

Spring Tales Newsletter

Wetland Management



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Conserving California's wetlands takes a lot of work from a lot of people coming together. It is important to not only provide the space all these wetland species need to survive, but to make sure all populations are properly balanced.



Wetland Management

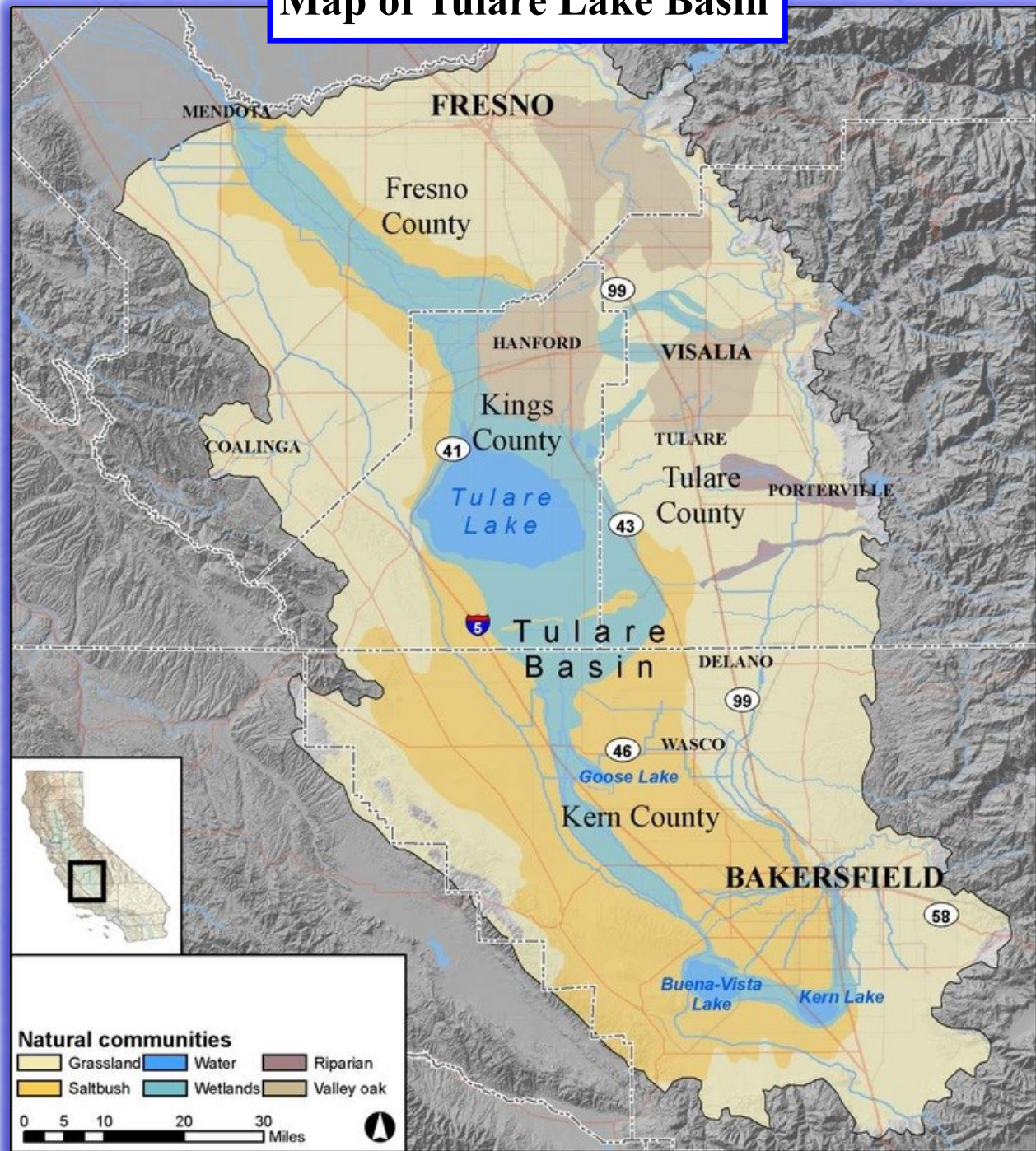
Wetland management is extremely important for conservation to many species of waterfowl and it takes a large team and effort to preserve our wetlands so that our waterfowl can succeed. Some waterfowl, such as our Northern Pintails (pictured below), migrate into the Central Valley of California as early as August, which can be a problem because there are not many wetlands around at this time for them to use. For example, the Tulare Lake Basin used to be over 500,000 acres of important wetlands, but now is mostly dry and only has about 25,000 acres flooded during the late winter. A lot of the water from the lake is used for farms, orchards and cities. This major loss of habitat from the Tulare Lake has shown us how important it is for wetland managers to come together across California to flood fields to provide waterfowl species with the habitat they need. There are many challenges though when talking about flooding fields during the summer or early fall (before November 1st). One major challenge from flooding early when it is still warm is that it provides a great place for mosquitoes, which is good for the animals that eat mosquitoes, but bad for people who might be getting bit and could possibly get sick from a disease one might be carrying. This is just one of many challenges we face when talking about wetland conservation and management and is why we all must work hard to do our part to help out where we can in order to provide waterfowl, such as the Northern Pintail, with the habitat they need in order to prosper.



Tulare Lake Basin

Trivia Question: **True** or **False**: Tulare Lake used to be known as the **largest** body of water west of the Mississippi. (Answer Below)

Map of Tulare Lake Basin

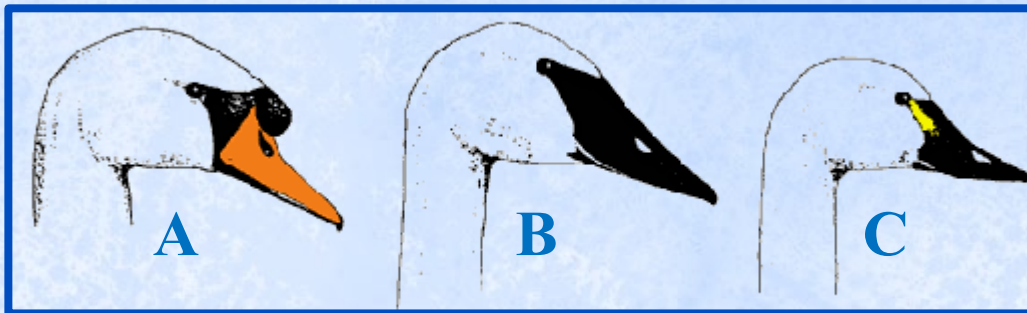


Answer: True. At one point Tulare Lake used to stretch over 650 square miles! Over the last 100 years though it has mostly been dry because of people building dams, levees and canals, as well as farmers using the water for irrigation.

California Swans

Hundreds of thousands of Swans migrate through California each year, most of which are Tundra Swans. You may find other species throughout California though, such as the Trumpeter or Mute swans. Trumpeter swans typically do not migrate down to California, but every once in a while a few do and can be spotted throughout California during the migration. Spotting the difference between a tundra and trumpeter swan can be difficult to the untrained eye. Trumpeter swans are larger than tundra swans and usually have an all black bill, whereas the tundra swans typically will have a yellow patch on the side. Mute swans on the other hand are very distinctive and are not native to the North America. They were brought here from Eurasia as pets in homes or at local parks because they looked nice. They have an orange bill with a fleshy black knob. Although they are very beautiful, mute swans can be extremely harmful to California habitats. Because they are so big, they need to eat a lot, taking precious food away from our native waterfowl species who depend on it. They also can be very aggressive, chasing ducks off nests as well as attacking ducks, geese and even people!

Can you spot which swan below is a tundra or trumpeter, mute?



ANSWERS A. Mute B. Trumpeter C. Tundra

For more information on our education programs or to get involved, contact Molly Maupin, Education Coordinator at (916) 648-1406 Ext. 102 or mmaupin@calwaterfowl.org

For more information and our calendar of events go to www.calwaterfowl.org