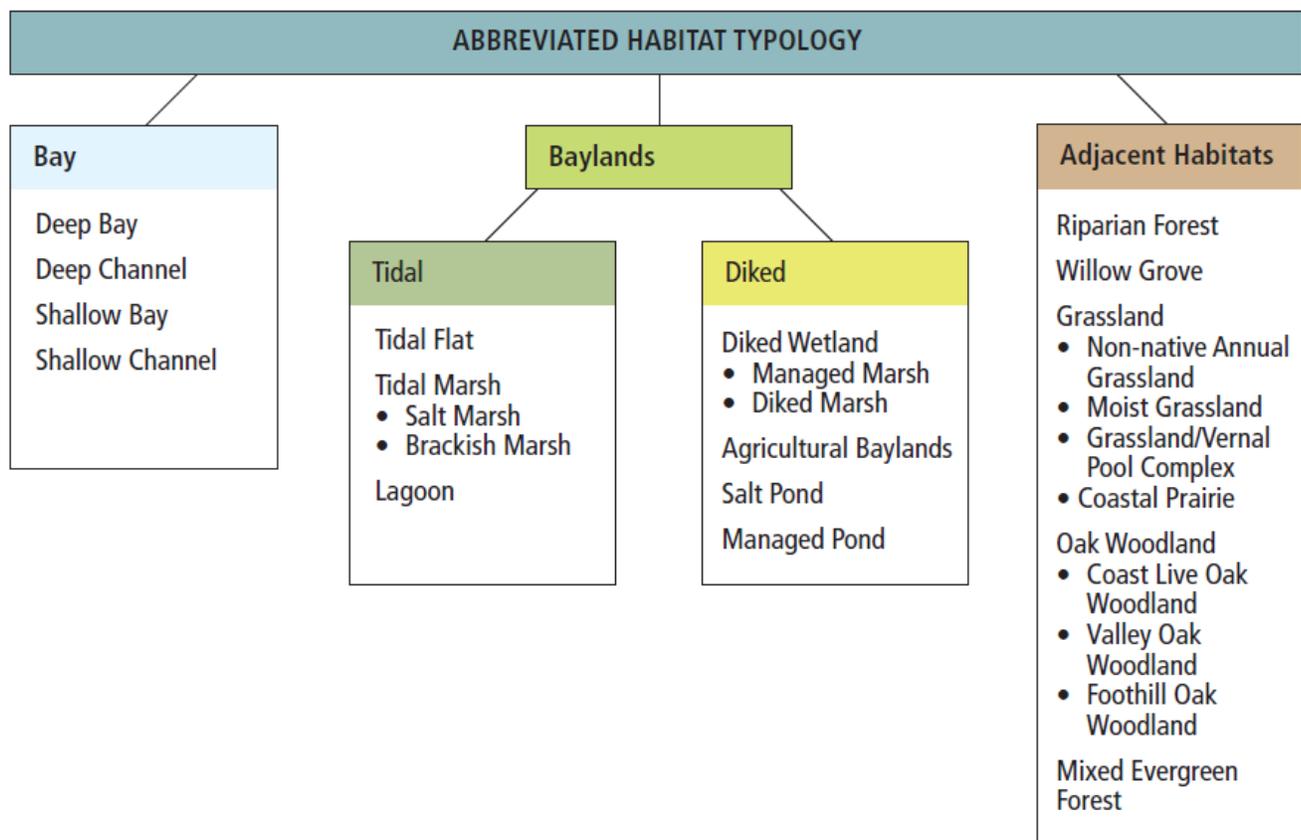


New Understanding: The Baylands and Climate Change

Appendix E: Habitat Types

HABITAT TYPES

The Baylands and adjacent habitats are summarized in a hierarchical typography (**Figure below**) that acknowledges their connection to adjacent habitats both landward and bayward. They comprise a diverse assemblage of open water, intertidal, diked managed lands, transitional and upland habitats. More detail on these as well as descriptions of the adjacent habitat types are available in full in the Baylands Goals (Chp. 4, Goals Project 1999) and accompanying Species and Community Profiles (Goals Project 1999b).



Tidal Baylands

Tidal Flat

Tidal flat habitat includes mudflats, sandflats, and shellflats. It occurs from below MLLW (at the elevation of the lowest tides) to Mean Tide Level (MTL) and supports less than 10 percent cover of vascular vegetation, other than eelgrass. Tidal flats include mudflats that support an extensive community of diatoms, worms, shellfish, and algal flora, as well as eelgrass, which is found in shallow bay and channel habitat. Tidal flats and provides foraging habitat for many species of fishes, as well as serving as the major

feeding areas for many species of shorebirds. Tidal flat tends to occur less in brackish or freshwater areas compared to more saline areas. This is because, under fresher conditions, marsh vegetation grows lower in the intertidal zone.

Tidal Marsh

Tidal marsh is vegetated wetland subject to tidal action. It occurs throughout much of the Bay from the lowest extent of vascular vegetation to the top of the intertidal zone (at the maximum height of the tides). Tidal marsh also exists in the tidal reaches of local rivers and streams. In the fresher parts of the Estuary it occurs at lower elevations in the intertidal zone. Tidal marsh plant communities correlate strongly to salinity patterns and to other factors such as substrate, wave energy, marsh age, sedimentation, and erosion, and are often categorized into tidal salt and tidal brackish marsh.

Lagoon

A lagoon is an impoundment of water that is subject to at least occasional or sporadic connection to full or muted tidal action. Lagoons can be natural (e.g., formed behind a barrier beach along an indented shoreline) or artificial.

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