

## BIRD OF THE WEEK



### BLUE-GRAY TANAGER

*Thraupis episcopus* OTHER NAMES: Blue Tanager (arch.), Bluebird (C), *raxon tzul* (K)

Common throughout; Open Woodland; Pale Grayish blue body, with bright turquoise wings and tail

**Identification:** 6.5" (16.5 cm). Unmistakable pale grayish blue and darker on back, with bright turquoise blue wings and tail.

**Voice:** Call 1. Forceful *tseeu*; 2. High, thin, slightly squeaky *eeant*, singly or in a rapid irregular series; 3. In flight, a squeaky *see*. Song; forced series of alternating thin, higher pitched and squeaky lower pitched notes, *see suh see suh see suh see see see*.

**Habitat.** Midlevel to canopy; open areas with scattered trees, towns and villages, parks, orchards, forest edge, Frequents fruiting trees.

Status in Belize: Common resident on mainland, increasingly less common northward, becoming scarce in OW and CO. Occasionally seen on Ambergris Caye.

Jones, H. Lee (2003) *Birds of Belize*, University of Texas Press Austin

## Birding Field Trip



On Saturday, 24 October 2009 the Introduction to Bird Watching Class went on a field trip. The class gathered at the TIDE office at 6:00 am (birds are early risers) and proceeded by van to Boom Creek Road. First stop, the class practiced focusing on an iguana and sighted the Keel-billed Toucan (the national bird of Belize). I missed it (again) but am determined to see it for myself soon.

The field trip was led by instructor and TIDE Terrestrial Biologist, Elmar Requena, assisted by Environmental Education Outreach Coordinator, Norman Budna, and Development Director (me) Ruth McLean Dawson. We were very fortunate to be joined by birding experts Mario Muschamp, Manager of Payne's Creek National Park and TIDE Tour's Guide and birding enthusiast, Agapito Pop. Also along for the trip was Paul Etienne, IT and Media Manager for TIDE, testing out new video equipment. We made two more stops – one in a more marshy and forested area where we sighted a number of birds including a Great Egret, a green heron, a Pale-billed Woodpecker and some parakeets – the last stop was along the riverside in Boom Creek Village where we were fortunate to sight the Squirrel Cuckoo, the Yellow-crowned Night-heron, and the Scaly-breasted Hummingbird.

## Climate Change and Belize

Belize is small country making minor contributions to the emissions of global greenhouse gases and with a limited capacity to make a significant contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change.

Belize is at immense risk from the hazards associated with climate changes. A recent report **Belize and Climate Change: The Costs of Inaction** details the issues facing Belize if adaptive actions are not taken at all levels from government to local and is highly recommend reading. The report characterizes the vulnerability of three economic sectors in Belize – agriculture and fisheries, energy, and tourism.

There are definitely things we can do in Belize – educate ourselves about climate change and how it will impact our villages and towns and prepare plans for adaptation to changes. Belize can also recycle – only now is there legislation pending on recycling only glass. Looking at our dump sites, one can only imagine the impact if Belize were to recycle plastic. Solid waste is an issue – Belize is working on moving sites away from where they can contaminate ground waters but more needs to be done and more quickly.

TIDE is one of several organizations working on conservation issues including Environmental Education and Outreach. Our recent Youth Conservation Competition featured young people creatively educating the audience on the impacts of climate change. On 25 October 2009 in Punta Gorda in southern Belize, TIDE hosted Dr. Mark Brown from the United States to make a presentation focused on An Inconvenient Truth. In early November, TIDE hosted a Training of Trainers to provide environmental and other educator's information and tools to present information about climate change to their communities. TIDE is seeking funding to assist local communities in southern Belize to understand the potential and likely hazards of climate change and to prepare community based plans for adaptation. More needs to be done and we can all be a part of doing it!

## Looking at the TIDE Weekend Goals

**Our goals for the TIDE Weekend included**

- Raising awareness of the issue of climate change through the Youth Conservation Competition
- Involving young people in raising that awareness through the Youth Conservation Competition
- Providing an opportunity and outlet for local businesses through the Fish Fest
- Increasing public awareness about the work of TIDE through the entire TIDE Weekend
- Providing a fun venue for activities that celebrated the fishing heritage of southern Belize.



The vendors of food at the event all sold out, which is great! Waluco's also did outstanding business, selling out on some items, including drink. TIDE is very excited about this aspect of the event.

Key donors included the Protected Areas Conservation Trust, Love FM, Belize Hydroelectric Development and Management Company, the Belize Tourism Board and Tropic Air. There were numerous other donors including Garbutts' Marine Investment Company, Ltd., Romero's Charter Service, Atlantic Bank Limited, Bowen and Bowen Company Ltd., ACES, V-COMP Technologies, Wamalai, SMART, Alliance Bank of Belize Ltd., Provident Bank and Trust of Belize Ltd., Belize Bank Ltd., Caribbean Treasures Ltd., First Caribbean International Bank, Monkey River Retreat, Yong's Lumber Ltd., Fultec Systems Ltd., BEYA Suites, Wallace Supaul and Sons, Coral House Inn, King's Gas Stations, The Lodge at Big Falls, Arsenio Witz, Dick's Service Station, Marelco Ltd., Atlantic Insurance Company Limited, Amandala, Sea Sports Belize, Sagicor Capital Life Insurance Limited, Aquifer, Old Belize Adventure, RVJ's Creative Designs and Gift Shop, Marians Bayview Restaurant, Requena's Water Taxi, Belize Mills Ltd., Office Solutions, Mikados, Charlton's Inn, Duke Marine, Scotia Bank, Raju's Variety Store, Sonny's Records, Rosalma's Pharmacy, P.G. Shopping Center, Essential Business Services, Toledo Shopping Center, Waluco's Bar and Grill, Webster's Electrical and Refrigeration Services, Grace Kennedy, Frontier Inn, Grace's Restaurant and Hotel, James Brodies, MADISCO, Johnson Distributors, Marengo's Ice Cream Parlor.

**Thanks to all of our donors and to the volunteers and staff members who made the event possible. You are the best!**