

Ohlone Natural Resources Scavenger Hunt

Here in San Francisco where the Wild Oyster Project is headquartered, we are on Yelamu Ohlone land. Other parts of the Bay Area are the lands of various Ohlone, Coast Miwok and Bay Miwok indigenous groups whose sovereignty, lands, languages and culture were subsumed by Spanish and American colonization. The ancestors of modern day Ohlone, Coast Miwok and Bay Miwok people built large mounds where ceremonial gatherings took place, families built their homes, and deceased individuals were buried. Many shellmounds have since been paved over in recent years.

Archaeological digs in these shellmounds have revealed what the ancestors of modern day Native people have used as natural resources.

Find these plants and animals when you go on a nature scavenger hunt in local natural areas, and circle as you find them:

In the Bay:



Oysters, mussels and other bivalves – various types of shellfish had been eaten, and the shells were used to make currency, jewelry and tools.



Tule – a hollow aquatic grasslike plant whose starchy roots were eaten, and stems were used to build baskets, boats and houses.



Sandpiper – these and other shorebirds were eaten as a food source.

Around the Bay on dry land:



Soap plant – this versatile plant's starchy bulb was used as a food source after roasting, as soap, and to stun and catch fish, and the sturdy fibers of the plant were used to make a brush.



Coast live oak – the bitter tannins were drained away after the acorns were ground into flour. One tree can yield 200 pounds of acorns.



California blackberries – Himalayan blackberries are now a common sight, but the native California blackberries have wispiest thorns, whereas the Himalayan blackberries have much thicker thorns.



Western gray squirrel – they live in oak trees and feed on acorns, and served as a source of meat.