

Chapter 1 – California Natural History and the Role of Naturalists

1. What makes California a hotspot for biodiversity?
2. What characteristics set California apart from the rest of the North American continent?
3. What are the key factors driving the loss of biodiversity in California? Do you think it has gotten better or worse? Why?
4. Explain ecosystem services. Do you think it is useful to apply a monetary value for these services? Why?
5. What does the Endangered Species Act do and what are the problems that impede its effectiveness?
6. How are Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) practices similar to western naturalist practices? How are they different?
7. How have TEK practices influenced the landscape of our region of California?
8. Name 2 naturalists who influenced your thinking. How?
9. How do we use the Linnaean Classification system to describe species? What does it tell us about the relationships between organisms?

For discussion in class: Within the last 4 years the US EPA has been directed to include the economic costs of any new regulations. For example, with regards to the Endangered Species Act, the EPA *“proposed to remove the prohibition on the Services describing economic factors when listing, delisting, or reclassifying species as threatened or endangered.”*¹ What is your response to this?

Activity: Create an illustration of what you think a naturalist looks like. Don't worry about drawing skills; some basic characteristics is fine. We can share and discuss in class.

Suggested reading:

- *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* by M. Kat Anderson
- *Kumeyaay Ethnobotany: Shared Heritage of the Californias* by Michael Wilken-Robertson
- *Learning Native Wisdom: What Traditional Cultures Teach Us about Subsistence, Sustainability, and Spirituality* by Gary Holthaus
- *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

¹<https://www.brookings.edu/interactives/tracking-deregulation-in-the-trump-era/>