

THE ESTUARY NEIGHBORHOOD:

A Coloring Book for Southwest Florida's Estuarine Community

Written and Illustrated by Cori Chandler



Cover Illustration by Cayla Salo, Punta Gorda Middle School



Funding provided by
The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
& The Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center



To learn more about estuarine plants and animals and ways to protect your local environment contact...

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

239-338-2556 or toll free 866-835-5785

On the web at www.chnep.org

1926 Victoria Ave * Fort Myers, FL * 33901

Or

The Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center

941- 575-5435

On the web at www.checflorida.org

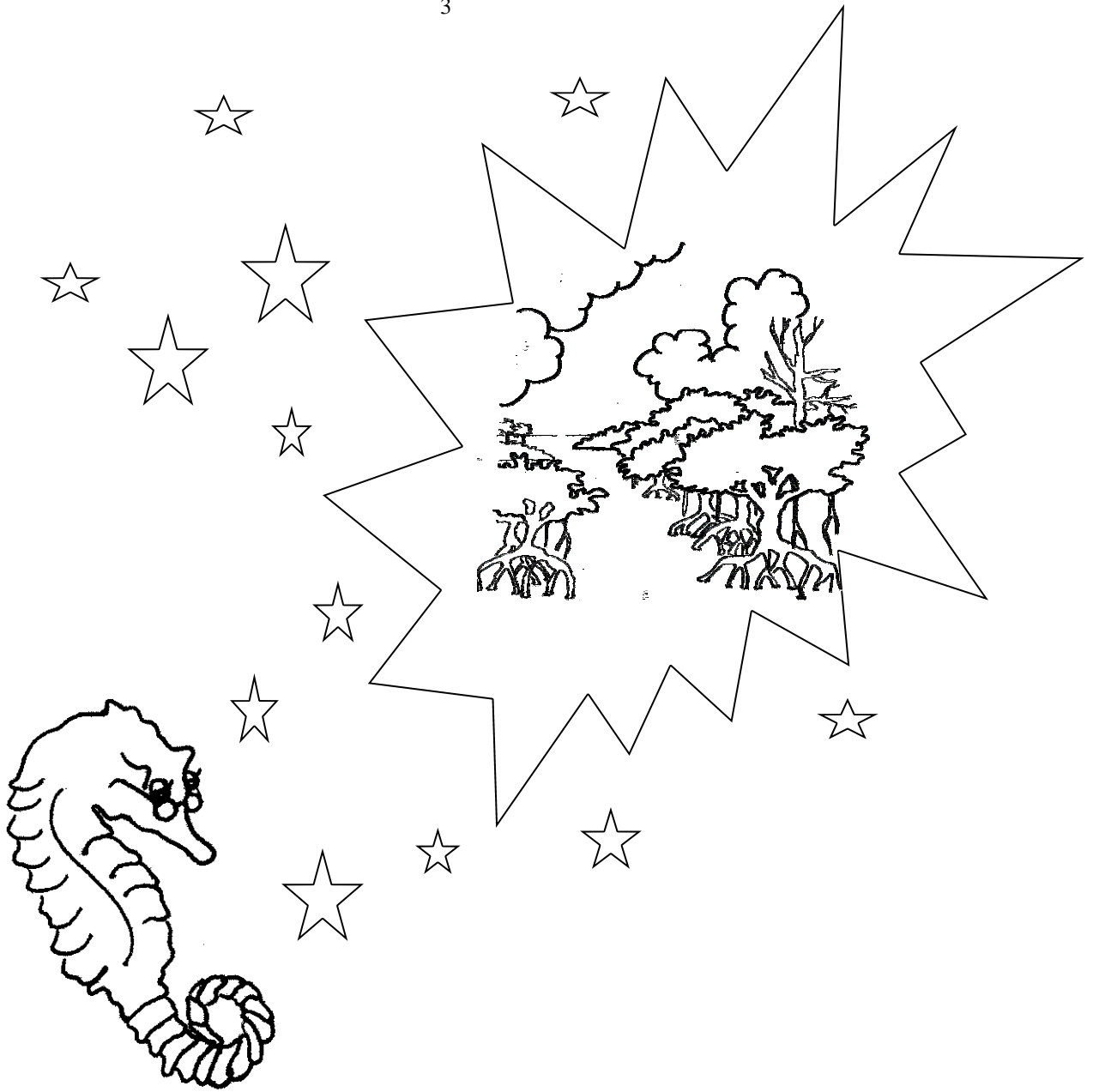
Alligator Creek Preserve: 10941 Burnt Store Rd. * Punta Gorda, FL * 33954

Cedar Point Environmental Park: 2300 Placid Rd * Englewood, FL * 34224

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program is a partnership working to protect the natural environment from Venice to Estero Bay to Winter Haven. Local citizens can get involved in the Charlotte Harbor NEP by joining the **Citizens Advisory Committee**. The CAC provides a structured mechanism for citizens input to the Charlotte Harbor NEP and assist in the dissemination of relevant information to the public. This committee works closely with the CHNEP staff developing and promoting the public education and participation program.

The **Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center** offers a variety of field trips, lectures, teacher education demonstrations, clubs, and many more environmental avenues throughout the Charlotte Harbor area. In addition, you can join the combined efforts of CHEC's generous volunteers working in a variety of crews: maintenance, trail blazers, trail guides, water quality and wildlife monitors, gardeners, photographers, Friends of CHEC, volunteer coordinators, and office and receptions helpers. Come by and be part of the fun!





There's a neighborhood where a river meets the sea,
A community called an *estuary*.

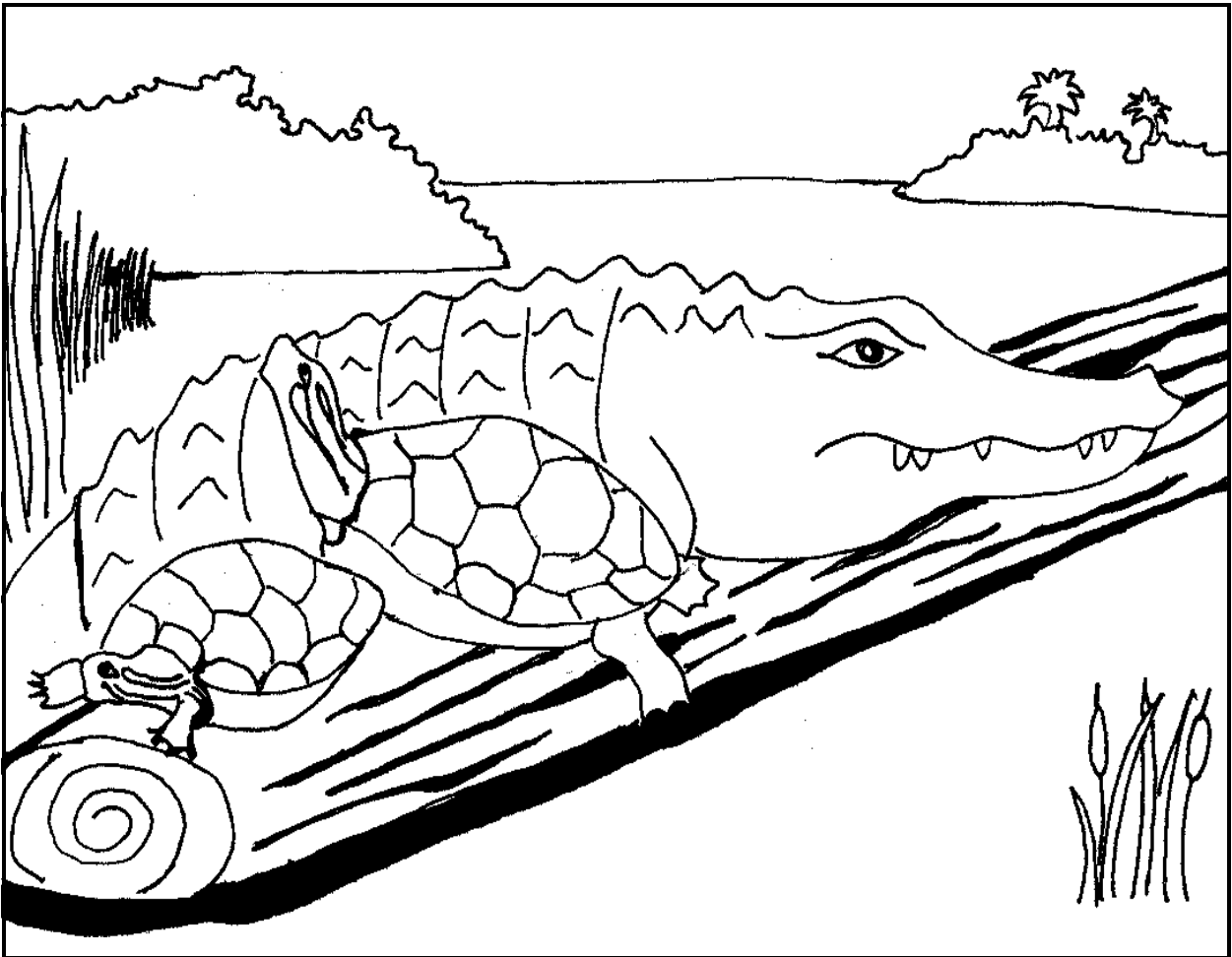
Let's swim through the water and walk through the trees,
There are some creatures I'd like you to see.



It is the *mangrove tree* that provides a home
For oysters and crabs and fish that roam.



The roots of a mangrove are much like a crib
Where little fish live and wait to get big.



Once they grow up, and then still later,
They might feed a *turtle* or an *alligator*.

And like the mangroves who cradle the young,
The gator has a job to be done.

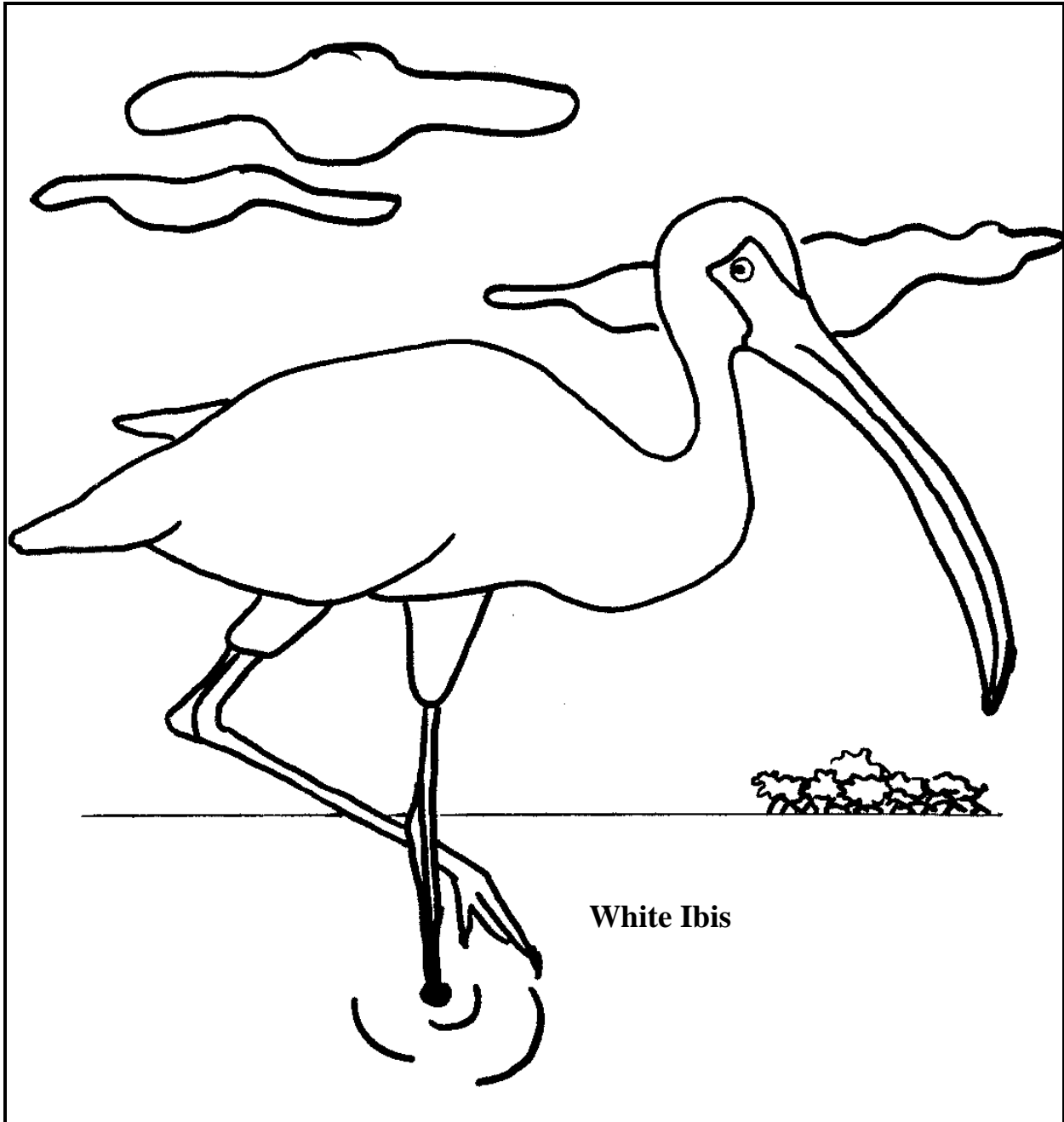




When the water runs dry and the river gets low,
The gator will dig for water below.



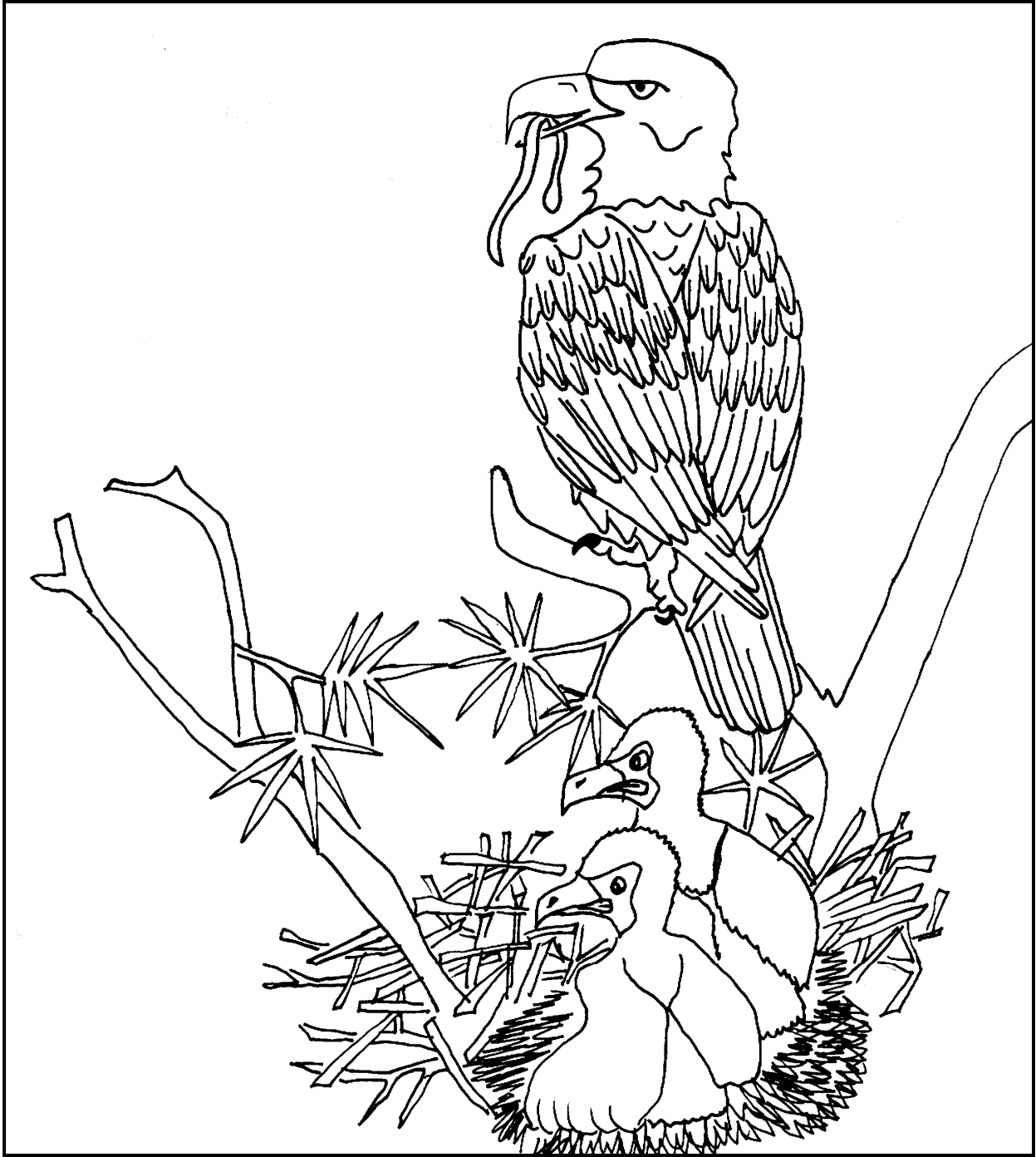
The gator's digging becomes a hole
For plants that grow in a watery bowl.



These water plants will feed insects and fish
Who later will make a tasty dish,

For an *ibis* that plows its beak in the mud
Or a frog that will hop and swim for a bug.

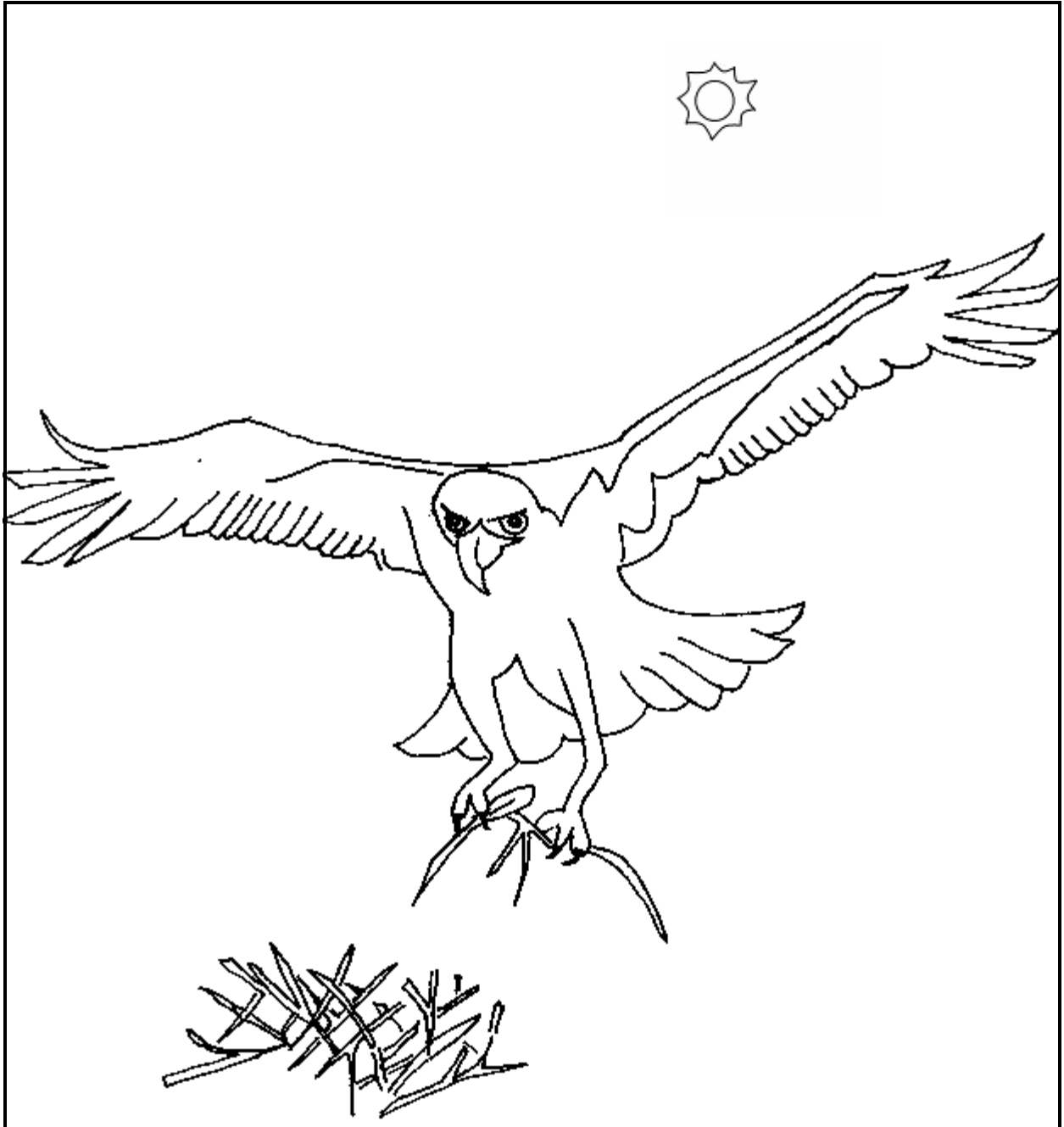




That frog may provide a meal for a snake
That a *bald eagle* might swoop down to take,

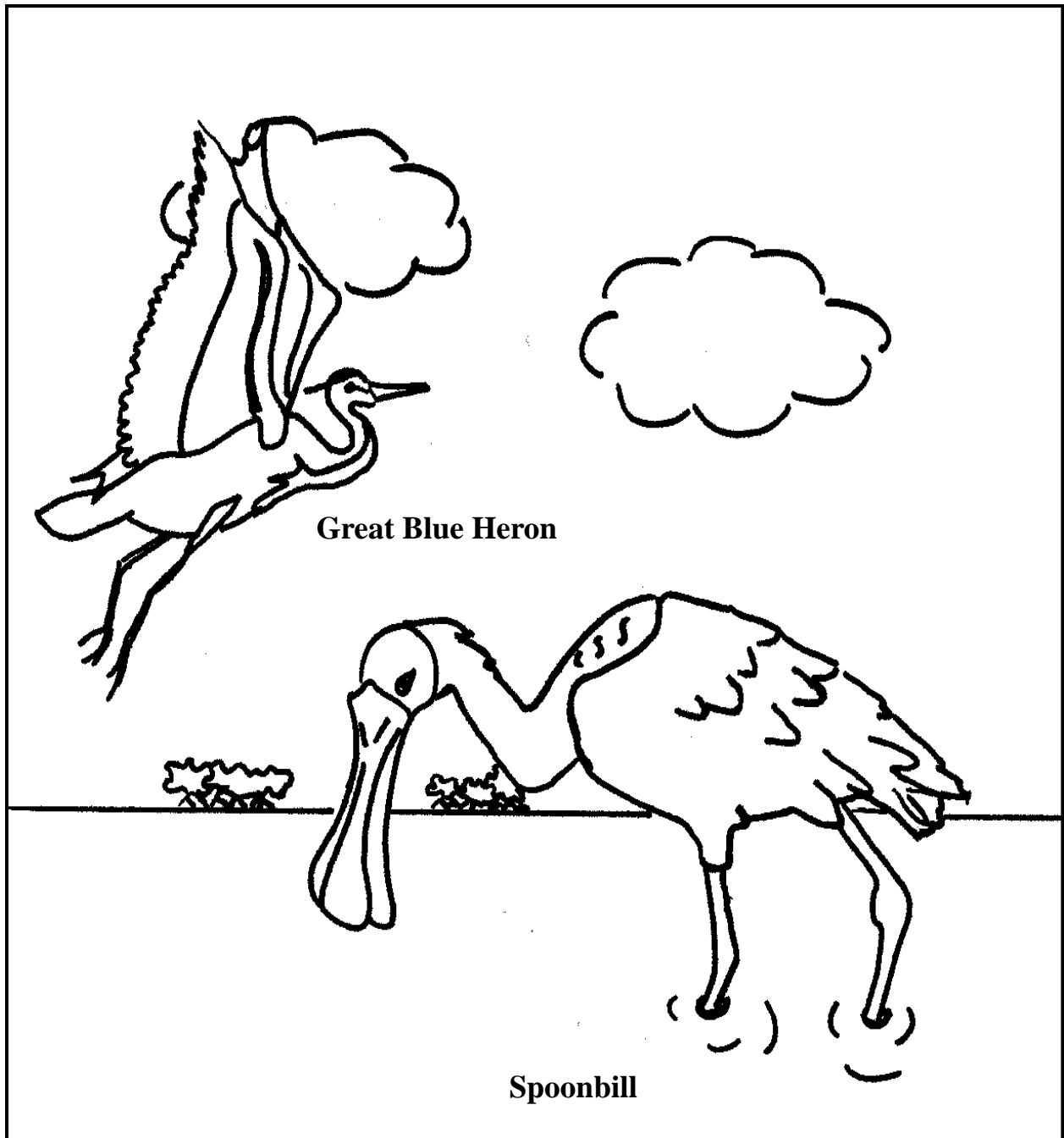


And bring back to the nest in the tall pine tree
Where she cares for and feeds her little fledglings.



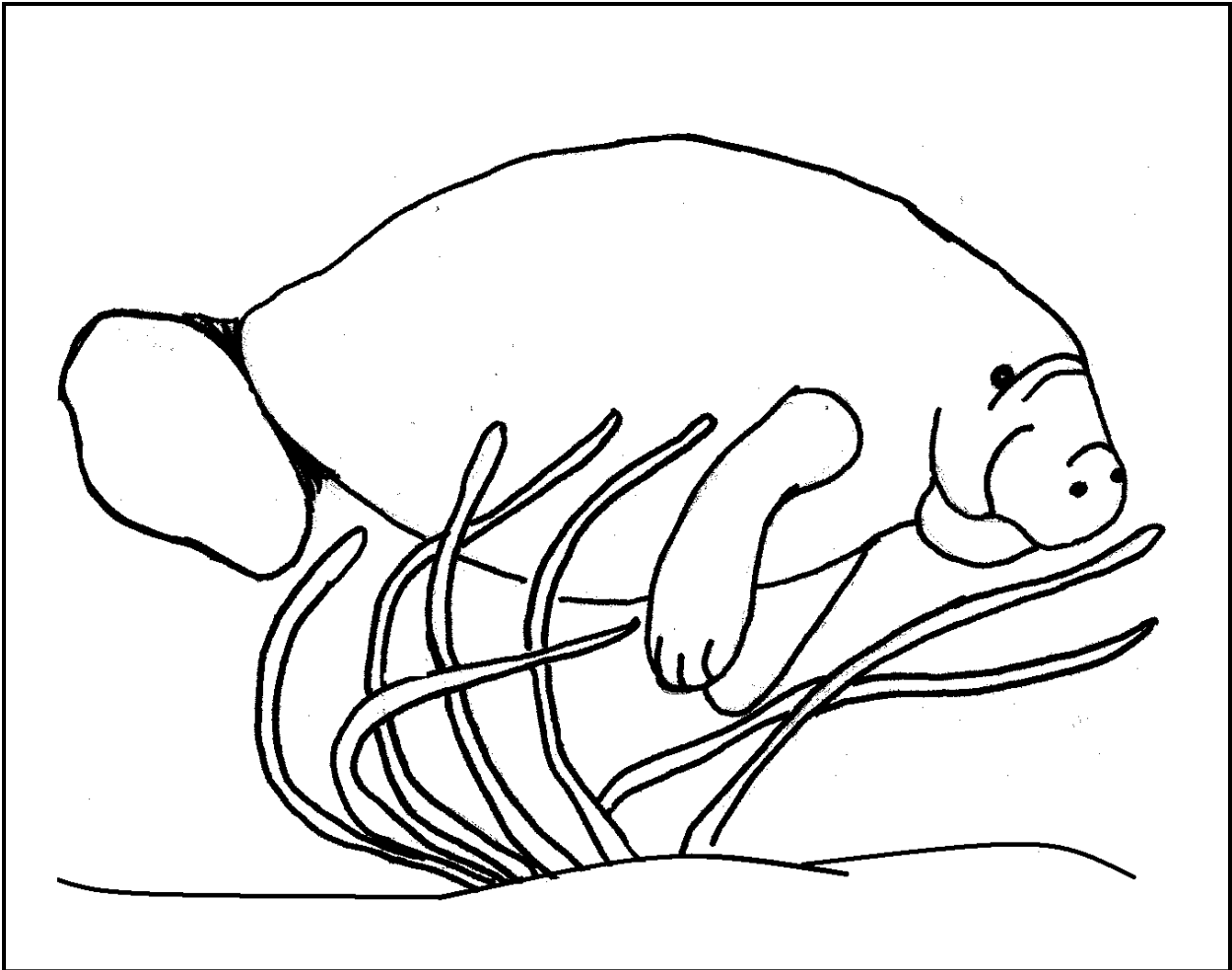
And when she no longer needs the nest,
An *osprey* may find it a nice place to rest.





But no osprey, nor *heron*, nor *spoonbill* could eat,
If not for the crabs, fish, and shrimp so sweet





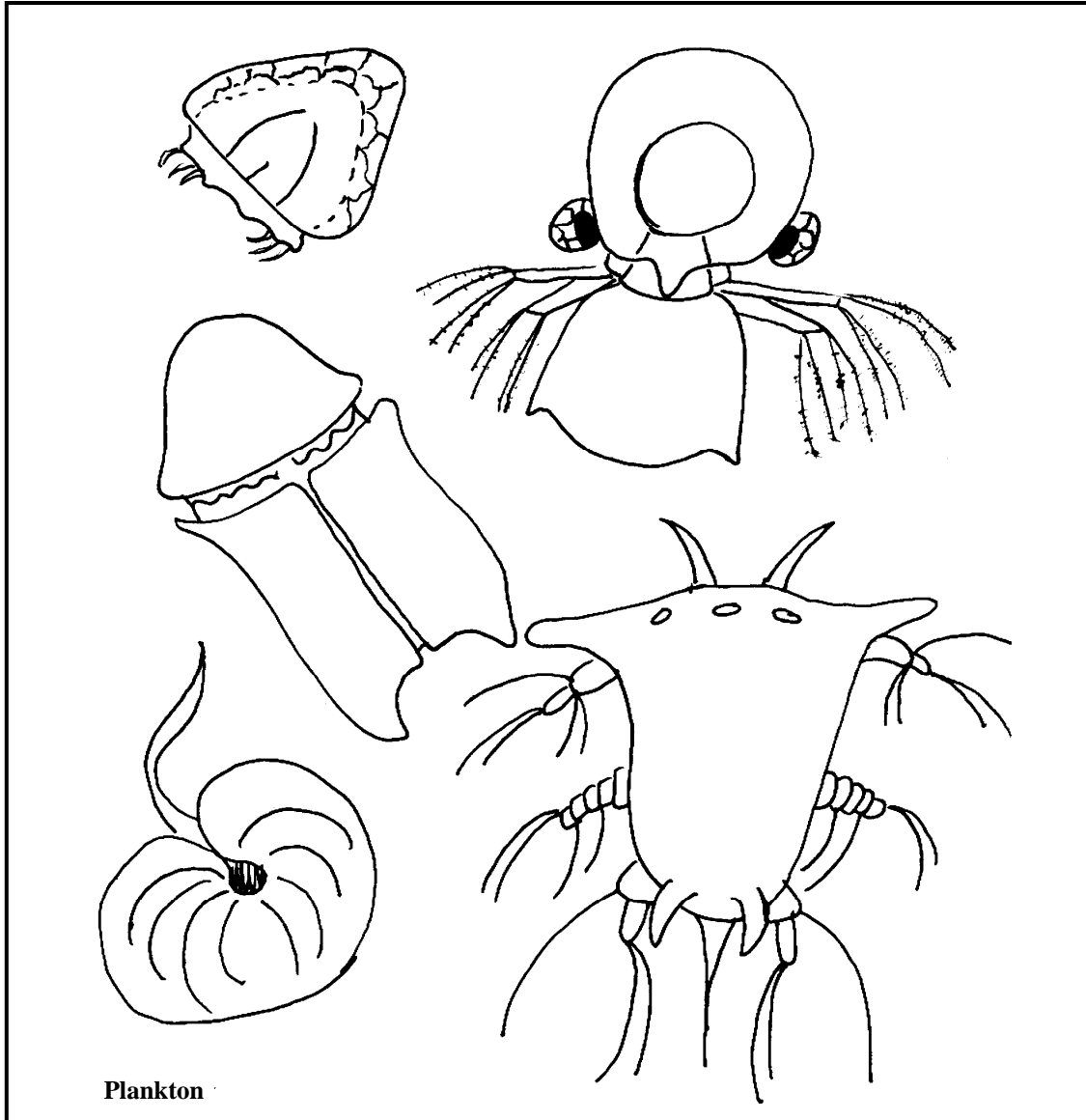
That eat *detritus* from plants
and *seagrass*
Where pods of *manatees* graze
as they pass.



Detritus is broken up stems and leaves,
That falls on the water when it's shed from the trees.

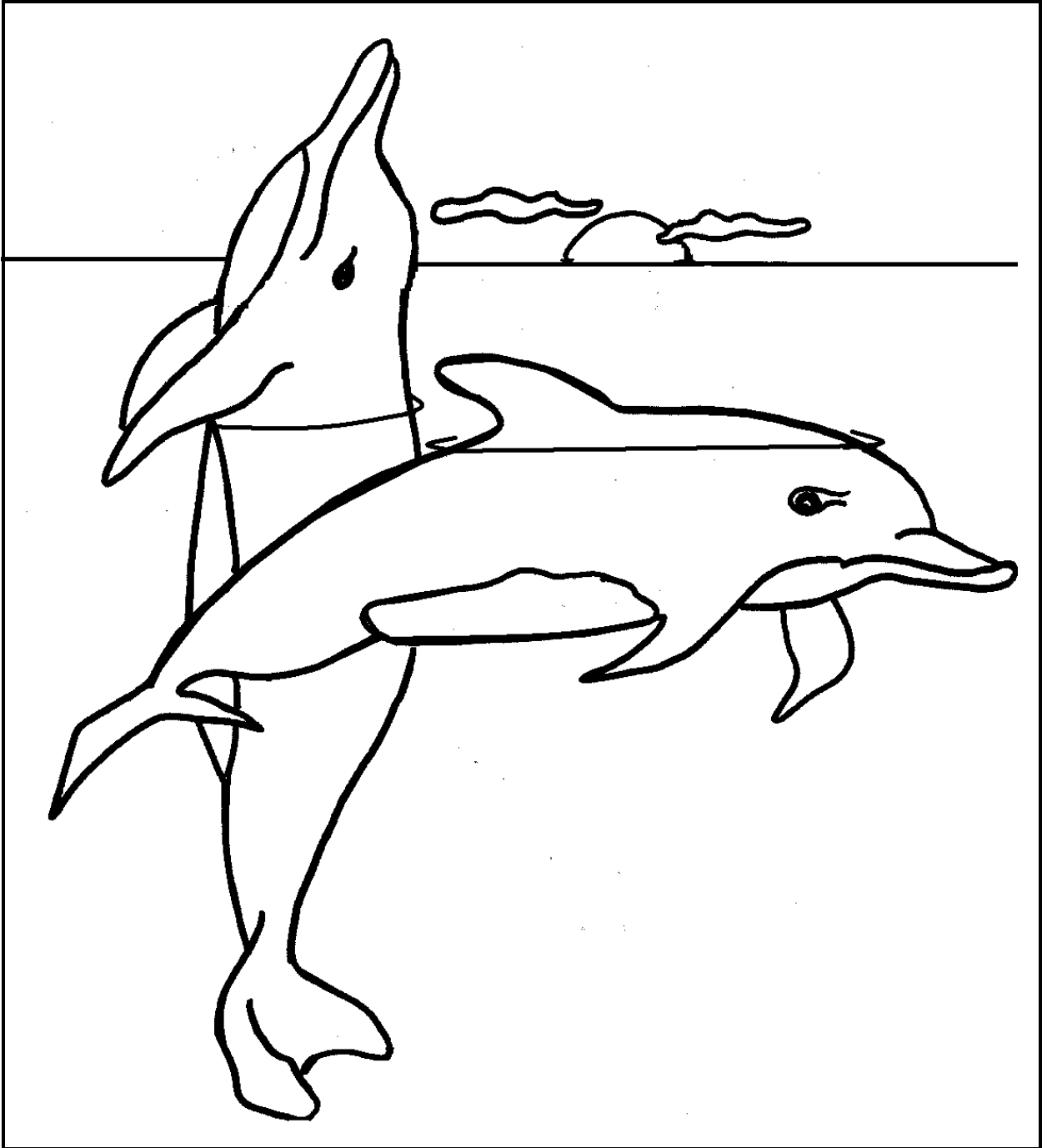
When it falls down, the water turns dark and brown,

Giving nutritious food for the *plankton* that feed
On this fine brew of estuary tea.



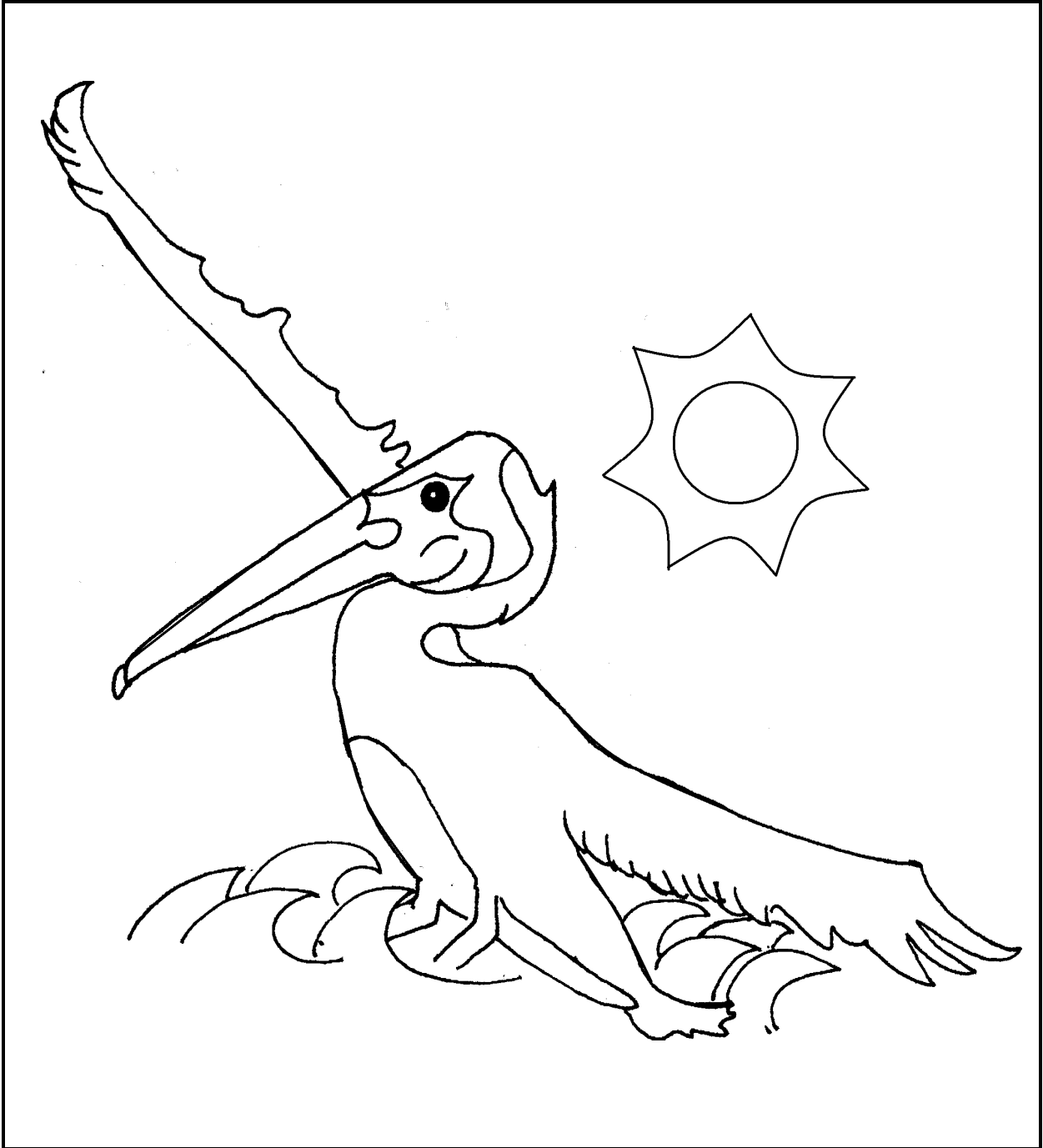
In case you didn't know, here's a note on the side...
Plankton are creatures that can't swim but ride
And move through the water by currents and tides.





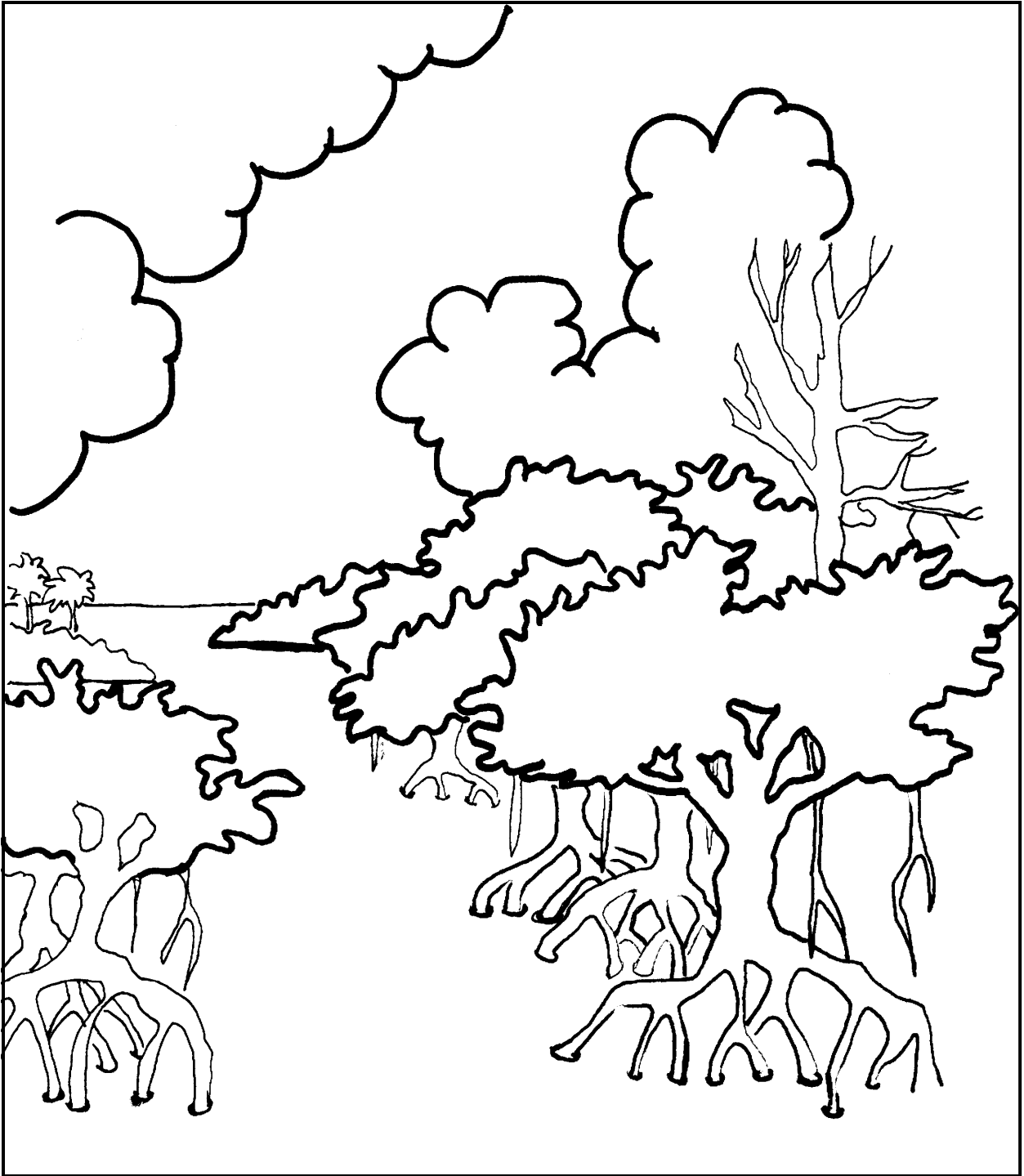
In water so dark, it's hard to see all around,
But the *Bottlenose Dolphin* can rely on sounds





Like the splash of a *pelican* as it lands in the sea,





Or the rush of the river as it flows by the trees.

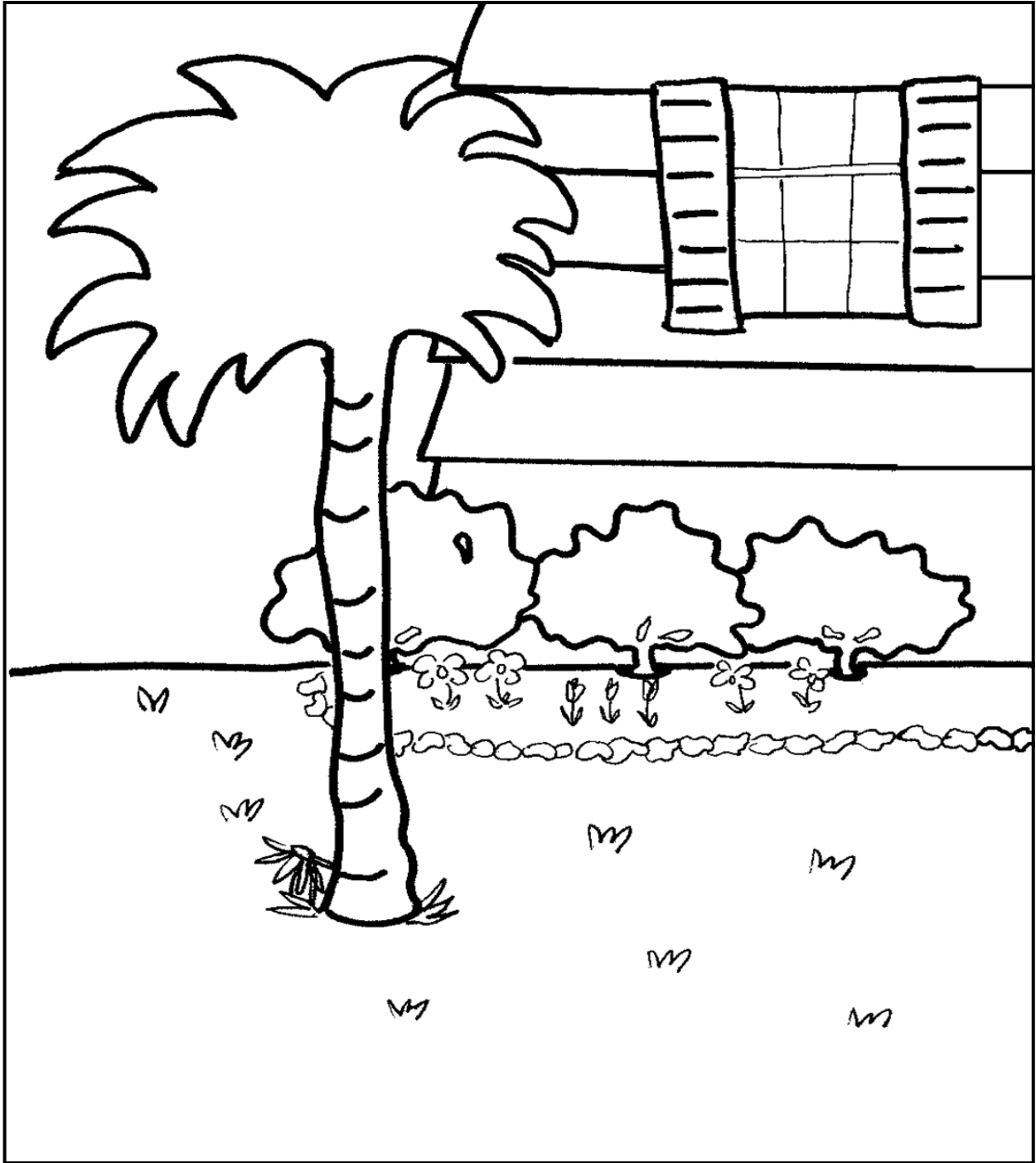




But what about you? What do you do?
Don't people live in the estuary too?

Let's learn from these creatures and take our cue
To keep this neighborhood looking like new.



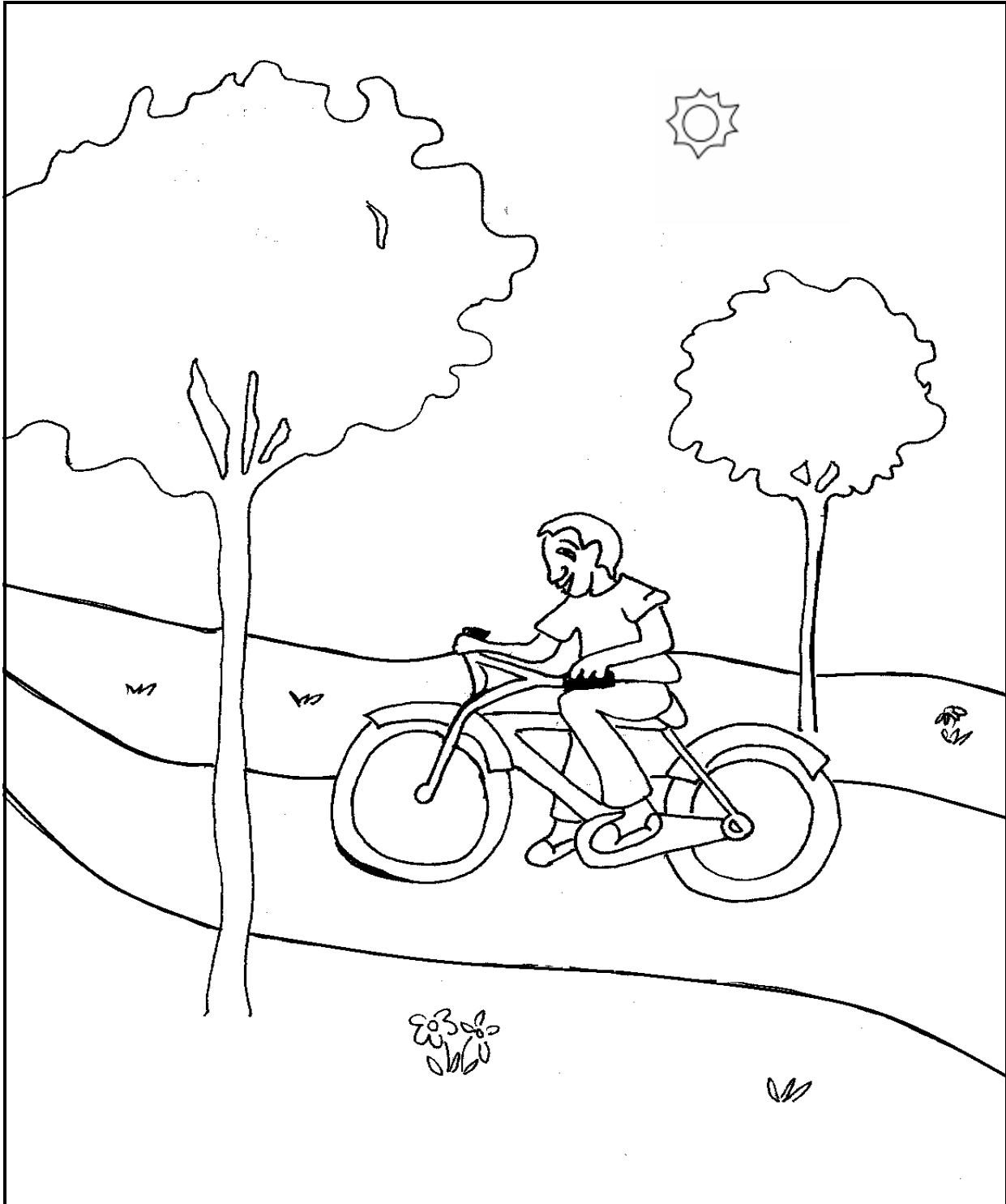


Our part can be so simple, no it's not very hard,
To keep fertilizers and pesticides off of the yard.



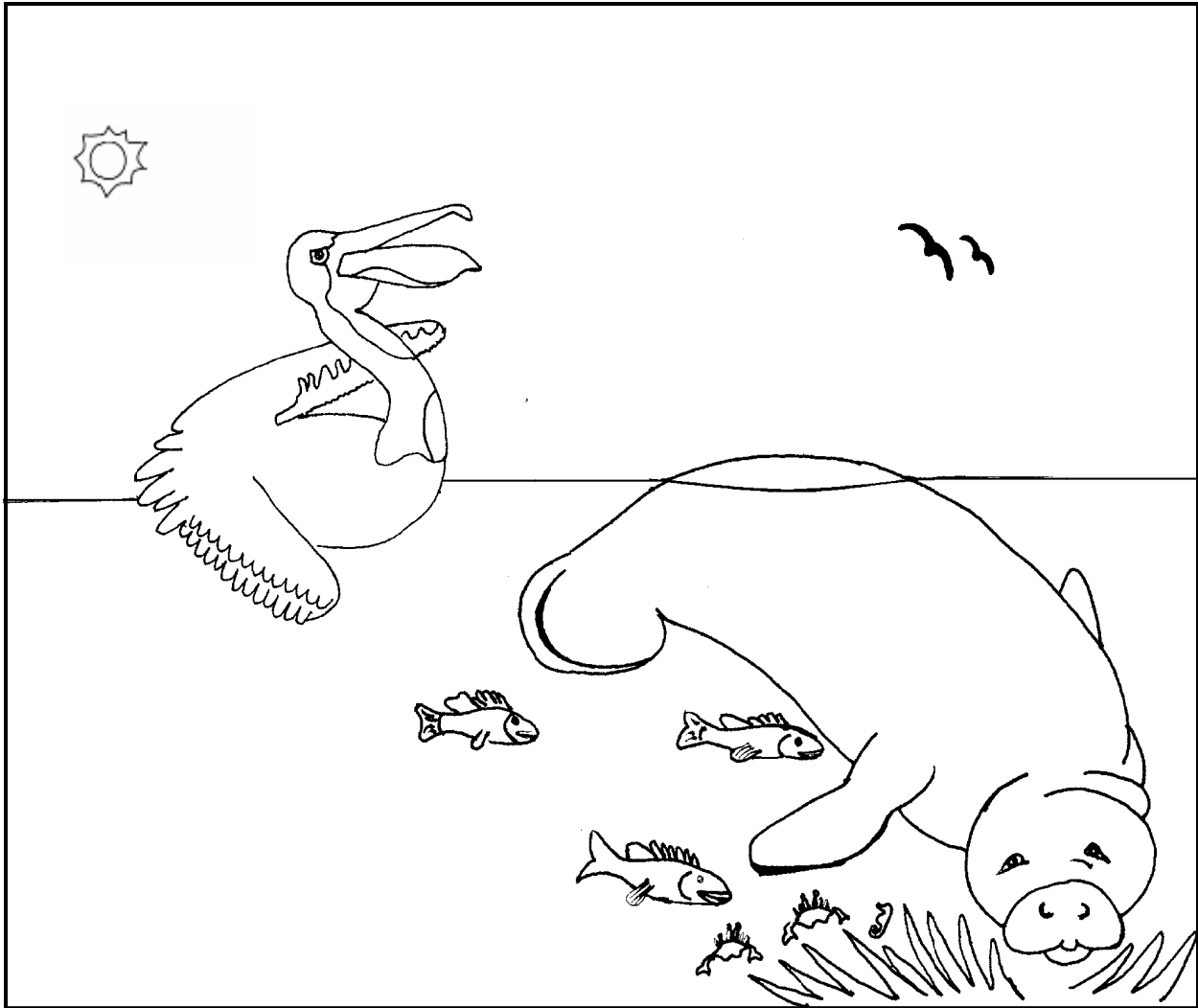


And to keep food and garbage out of the sea,
For animals may think it's something to eat.

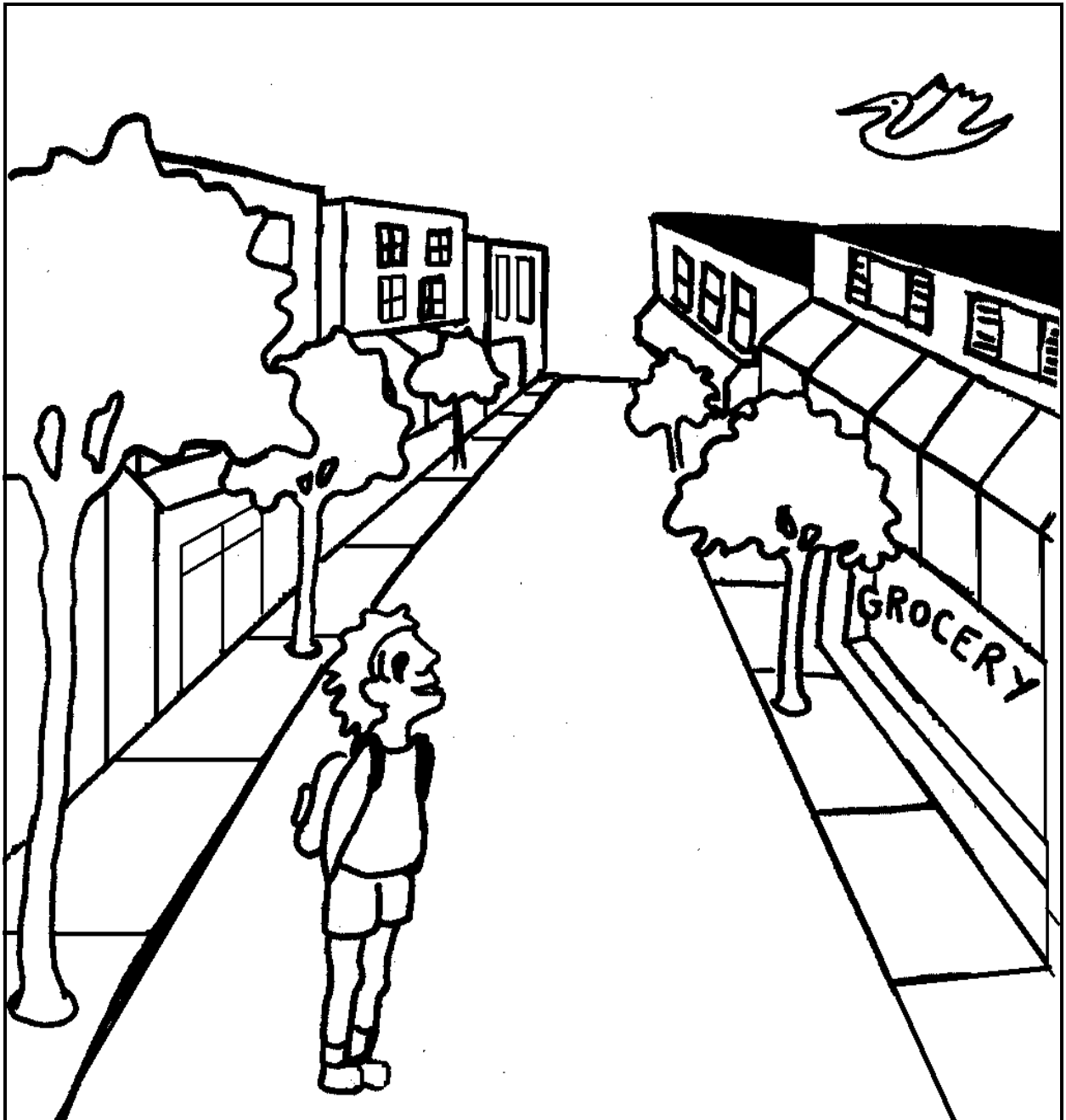


Let's turn off the motors on our boats and cars.
Let's walk or ride bikes when we're not going far.





The estuary will stay clean without the pollution,
And then you too will be part of the solution.



So it's up to you, it's your choice you see,
What kind of neighbor would you like to be?



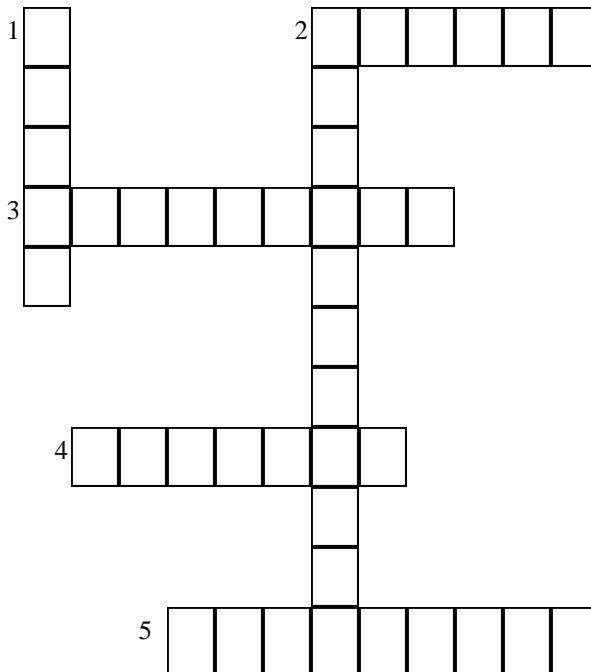
ESTUARY WORD FIND

MANGROVE
MANATEE
IBIS
ALLIGATOR
DOLPHIN
DETRITUS
HERON
SPOONBILL
ESTUARY
PLANKTON

S	D	F	B	B	E	S	T	R	D	G	D	E	H
D	P	L	O	R	S	H	U	F	O	G	R	T	E
R	T	E	H	R	T	I	B	V	L	S	O	N	R
A	N	E	D	F	W	S	R	X	P	E	D	A	Y
M	A	N	A	T	E	E	S	T	H	D	O	L	L
F	D	F	L	R	O	S	A	S	I	C	L	P	S
F	L	P	L	A	N	K	T	O	N	F	F	F	P
D	L	L	I	E	P	L	E	U	F	V	I	Y	O
O	I	N	G	V	R	L	E	P	A	B	M	K	P
I	B	N	A	V	N	N	F	A	F	R	B	J	H
B	D	E	T	R	I	T	U	S	G	G	Y	U	H
I	O	S	O	P	O	B	T	N	V	V	H	Y	S
T	L	T	R	T	T	N	I	I	S	C	E	H	D
F	P	U	D	B	R	B	D	S	B	C	R	B	C
L	H	R	W	E	I	B	B	D	S	I	O	G	V
Z	E	M	A	N	G	R	O	V	E	C	N	T	B
A	D	M	F	E	W	A	X	S	S	C	D	R	N
T	D	O	G	G	S	P	O	O	N	B	I	L	L

Crossword Puzzle: Ways to Reduce Toxics in the Yard

Word choices: weeders, phosphorous, plants, grass, soil tests, less toxic



Down

1) Let your ___ grow a couple extra inches to allow roots to grow deeper and reach more water during dry periods and to create shade, making it harder for weeds to grow.

2) Use fertilizers that do not contain ___.

Across

2) Replace parts of the yard with native ___ that lessen the need for water and fertilizers.

3) Get regular ___ to see what your soil needs so you don't use unneeded fertilizer.

4) Hand and foot powered ___ are a better way to get rid of weeds.

5) Ask your garden store for ___ options to pesticides.

The cover of this booklet features the following artist in this order...

Justin Winters, Peter Hughes, Nicole Pancic, Stephanie Zoller, Cayla Salo, Paige Earnest, Stephen Albertini, Avery Brightwell, Renee Coccoaro

The back of this booklet features the following artist in this order...

Tony Dang, Jordan Moore, Shannon Kelley, Ryan Bailey, Tori Fitzgerald, Jordan LaRocca, Cara Bishop, Megan Marone, Jackie Carroll, Kaylee Smith, Jordan Morrill, Mathew Barnhart, Nadia Kemal, Shelby LuKasek, Kelsie Weatherholt, Trent Morgan, Amanda Ivankovic, Thomas Turney, Taylor Mack, Amanda Smith, Shelby Hendrickson, Alison Hall, Peter Campo, Nicole Hernandez, Selina Squire, Nick Kruse, Krista Wrightsman

Special Thanks to: Martha Clemente, Rich Dorken, Monica Dorken, Maran Hilgendorf, Carol Mahler, and Chris Salmonsens for assisting in artistic design and text editing; Jason Hale for providing technical support; and Kathy Fedonni and the Punta Gorda Middle School students who participated in the drawing contest. All the beautiful entries made it a very difficult decision.

Thanks also to the following people for lending their time or encouragement toward the completion of this book: Al Cheatham, Ron and Barb Chandler, Bobbi Rodgers, Jamie Scudera, and Pat and Bud Tertz

