



# TULARE TAPPINGS

## Tulare County Audubon Society

In the Heart of California's San Joaquin Valley  
Gateway to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

NOVEMBER 2009

November Program: Gary Lindquist

Oh yes, that's right, TCAS's own past field trip co-chair, Gary Lindquist, is coming to wow us with his new and updated, most excellent of slide presentations. His comprehensive knowledge of feathered facts will entertain and elucidate both the novice and expert birder. This upcoming slide presentation will also include some pictures and new facts from his latest travels, within the United States and beyond.

Gary has been with TCAS for about fifteen years, nine of which has been as the field trip co-chair. In the past, he has served on the TCAS Board of Directors, stepping down to focus additional time on his veterinary practice, the coordination of TCAS field trips, spending time with family, and adding to his extensive avian identification and photography skills.

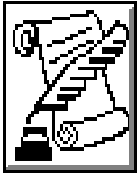
Please join us at the Tulare County Office of Education (at the corner of Woodland and Burrel Avenues in Visalia) on Friday, November 20, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. to learn about our feathered friends and to hear first hand about Gary's newest travels!

### Articles for Tappings

TCAS welcomes submissions of articles on bird sightings, conservation, and environmental issues, book reviews, and whatever else you think may be of interest. Please submit by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for the next month's newsletter. Articles in electronic format (disk, CD, or E-mail) are highly encouraged to save time and trees! Send to Jihadda Govan at P.O. Box 670, Delano, CA 93216, or E-mail to [jihadda@earthlink.net](mailto:jihadda@earthlink.net)

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## Monthly Message By: Jordan Wellwood

Our San Joaquin Valley is suffering, no question. Economic recession, drought, and the foreclosure crisis have hit this region with particular brutality. But to blame the hardship in the Valley on the Delta smelt or on the Endangered Species Act is not logical.

We are in the middle of an economic recession, and California (not just the Valley) is suffering from record unemployment levels. We are in the third consecutive year of lower-than-average precipitation. Demand for water is dangerously exceeding supply and even in wet years it has become difficult to meet these demands without totally destroying the ecological framework of our state's waterways.

A recent study by the University of the Pacific Business Forecasting Center showed that construction job losses driven by the foreclosure crisis are eight times greater than those created by water shortages. And although unemployment rates in the Valley have risen recently, over time they have fluctuated with no correlation to water deliveries.

It's true that water deliveries were reduced to some areas in the Valley for part of this year. In particular, to areas with junior water rights. In other words, to those who are promised less water in dry years. Deliveries were reduced largely as a result of low precipitation for three consecutive years, but also in part because of mandated water deliveries to help fish species in the Delta from going extinct.

There is a belief among some people in the Valley that water flowing down a river and to the ocean is wasted. That instead it should be entirely captured and diverted for our use. But if we treat our rivers this way, if we overlook the inherent value of a living river system, we are simply poor stewards of these resources.

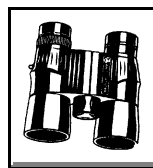
The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta sustains the most important estuary on the west coast of the Americas and provides drinking water for the majority of Californians. An entire food chain relies on conditions in the Delta, and by allowing conditions to continue to worsen we risk losing the entire system.

If our elected representatives make policy decisions based on propaganda instead of facts, both nature and people will lose out in the long run. Instead, we must insist on an approach to water policy that reflects the best science available to us.



## Return of the Cranes, Saturday, November 14, 2009

The staff of Kern and Pixley National Wildlife Refuges would like you to come and join us, Saturday, November 14, 2009, from 4:00 p.m - 7:00 p.m. at the Pixley NWR to welcome back the Sandhill Cranes and to enjoy the cool fall weather. On October 14, 2009, Refuge staff conducted the first crane survey of the winter, recording over 3,900 birds! Participants are invited to meet with Refuge staff at the Pixley parking lot at 4:00 p.m. for an opportunity to socialize, enjoy light refreshments that will be provided, and to learn more about current and upcoming undertakings at both refuges. We will then walk to the observation platform to watch the nightly Sandhill Crane fly-in to the refuge where they will roost for the evening. Please bring a flashlight, sturdy comfortable shoes, and layers, as it can be cloudy and cool at this time of year. For more information, please contact the Refuge at 661-725-2767 for more information, directions to Pixley Refuge, and to R.S.V.P. Hope to see you there!



## Christmas Bird Counts, December 2009/January 2010.

Well, well, well...TCAS friends and members, it's getting to be that time of the year again! Time for folks to mark their calendars to participate in one of many Christmas Bird Counts coming to a park, forest, city, or preserve near you.

Below, please find various local Christmas Bird Counts to participate in. To help with the costs associated with the planning of these counts, a fee of only \$5.00 is requested and can be provided to the coordinator the day of the count. To RSVP, contact the Christmas Bird Count coordinator for that specific count. For more information, or opportunity to participate in other Christmas Bird Counts in other counties and states, please visit Alison Sheehey's web site [natureali.org](http://natureali.org).

Springville Count- Saturday, December 19, 2009

Sequoia Count- Sunday, December 20, 2009

Kaweah Count- Saturday, December 26, 2009

The 110th annual Christmas Bird Count season has arrived! Three annual Christmas Bird Counts take place in Tulare County each December: the Springville Count on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> organized by Gary Lindquist; the Sequoia National Park Count on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> organized by Daniel Gammons; and the Kaweah Count organized by Rob Hansen.

Here is your chance to be a citizen scientist, helping to collect important data that is used to monitor the wintering populations of birds. **Everyone can participate regardless of your birding expertise.**

Our job is to count every bird in a 15 mile diameter circle in 24 hours. Obviously, the more birders, the more complete our data will be. We need more eyes, because every Scrub Jay and House Finch counts! Spotters, recorders, counters, and feeder-watchers are all needed. We would like to split our 15 mile diameter circle into many smaller sections, with each section being carefully covered by a team of 5 or more birders, and every team is led by an experienced birder. All members are encouraged to take part in this fun and worthwhile event. You may participate in all or part of the day as you wish.

Those participating in the counts rise early in the morning and arrive at a central destination where they are then assigned a certain territory to cover. To the greatest extent possible, all of the birds in the area are identified and counted. and the totals are turned into the leader during a count down dinner at the end of the day. Statistics from all bird counts around the country are used to monitor bird populations at the

national level.

The 37<sup>th</sup> Springville Count, which often produces over 140 species, covers Lake Success, Springville to Scicon and the Milo Fire Station, and to the edge of Balch Park and the Tule Indian Reservation. In year's past, with 30 participants, we were able to create some new territories to cover our circle better, which resulted in 146 species! We hope to have even more participants this year so we can finally reach the 150 species club. With enough participation, we have a chance to lead the nation in counting the most individuals for several oak woodland species.

Past years highlights included an Eurasian Wigeon, Eurasian Teal, Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Great-tailed Grackle, Northern Goshawk, Clark's Nutcracker, Hooded Merganser, Pacific Loon, Peregrine Falcon, Long-eared Owl, Common Poorwill, and Red-naped and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers! Anyone wishing to participate on this count should notify Gary Lindquist at 734-0833 or ([Felix6014@aol.com](mailto:Felix6014@aol.com)) or John Lockhart at 303-9706([j\\_f\\_lockhart@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j_f_lockhart@sbcglobal.net)). We will meet to assign territories at the marina parking lot at Lake Success on Hwy. 190 at 7:00 a.m. or earlier on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. After the count, we will share our results at a count-down dinner around 5:00 p.m. at the El Nuevo Mexicali 3 Restaurant at 35258 Hwy 190 in Springville.

This will be the tenth Sequoia Count. In year's past, nearly 40 volunteers spent a rainy day in beautiful Sequoia National Park counting 66 species!

Highlights on past Sequoia Counts include Blue Grouse, Northern Goshawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Mountain Quail, Peregrine Falcon, Varied Thrush, Pygmy Owl, American Dipper, and lots of bears! Please contact Daniel Gammons at 559-565-3124 to participate. Participants will meet at the Sequoia National Park headquarters building at Ash Mountain at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. The count-down dinner will be at Serrano's Restaurant in Three Rivers about 5:00 p.m.

The Kaweah Count produces over 120 bird species and it covers Bravo Lake, Lake Kaweah, Woodlake, Kaweah Oaks Preserve, Exeter, Rocky Hill, Dry Creek, and Yokohl Valley. To participate, please call Rob Hansen at 559-627-5473 or [hansenbio@comcast.net](mailto:hansenbio@comcast.net). Most groups will meet at the entrance to Kaweah Oaks Preserve at 7:00 a.m. on the day of the count. The count down dinner will be at Todd's Pizza Factory, 250 E. Antelope Ave. in Woodlake around 5:00 p.m.

Other nearby Christmas Bird Counts and their compilers include:

Saturday, December 19: Morro Bay (San Luis Obispo Co.) Tom Edell (805)995-1691 [tedell@aol.com](mailto:tedell@aol.com)

Monday, December 21: Buena Vista (Kern Co.)- Alison Sheehey, 760-378-2029

Sunday, December 27 : Lost Lake (Fresno Co.)- Kevin Enns-Rempel (559) 237-7260.

Saturday, January 2 : Carizzo Plain (San Luis Obispo Co.) Roger Zachary (805)466-6222 [rzachary@charter.net](mailto:rzachary@charter.net)

Saturday, January 2 : South Fork Valley (Kern Co.)- Denise LaBerteaux (760) 378-4278.

Sunday, January 3 : Kern River Valley (Kern Co.)- Alison Sheehey (760) 378-2029.

Plan to set aside a day or two now for the upcoming 107th Annual Christmas Bird Counts. This is a great opportunity to contribute to data used to document wintering populations.

#### Official Request

Greetings TCAS friends! At this time the board would like to ask for door prizes for our next meeting and beyond. Offers to help out can be forwarded to Joanne or Mary. Thanks in advance!

#### **Mourning Dove:** Part 1 of 3

The Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) is one of the most widely distributed and abundant birds in North America. Fall populations of this game bird in the United States are estimated to be slightly more than

400 million birds. In recent years, the annual harvest by hunting in the United States has been estimated at 18 to 25 million birds, similar to the harvest of all other migratory game birds combined. Mourning Doves are highly adaptable, occurring in most ecological types except marshes and heavily forested areas.

The Mourning Dove is a medium-sized member of the Columbidae family. While this family consists of approximately 300 species of doves and pigeons, only 8 species, including the mourning dove, are native to the United States. The Mourning Dove is approximately 11 to 13 inches in length, with a 17- to 19-inch wingspan, weighing on average 4.4 ounces. Mourning Doves have delicate bills and long, pointed tails. They are grayish-brown and buff in color, with black spots on wing coverts and near ears. The tail and wing feathers are gray, except for black-bordered white tips on the tail. Their eyes are brown and bordered by light blue bare skin, while legs and feet are a dull red. Males are slightly larger than females, and slightly more brightly colored. Males have more of a pinkish wash on the breast and a brighter blue-gray coloration on top of the head. Juveniles have light buff tips to their feathers, giving a scaly appearance.

Mourning Doves are monogamous and form strong pair bonds that persist during at least one nesting season. The breeding season is among the longest of all North American birds, with peak nesting activity occurring in late spring/early summer and a decline beginning in July. At the beginning of the breeding season, unpaired males devote considerable time to perch cooing and performing displays such as flapping/gliding flight to attract females. When performing the flapping/gliding flights, a male leaves his cooing perch with a vigorous and noisy flapping of his wings, rising up to 100 feet in the air. He then extends his wings and begins a long spiraling glide back down.

The perch coo is one of the few vocalizations that mourning doves make. It consists of one note followed by a higher one, then three to five notes held at great length, and it is used by males to court females. A female will respond to the perch

coo in one of three ways: she will fly away, initiating a pursuit chase; she will ignore the male and continue preening or feeding; or she will permit copulation and formation of the pair bond.

Once the pair bond is made, the male takes the initiative in nest-site selection. He selects small twigs and delivers them to the female, who arranges them in a nesting platform. Clutch size is small, usually two eggs per nest. Sometimes three or four eggs are found in a nest, due to “dump nesting” where a female lays her eggs in another’s nest. Eggs are white and nests are usually open, making them easy targets for predators, including blue jays, grackles, crows, house cats, red squirrels, and rat snakes. Both parents incubate the eggs; eggs hatch in 14 to 15 days. Repeated nesting in a season is necessary to maintain population levels, as average mortality rates can be as high as 58 percent per year for adults and 69 percent per year for juveniles. Generally, mourning doves can successfully raise two to three clutches per season in northern areas and five to six clutches per season in warmer areas.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- NOV 14      Return of the Cranes**  
Pixley Wildlife Refuge. Watch the evening fly-in of Sandhill Cranes
  
- NOV 20      Chapter Meeting and Program**  
Gary Lindquist, birder and Photographer, presents stunning slides of birds.
  
- NOV 21      Field Trip**  
Yokohl Valley Road led by John Lockhart. Another local annual favorite for fall birding, especially raptors. Join us and bring a friend
  
- DEC          No Program Meeting**
  
- DEC 19      Springville Bird Count**  
Led by Gary Lindquist. A favorite for oak woodland species.
  
- DEC 20      Sequoia Christmas Bird Count**  
Led by Daniel Gammons
  
- DEC 26      Kaweah Christmas Bird Count**  
Led by Rob Hansen