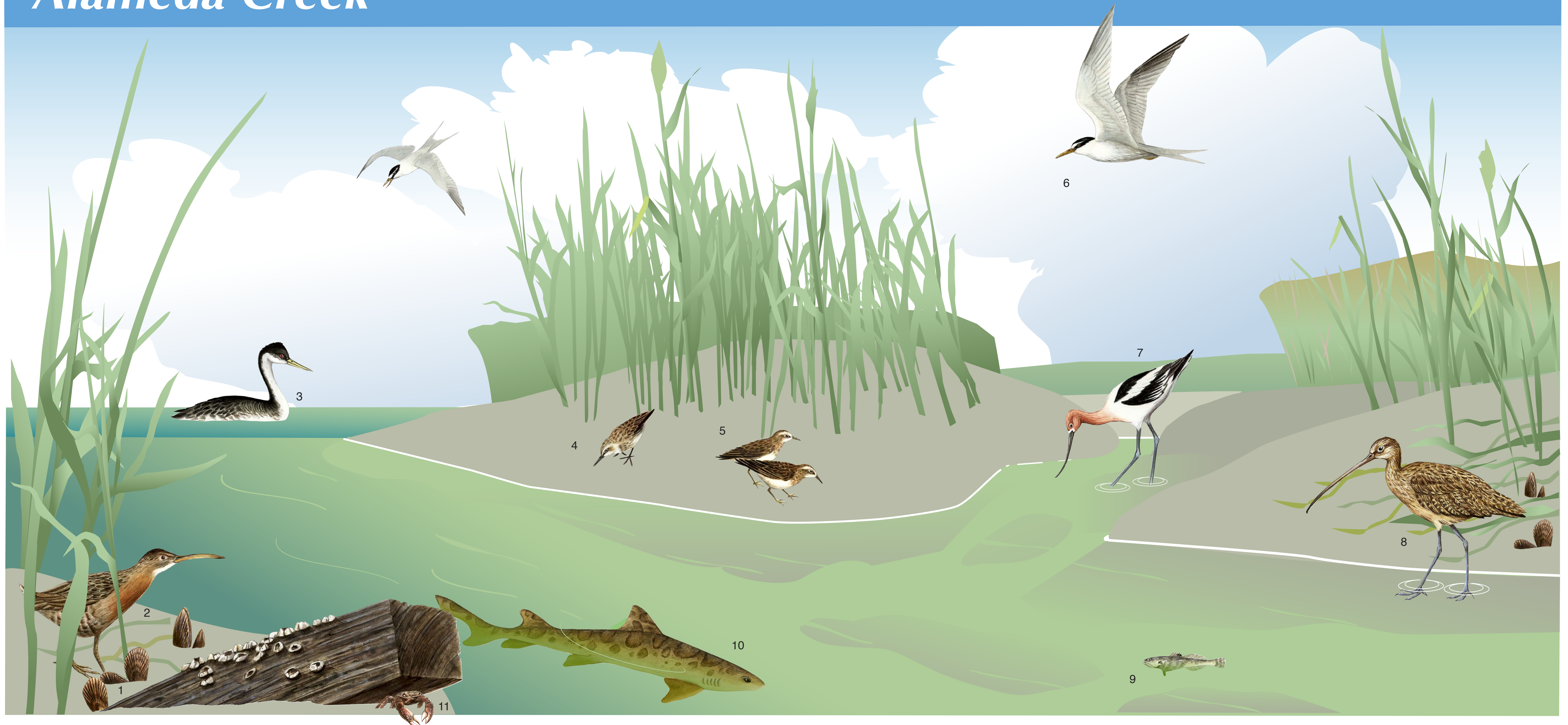


Alameda Creek



From where you're standing you can observe the mixing between the fresh and salt water. This meeting between the creek and the bay creates a vast ecosystem known as an estuary. San Francisco Bay is the largest estuary along the Pacific Coast. The organisms living in the estuary survive the challenges of a constantly changing environment that ranges from dry to flooded and from fresh to saline. Mud flats support plants known as diatoms and algae. Within this soft sediment live billions of worms, snails, clams, and crabs. They are food for waterfowl, fish, and shorebirds. Cordgrass grows along the lowest edge of the salt marsh. Native cordgrass provides dense cover and nesting material for the endangered clapper rail,

as well as the attachment sites for the ribbed horse-mussel, a favored rail food. Fish also depend on this unique environment. Two-thirds of our commercial fish species spend some of their lives in estuaries. This area is a major spawning and nursery ground for leopard and brown smoothhound sharks. The salt marsh has numerous values ranging from controlling floods, erosion, pollution, and sediment to providing priceless habitat for diverse wild creatures and forming the basis of a complex food web. In addition, this area provides us boundless recreational and nature study opportunities.

1. Ribbed Horse-muscle 2. Clapper Rail 3. Western Grebe 4. Western Sandpiper 5. Least Sandpiper 6. Least Tern 7. American Avocet 8. Long-billed Curlew 9. Staghorn Sculpin 10. Leopard Shark 11. Shore Crab