

# CHIP NOTES

The Newsletter of  
The Birds of Vermont Museum



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Volume 23

Our Twenty-third Year

Fall 2009

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## AUSTRALIAN BIRD LIFE 2009 Lucille Greenough Lecture Series

Graeme Rhind, born in Western Australia, is spending August, September, and October in North America. The Birds of Vermont Museum is delighted to welcome him as our Visiting Woodcarver. In addition to wood carving, Graeme will be presenting a slide show on Australian Bird Life on September 12 at 6:30 pm.

The Australian bird watching community is active in enjoying birds, feeding birds, and there are numerous on-going research and monitoring projects. Bird observatories and reserves can be found throughout the country for bird watching. The current checklist, published in 2008, lists 867 species that can be found in Australia. The number of species continues to grow as birders travel to more and more remote locations.

Some birds found in Australia are birds that are found worldwide and can even be found in Vermont, such as the Mallard, Cattle Egret, Peregrine Falcon, and Osprey. Others are endemic to Australia and in some cases only found in certain regions. The country maintains a list of critically endangered, endangered, and vulnerable species, and work is being done to restore some of these populations.

The variety of birds is impressive. Australia's smallest bird is the 9 cm Weebill, while the largest is the flightless Emu which can be over 100 pounds. The Emu is the unofficial national bird.

Graeme volunteered at Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary to help with bird surveys, mammal trapping surveys, weed control, plus building furniture, and welding frames for solar arrays. Mornington is an Australian Wildlife Conservancy property in the North Kimberly in Western Australia. While there, he carved a Gouldian Finch to decorate the front of a cabinet in the restaurant.

For more information about Graeme, please see our spring edition of Chipnotes. Older issues can be downloaded from our website [www.birdsofvermont.org](http://www.birdsofvermont.org)



The Australian Pelican can be found on the inland and coastal waters of Australia. This species holds the record for the largest bird bill. Photograph by Ingrid Riga.

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**Interested in up-to-date information about the Museum?**

**Follow the Museum on Twitter and become a fan on Facebook.**

## GARAGE SALE AND USED BOOK SALE - OCTOBER 10, 2009

As you may remember we had a successful fund raising garage sale in 2007. This year we will combine the garage sale with a used book sale. It will be coordinated by our volunteer Stewart Kirkaldy who has had 47 years experience as co-founder, organizer, worker, and *Man Friday* at what has become a wildly successful annual Friends book fair in Westport, Mass. All books there are donated by local individuals and groups. It started in 1962 with 10 tables and less than a thousand books, and expanded by 2009 to cover 100 tables and all the benches in the Friends meeting house with 50,000 books. As Stewart tells it, "In 1962 when I was young and foolish a box of very old books arrived. We marked each for 25 cents and none of them sold. Fortunately, we left them for 1963 and a more sophisticated friend pointed out that one of them was a first edition of "Moby Dick." It was sold for more than the entire proceeds of the 1962 sale. A lesson was learned!"

We welcome donations of all items for our garage, especially books, but not clothing nor electronics. Most of us have homes that are probably cluttered with unused items, and have bookshelves full of mostly read books which others might want to read. (Also you may be able to find "new to you" books at our sale and stock up for your winter reading.)

Donations are welcome. Please call first (802-434-2167) to arrange a time for bringing in items. We are open daily from 10 - 4.



This summer we have had many visitors to the bird feeding area. It appears to have been a successful year for breeding Blue Jays, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Northern Cardinals, and Common Grackles, as there have been many juveniles helping themselves to seed and suet. They all cleared out when the Sharp-shinned hawk (above) flew in. They almost all scattered when a Bobcat stopped by for lunch on two different occasions!



An American Goldfinch pair perched on a piece of driftwood is being raffled off at the end of our 2009 season (October 31).

The carving was completed by Ingrid Brown Riga. Tickets are a dollar each or six for five dollars. To buy tickets call 802-434-2167 (VISA, Mastercard or American Express) or stop by the Museum.

## CARVING REPORT

Bob has spent much of the summer working on the Robert Frost Memorial Orchard (see page 7), but he has still managed to fit in a few hours of carving. He finished the Glossy Ibis which is now in the spring wetland diorama for visitors to enjoy. He is currently painting a Black-bellied Plover in fall plumage for the fall wetland diorama. There is already one in spring plumage for comparison.

In our last newsletter we reported that Ingrid had finished a Ring-billed Gull. Unfortunately the work of a wood carver is never done. The carving was placed next to the Herring Gull along with the other gulls. While both carvings were technically accurate in their measurements, the Herring Gull was created slightly smaller than average size, and the Ring-billed Gull was larger than average, giving the impression that both birds were of similar size. It was back to work! Using a power grinder, Ingrid gave the bird a diet. Grinding away all her detailed work, she reshaped the bird from rotund to petite. She is currently starting to paint and burn in the feathers once more. As Bob says in the introductory video, "It is a constantly changing thing, there are always problems, you never learn it all, there is always something to do."

Our visiting woodcarver, Graeme Rhind, can also be found working on a variety of different carving projects in the workshop most days except for Thursdays and Fridays.



Visiting woodcarver, Graeme Rhind, works on a small cardinal that will be turned into a magnet and be for sale in the Museum gift shop.

In mid August, Graeme and Ingrid attended a three-day carving workshop in Morrisville, Vermont, taught by David Tuttle. That same week the Museum participated at the 36th annual Green Mountain Wood Carvers show in Morrisville, and Ingrid taught soap carving there to kids of all ages.

Calling all wood carvers. Look for David Tuttle to be teaching a workshop at the Museum in 2010.



Sadly, one of our cherished volunteers, Priscilla Spear, passed away recently. Years ago she moved to Vermont after retiring from teaching school, and soon thereafter became a museum volunteer who loved to teach kids about the natural world, and about birds and their special role in the scheme of things. She was married to Calvin Spear who shared common ancestors with Bob, and their middle son looks like a younger Bob Spear. Bob and the museum were very special to Pris, who loved to volunteer here whenever she had the time, and she especially loved to work with visiting school groups.

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## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Weekly Carving Demonstrations

Every Saturday until October 31, 2009

**Time:** 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Appropriate for:** Everyone

**Fee:** Free with Museum admission

Come watch Ingrid Riga, Graeme Rhind, or Bob Spear at work.

### Lucille Greenough Lecture Series—Australian Bird Life

September 12, 2009

**Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**Appropriate for:** Adults and older children.

Visiting wood carver Graeme Rhind will do a slide presentation on Australian Bird Life. Doors open at 6:30 for wine and cheese; slide lecture begins at 7:00. Suggested donation \$10.



### Huntington Living Arts Festival

September 13, 2009

**Time:** 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

**Place:** Jubilee Farm, Main Road, Huntington Center

Visit the Museum's booth and Huntington artists. For more information visit:  
<http://www.huntingtonvalleyarts.net>.

### Shelburne Farms Harvest Festival

September 19, 2009

**Time:** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Place:** Shelburne Farms

Join Museum staff and many other wood carvers and handcrafters at a fun, family event at Shelburne Farms. Kids activities, live performers, horse-drawn cart rides, petting zoo, and food!

### Museum Day

September 26, 2009

**Time:** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Museum Day is a one-day event where participating museums and cultural institutions across the country offer fee admission to Smithsonian readers and Smithsonianmag.com visitors and friends who present a Museum Day admission card.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (CONTINUED)

### Dead Creek 8th Annual Wildlife Day

**October 3, 2009**

**Time:** 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

Visit the Museum's booth at Dead Creek Wildlife day in Addison, VT. Activities throughout the day.



### Open Studio and Garage and Used Book Sale

**October 10, 2009**

**Time:** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Free admission to the museum all day. Visit with and watch Green Mountain Wood Carvers in the workshop. Support the Museum while picking up treasures at our garage/used book sale!

### Big Sit

**October 12, 2008**

**Time:** Dawn to Dusk

This is the seventh year that the Birds of Vermont Museum is participating in *Birding's Most Sedentary Event*. We sit or stand in a 17-foot circle in the garden behind the Museum and record every bird species heard or seen. You may leave the circle often, but can't count birds unless you return. Lots of food, friends, and camaraderie, and hopefully about 30 species of birds! Dress warmly. This is a fundraiser to help support the Museum. Join us for bird watching or sponsor one of our sitters.

### Fall Birds of the Lake Champlain Basin

**October 24, 2009**

**Time:** 8:30.am - 1:30 p.m.

Join Jim Andrews, herpetologist and long-time Champlain Valley birder for another fun day exploring the Champlain Basin for migrating birds.



### Gift Shop Sale and Raffle Drawing

**October 31, 2009**

**Time:** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

On our last official day of the 2009 season we are having a sale. All non-consignment items are 20% for members and 10% off for non-members. A great time and place to start your holiday shopping. We will also be drawing our raffle prize winner on the 31st.

**For more events please see our [www.birdsofvermont.org/events/php](http://www.birdsofvermont.org/events/php)**

## THANK YOU

As always the Museum could not continue without the generosity of numerous individuals and organizations, In addition to our members and volunteers we would like to thank:

Chittenden Bank

Guys Farm and Yard

Northfield Saving Bank

Diane Dunn

Alison Wagner

Verde - VT Energy Research and Design



Participants of Diane Dunn's Nature Journaling workshop.

## 2009 ART CONTEST STILL ACCEPTING ENTRIES

### Art Contest Rules

This competition is open to persons aged 0 - 18 years old.

The theme of the contest is ***Birds, Birds, Birds.***

Entries on paper must be no larger than 8 ½" x 11", 3-D art must be smaller than 6" x 6" x 8".

One entry per person - name, age and contact information must be included on the back side.

Contestants can use any medium - (paint, pencils, crayons, markers, clay, wood, papier-mâché).

Entries must be received no later than September 30, 2009.

Please drop off or mail artwork to: Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Road, Huntington, Vermont 05462.

All pictures will be displayed at the museum throughout the 2009 season - enter early!

Winning entries will be displayed (with artist's approval) on the BOVM website!

First, second, and honorable mention prizes will be awarded in the following categories:

5 years and younger

6 – 8 years

9 – 13 years

14 – 18 years

Winners will be announced at the Museum at the Fall Festival, October 10, 2009.

### Thank you to our Sponsors:

Black Horse Fine Art Supply,

Artists' Mediums

Guys Farm and Yard

Pizza Putt

Some of the 2009 art contest entries



## ROBERT FROST GARDEN

“And I keep hearing from the cellar bin

The rumbling sound

Of load on load of apples coming in...”

From “After Apple Picking,” by Robert Frost

The Birds of Vermont Museum may soon be hearing the rumble of apples coming in, though on a smaller scale, thanks to the four descendents of Robert Frost’s own favorite apple trees which are now growing in the field across from the museum.

Bob purchased these special trees from the Robert Frost Stone House Museum in Shaftsbury, Vermont, which is selling them for a fund raising project. “Gale and I thought it would be nice to have a Robert Frost Memorial Orchard here,” said Bob, who has long been a fan of the New England poet.

To keep these literary trees protected from four-legged appreciation, Bob is currently building a fenced-in enclosure around them. True to Bob’s usual thoroughness, the enclosure will be made of mesh fencing held in place by seven foot high metal and wooden stakes, painted green. The enclosure, large enough to contain a small house, will not only protect the trees from the Sherman Hollow deer herd, but from any giraffes that might happen by.

The enclosure has a human-sized gateway leading into a mown lawn, complete with a bench, making a perfect spot to sit and contemplate the prestigious trees. Though the apples may not come with a poem inside, the quiet view of the green hillside and bluebird boxes should inspire many a budding poet to bear rosy fruit. And what better place to sit and relax than in an orchard, where, as Frost wrote, “My long two-pointed ladder’s sticking through a tree / Toward Heaven still.”

Written by Kari Jo Spear

Bob relaxes in the Robert Frost Memorial Orchard.

The varieties of trees planted are:  
*Snow Apple* - a dessert apple that ripens early.

*Lillian’s Crabapple* - with a fragrant flower and fruit suitable for jelly.

*Gulley’s Rhode Island Greening* - a tree that reverted to its wild rootstock

*Gulley’s Wild Patience* - a tree that requires patience as the fruit ripens late.

Information about the tree varieties provided by the Robert Frost Stone House in Shaftsbury, Vermont.



## SAVE THESE DATES

Sept 12	Australian Bird Life slide presentation
Sept 13	Huntington Living Arts Festival
Sept 26	Museum Day
Oct 3	Dead Creek Wildlife Day
Oct 10	Open Studio/Garage and Used Book Sale
Oct 11	Big Sit!
Oct 24	Birding the Basin
Oct 31	Gift Shop Sale

Weekly wood carving demonstrations until October 31

For additional information, or to register, please call 802-434-2167 or check out our website [www.birdsofvermont.org](http://www.birdsofvermont.org).

*The mission of the Birds of Vermont Museum is to provide education, to nurture an appreciation of the environment, and to study birds and their habitats using woodcarvings and other Museum resources.*

## Board of Trustees 2009

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## Museum Staff

Ingrid Riga, Curator  
Bob Spear, Founding Director  
Erin Talmage, Museum Director

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