

## A few ways to save native flora and fauna from human impacts



Photo Kim Curiel

The beauty of wild mushrooms is evident at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area in Orinda.

**By Toris Jaeger, Naturalist, FONA**

As someone given the gift of nature awareness at a very young age and becoming a naturalist for the Wagner Ranch Nature Area some 45 years ago, I feel I must use my voice to speak for local flora and fauna.

The truth is that native wildlife is disappearing while the human population continues to increase and the reasons for the wildlife decline are human caused. Removing woodlands, forests for cattle grazing and planting crops, the use of pesticides, herbicides and rodenticides have polluted the land and the waterways.

The best way to protect biodiversity is to respect the lands of Indigenous peoples, who are the best guardians of the natural world and are an essential part of diversity.

The species at greater risk are those depending on woodlands and waterways.

We may not be able to save the starving manatees in Florida or the polar bears in Hudson Bay immediately but we can stop the use of the poisons making it challenging for them to survive.

The other resource we need to save is water.

You may not be able to invest in a gray water system or rain barrels but your irrigation system could be updated. You can receive landscape advice from the East Bay Municipal Utility District and they have grants available to purchase native plants and remove lawns.

The California Native Plant Society has a website ([Calscape.calscape.org](http://Calscape.calscape.org)) identifying which plants are best for your landscape. You can type in your address and find suggestions for plants.

Three local native plant nurseries are Native Here, Watershed Native Plant Nursery and Regional Botanic Garden.

A great book that can be of help is "Native plant gardening for birds, bees and butterflies, Northern California" by George Oxford Miller.

Of course, the most challenging issues are changing transportation to electric and powering our homes with solar energy instead of the use of fossil fuels.

I believe if you make the time to be in nature each day you will learn so much and want to protect it.

*"Look deeply into nature and you will understand everything better"* ~ Albert Einstein

*"If we save the Earth we save ourselves!"* ~ Friends of the Earth