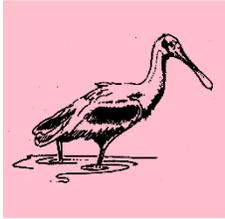


Monthly Meeting November 3, 2014

Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX



6:30 pm [Learning Corner](#): Birding in Ecuador by Nina Rach, Marcy Brown, and Pam Smolen

7:00 pm [Ornithology Group](#) (OG) Business Meeting

7:30 pm [Program](#): Birding in Ghana by Mike Austin

[Field Trip](#): Baytown Nature Center/San Jacinto Battleground State Park, November 16, 7:30 am

[Whistled Like a Bird](#)

Birding in Ecuador

By Nina Rach, Marcy Brown, and Pam Smolen

Nina, Marcy, and Pam will talk about the June OG trip to Ecuador. Be prepared to be overwhelmed by the number of species seen.

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Birding in Ghana

By Mike Austin

Mike will talk about his recent birding tour in West Africa. He used Tropical Birding guides since that company offered the best opportunity to see 300 birds in a two week period.

Biography: Mike is a retired physician living in Pearland. He was born in Ontario, Canada, but has lived on the upper Texas coast for 36 years. He has been birding for 57 years. Mike ran the North American Rare Bird Alert for Houston Audubon Society for 18 years. He has been president of the Piney Woods Wildlife Society and on the board of Houston Audubon Society. Currently, he is co-compiler of the Freeport Christmas Bird Count. Mike is an avid lister with a Texas list of 582, an ABA list of 823, and a life list that approaches 4000 species.

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Baytown Nature Center/San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Park, November 16, 7:30 am

Led by Stephan Lorenz

We will bird the Baytown Nature Center and then go to San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Park. Meet at the Baytown Nature Center entrance at 7:30. There is an admission fee of \$3.00. Bring water, insect repellent, hat, snacks. There is a lot of information about the Center

at:

<http://www.baytownnaturecenter.org/>

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Whistled Like a Brid

By Hart Rufe (hartrufe@gmail.com) (First Published April 1, 2014 by Hart Beat and St. Lucie Audubon Society with permission)



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks are one of the two species of Whistling Ducks seen in St. Lucie County

The book, *“Whistled Like a Bird,”* is the biography of arguably St Lucie County’s most famous person. The famous “whistler” was Dorothy Binney Putnam, heiress daughter of Edwin Binney, inventor and founder of Crayola Crayons, and the wife of George Putnam, the high powered force behind the Putnam publishing empire.

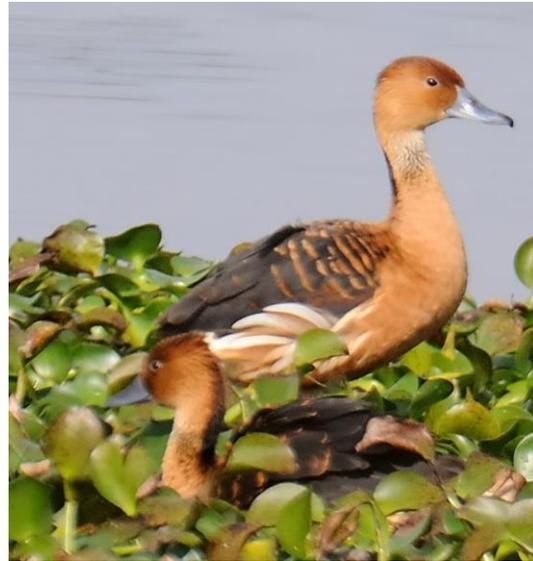
Dorothy was Amelia Earhart’s best friend. They traveled and flew together, and Amelia later dedicated her book to Dorothy. But Amelia also captivated Dorothy’s husband, when she fell in love with George while he was promoting her career as the leading aviatrix of her time. After divorcing Dorothy and marrying Amelia, George sponsored and promoted Amelia’s fateful flight across the Pacific Ocean, and spent unprecedented amounts of time and money searching for her, a mystery and search that continue even today. While one might expect that Dorothy’s divorce from George should have been devastating, it really was quite liberating for Dorothy, for like Anna in *“The King and I,”* she “had a love of her own,” - the 19- years-younger tutor of her son.

Dorothy came to Fort Pierce in 1930 after the divorce and built the magnificent estate, “Immokolee,” where she lived until her death in 1982, and where she loved birds and was able to whistle imitations of many different species. For the record, she was also a co-founder of the St Lucie Audubon Society. I can only wonder how Dorothy’s life story was missed by Hollywood.

Black-bellied Whistling Ducks



Fulvous Whistling Ducks



It is not known whether Dorothy ever whistled like a Black-bellied or Fulvous Whistling Duck, but it is probably unlikely, for both of those species are relatively recent arrivals in Florida.

Prior to 1968 the Black-bellied Whistling Duck was virtually unknown in Florida, and between that date and 2012, the species was regarded as very rare and localized. In 2006, when the small flock pictured here began to appear regularly at Dottie and Hank Hull's feeders in Port St Lucie, it was quite a thrilling event. Today, they can be found in many locations where suitable habitat exists, including back yard bird feeders along canals in residential areas throughout the Treasure Coast.

Fulvous Whistling Ducks were first found on Lake Okeechobee in Florida in 1965, and are more reclusive and not nearly as wide-spread or easy to find in Florida as Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. The Great Florida Birding Trail web site only lists a small hand full of locations for finding the species, but Jewel and I have found them most regularly at STA-5 in Hendry County, and at T. M. Goodwin WMA near Felsmere.

Both species are cavity nesters and were previously named "Tree-Ducks." The two, Black-bellied and Fulvous, are the only species of the Whistling Ducks found in North America (eight species worldwide), and all Whistling Ducks are placed in a separate subfamily of the *Anatidae*, the bird family of ducks, geese, and swans.

If you have the opportunity to go birding with a leader who has the talent to whistle like a bird to call them in to view, (and I have heard some extremely talented bird whistlers), I would wager that none can claim anywhere near the background life story that was lived by Dorothy Binney Putnam. I'll bet if she ever heard one, she could imitate the Whistling Ducks too.

To hear Fulvous Whistling Ducks whistle, click: <http://birds.audubon.org/birds/fulvous-whistling-duck>. To hear Black-bellied Whistling Ducks whistle, click: <http://birds.audubon.org/birds/black-bellied-whistling-duck>.

The author of "*Whistled Like a Bird*" is Sally Putnam Chapman, grand-daughter of Dorothy and George Putnam, and step-grand-daughter of Amelia Earhart. She continues to live in the magnificent estate built by Dorothy, and occasionally hosts birding field trips for the St Lucie Audubon Society. The main resource for her biographical work was the collection of Dorothy's very personal and private diaries that Dorothy gave to Sally before her death in 1982, and which covered the years from 1907-1961. A review of Sally's book can be found at: <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/1997/aug/08/unlocking-the-past-diaries-reveal-dorothy-binney/>. For a fascinating history of Dorothy's, and now, Sally's, "Immokolee" home, see: http://indianrivermag.com/LIVE/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=11.

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