

# Making the Connection

Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems on Earth.

SOUTH CREEK



FRESHWATER WETLAND

1

UPLAND MEADOW

2

3

CREEKS, STREAMS & SPRINGS

4

5

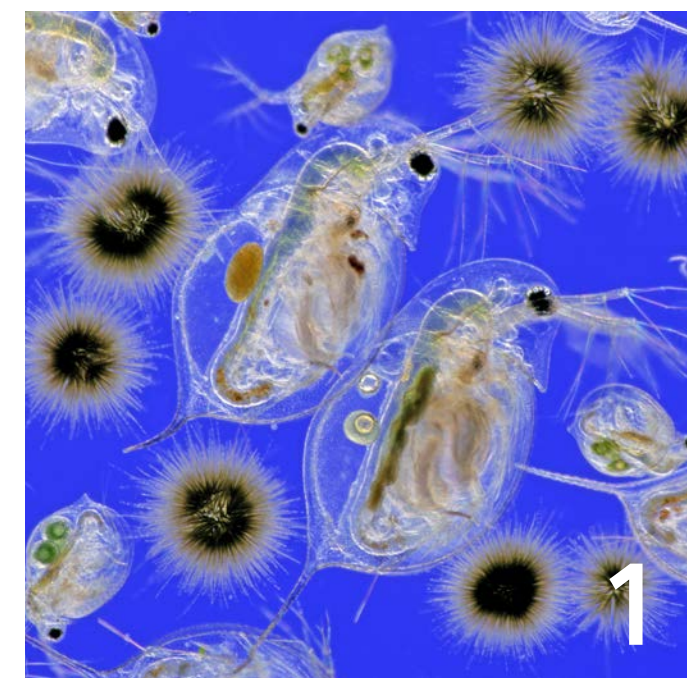
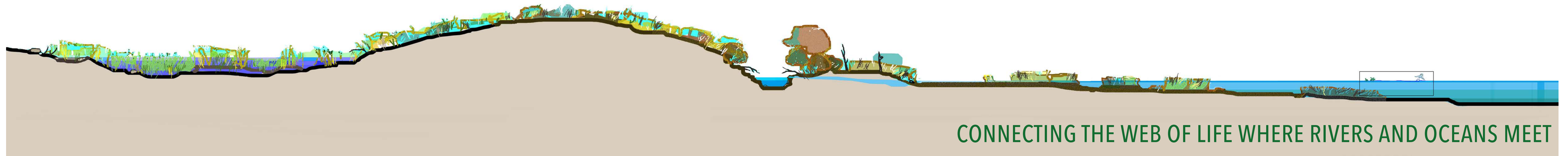
MUDFLATS

TIDAL MARSH

6

RIVER

7



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1



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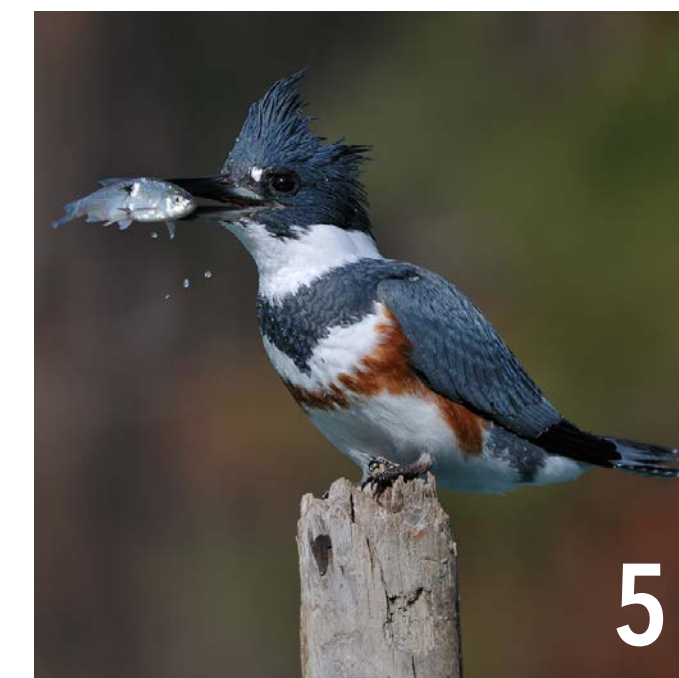
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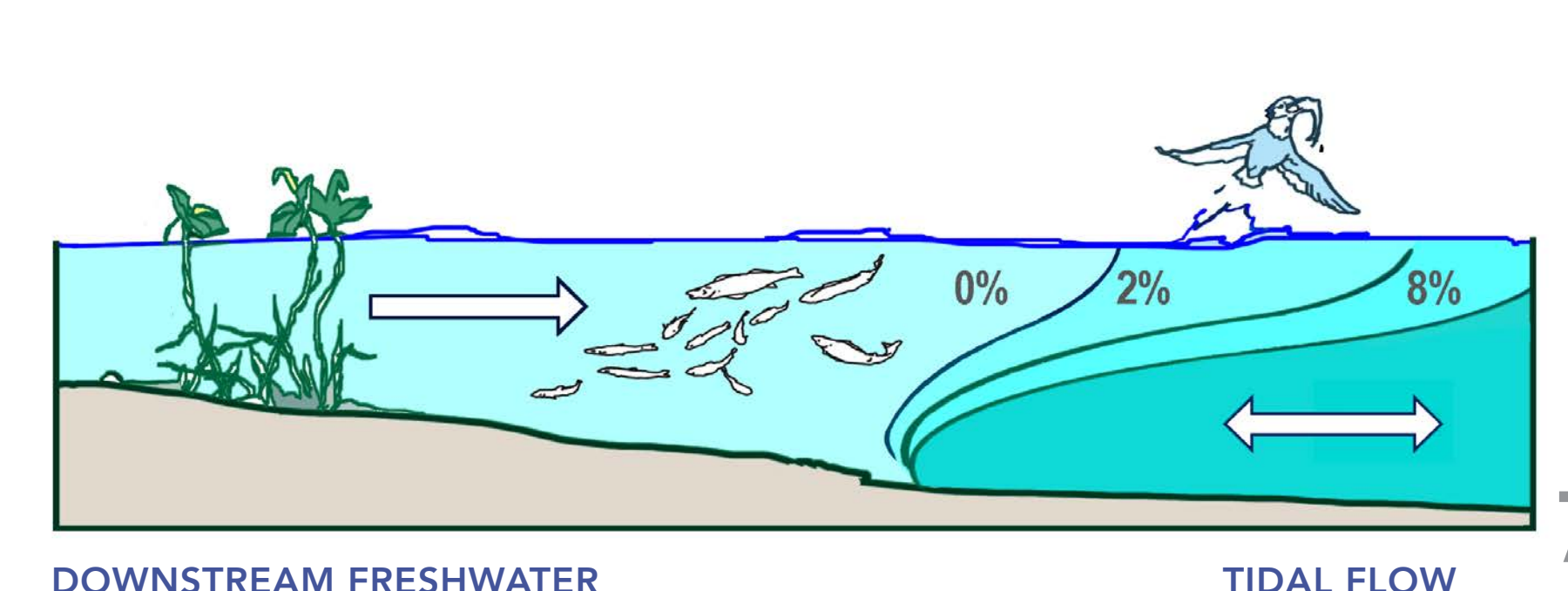
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6



DOWNSTREAM FRESHWATER

TIDAL FLOW

7

**Plankton** are a diverse form of microbiotic life abundant in water, here shown from a drop of water from a freshwater wetland.

**Common whitetail dragonflies** display distinctive checkerboard markings. They patrol wetlands and ponds for mosquitoes and other small insects.

**Eastern box turtles** are a species of Special Concern in Connecticut, due to loss of contiguous habitat from wetland to upland meadows.

**Muskrats** make their homes in muddy banks, with a largely vegetarian diet that helps keep wetland and marsh channels open for waterfowl and fish.

**Belted kingfisher**, often seen perched in trees before plunging for fish, nests in sloping tunnels in riverbanks.

**Mummichog**, also known as "mud minnows," are found in brackish waters of estuaries, as they can tolerate highly variable salinity and pollution.

**The Salt Wedge** describes the mix of fresh and salt water with nutrients from plants that sustain a rich ecosystem within the estuary.

