



# **EXPLORE OUR COAST**



**Institute for  
Regional  
Conservation**



This coloring book is designed by **The Institute for Regional Conservation (IRC)**, a nonprofit dedicated to the protection, restoration and long-term management of biodiversity on a regional basis and to the prevention of local extinctions of rare plants, animals and ecosystems.

One of IRC's key program areas is **Restoring the Gold Coast (RGC)**. RGC is a collaborative initiative launched in 2019 to restore the incredible beauty and diversity of plants animals native to coastal ecosystems in southeast Florida.

The content of this book was written by IRC Assistant Director of Programs, Cara Abbott.

Funding for this educational coloring book was provided by the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties.

IRC would like to thank Larissa Lynch for illustrating all of the images used in the coloring pages of this book.



For more information on the Restoring the Gold Coast program, including ways you can get involved, scan the QR code below.



To help IRC conserve the species found within this book (and more!), make a tax-deductible donation by scanning the QR code below.





See if you can find all of the plants and animals discussed in this coloring book hidden in this image! Look for the American beautyberry, Cooper's hawk, saw palmetto, gulf fritillary, beach morningglory, black racer and beach creeper.

In South Florida, our coastal uplands are made up of three main ecosystems: maritime hammock, coastal strand and beach dune. Let's explore these ecosystems and learn about what cool creatures and plants call them home!

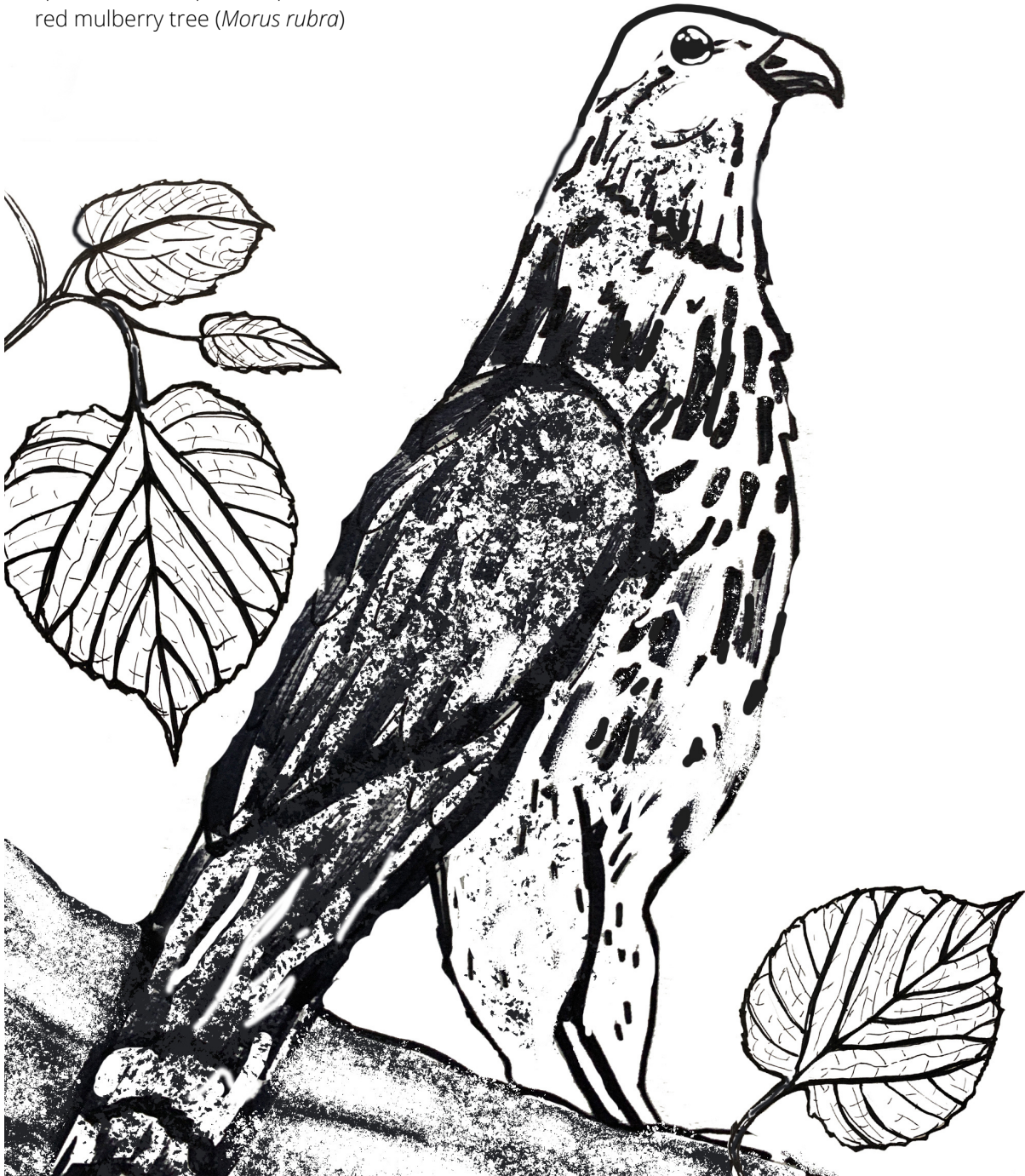


American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)

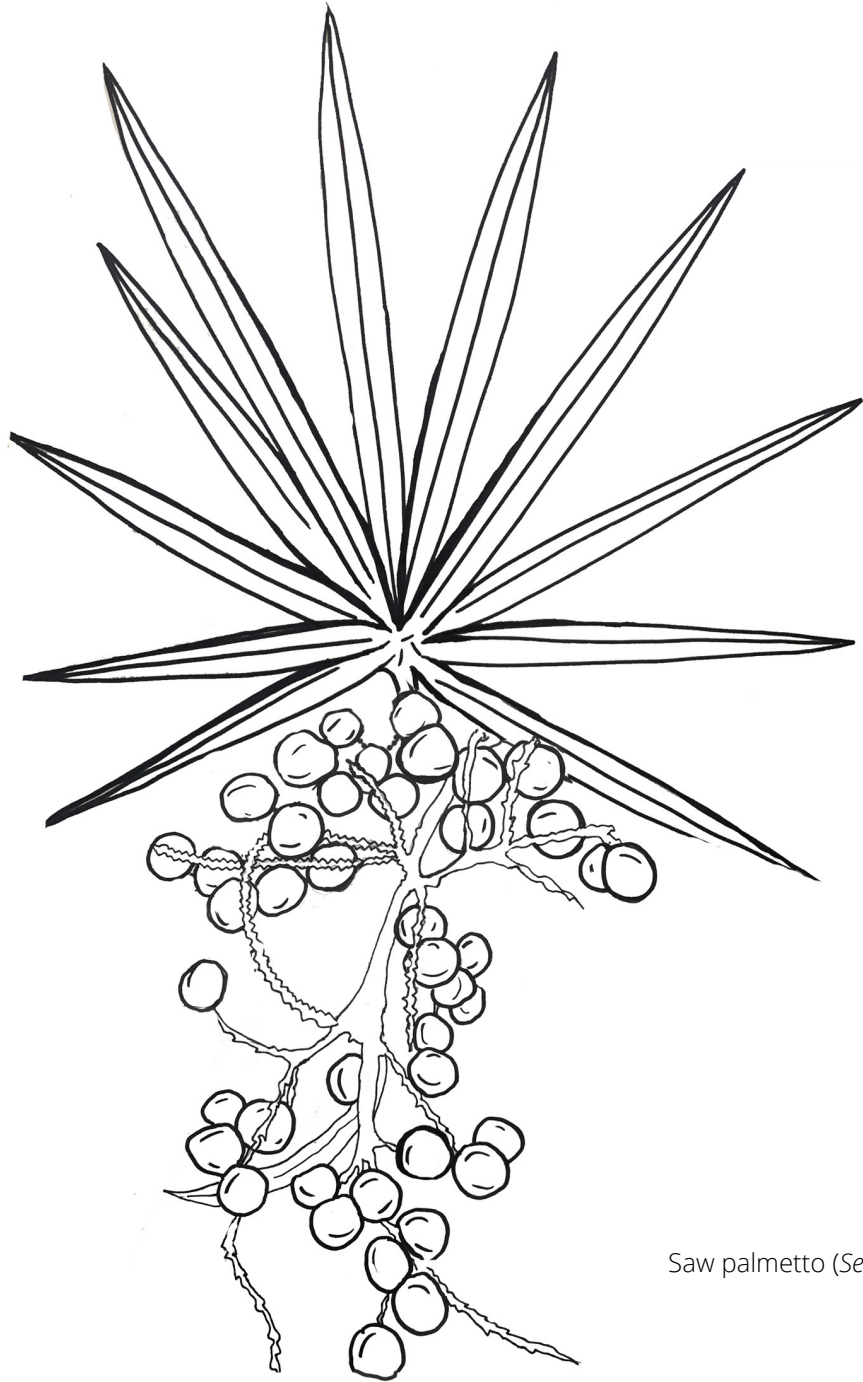
The most inland ecosystem is the maritime hammock, which is predominately an evergreen hardwood forest. These forests inhabit the highest, most stable areas of the barrier island and are made up of native trees and shrubs like gumbo limbo, Spanish stopper, wild coffee and American beautyberry.



Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) on a  
red mulberry tree (*Morus rubra*)



In the maritime hammock, you can see native green anole lizards scurrying in the trees and butterflies like the zebra longwing fluttering past its wild lime host plant. You can smell the fragrant flowers of a Simpson stopper and hear birds like the Coopers hawk call out.



Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*)

The coastal strand, found in between maritime hammock and beach dune, is an evergreen shrub community. This ecosystem is exposed to salt spray from the ocean and is made up of dwarfed shrubs and wildflowers like saw palmetto, coco-plum, beach verbena and the federally endangered beach clustervine.



Gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*)

In the coastal strand, you can observe migrating butterflies like the monarch and gulf fritillary as they travel south in the fall. You can hear small birds like the gray catbird or cardinal singing as they dart between wild-sage and saw palmetto looking for fruit and insects.





Beach morningglory (*Ipomoea imperati*)

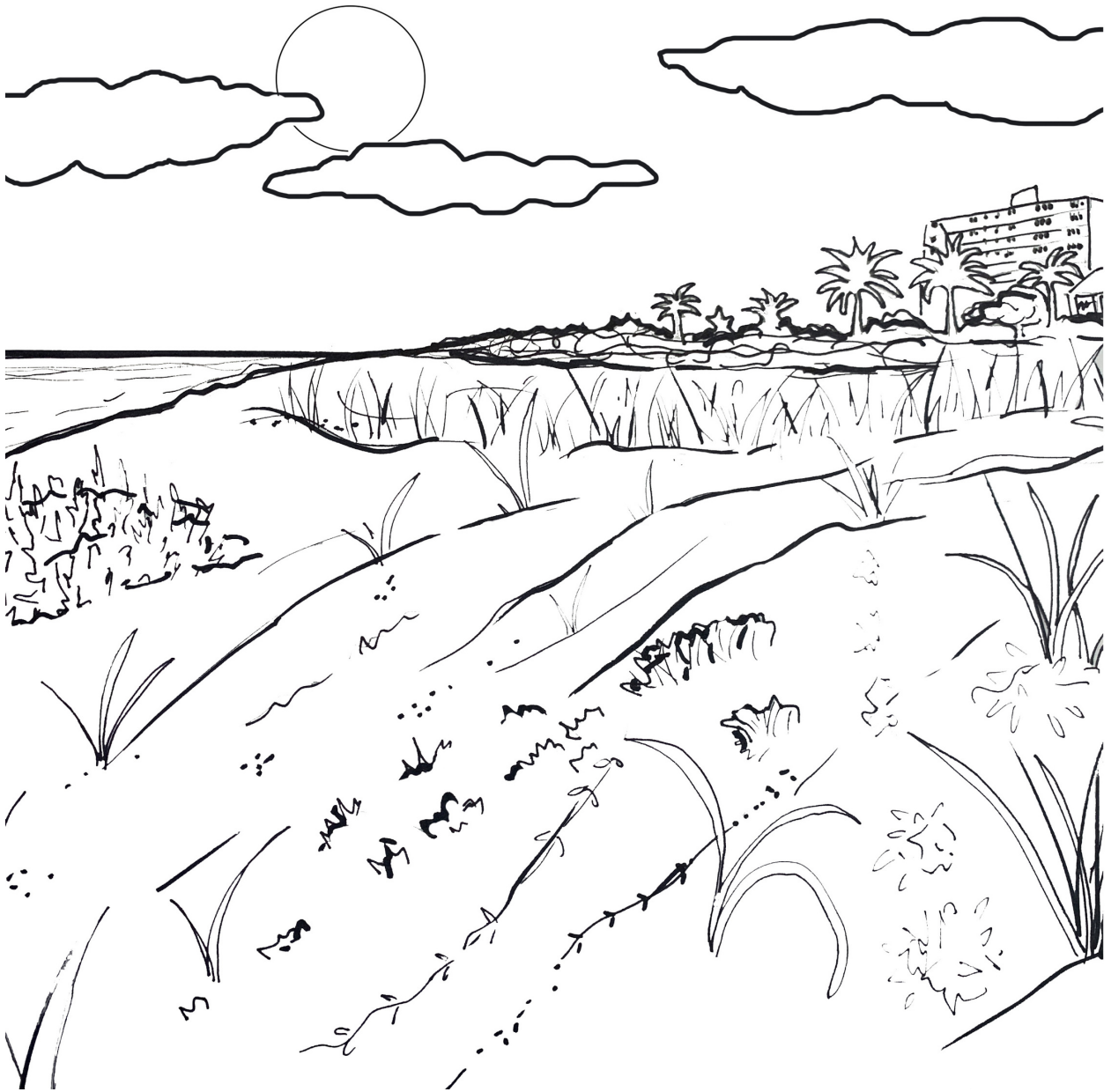
The eastern most coastal ecosystem is the beach dune, which is an herbaceous community of grasses like sea-oats, succulent species like beach-elder and pricklypear, annual species like coastal searocket, and trailing species like beach morningglory.



Black racer (*Coluber constrictor*)

In the beach dune, you can see snakes like the black racer slithering through the sandy grasses and hear birds like a rock pigeon cooing. At night, you might observe mammals like a raccoon or fox silently lurking in the dunes. You might even spot adult sea turtles nesting or sea turtle hatchlings climbing out and crawling towards the shore!

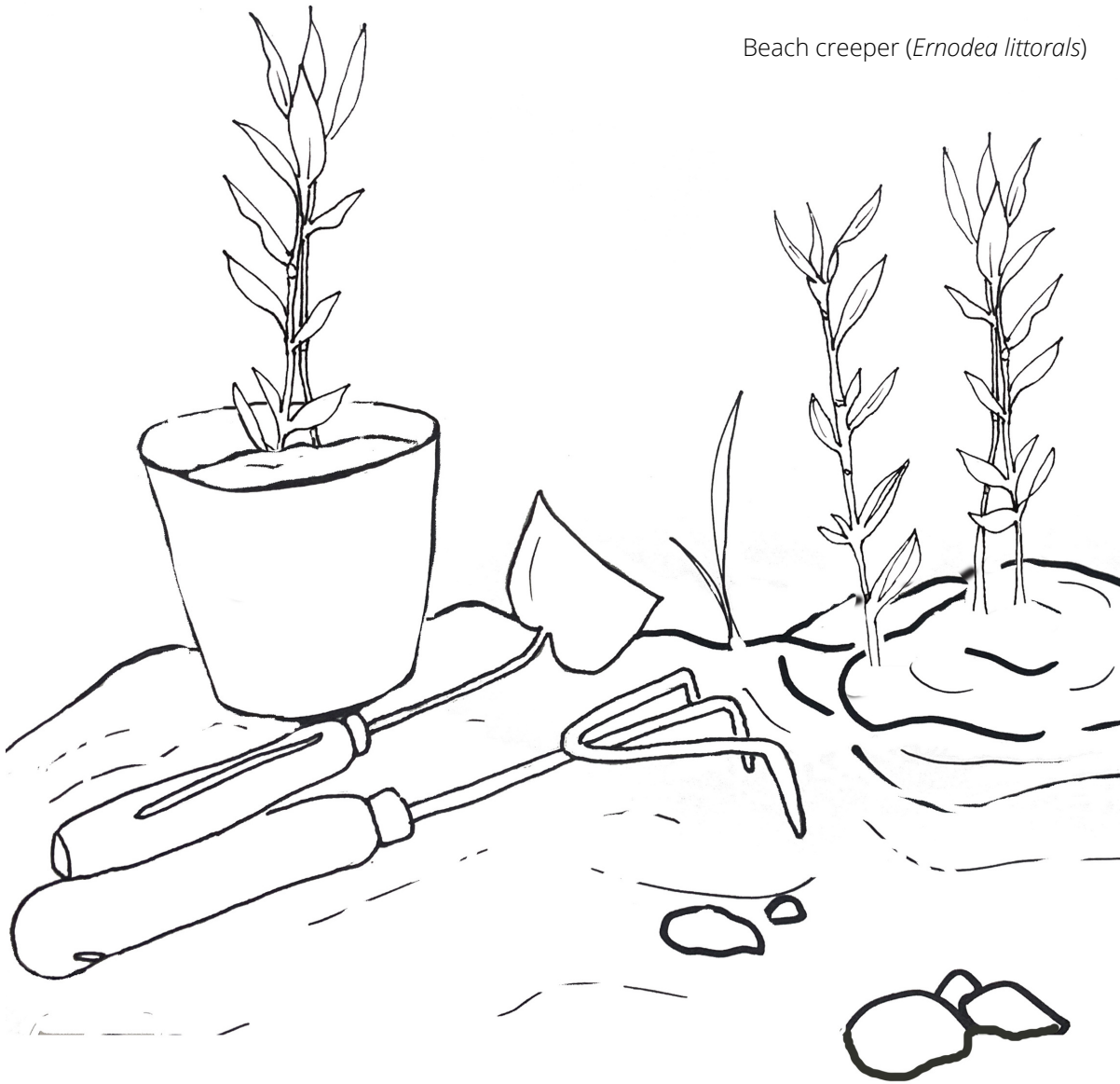




Did you know that there are over 200 plant species native to coastal ecosystems in Palm Beach County alone? Diverse dunes are healthy dunes and our first line of defense against erosion, sea level rise and catastrophic storms. Native diversity is threatened by invasive species, urbanization and pollution.

# YOU CAN HELP!

Beach creeper (*Ernodea littorals*)



YOU can help! Become part of the solution in conserving our dunes by planting a diversity of native plants, reducing single use plastic use and volunteering at a local beach cleanup or planting event.

# Thank You!



To contact The Institute for Regional Conservation, send us an email at [rgc@regionalconservation.org](mailto:rgc@regionalconservation.org).