

CHIP NOTES

The Newsletter of
The Birds of Vermont Museum



Volume 24

Our Twenty-fourth Year

May 2010

MIGRATORY BIRDS and the Power of Partnerships

Bird Day. What is it? Why is it? This a day for bird lovers, conservation groups, educators, and friends to celebrate and learn together. Individuals and organizations from northern Canada to southern Chile participate. This year's theme is *The Power of Partnerships*, reminding us that effective conservation comes from communication and cooperation across borders of many kinds, near and far.

Please join us on Saturday, May 22!

The Birds of Vermont Museum and the Green Mountain Audubon Center have again partnered to bring you a wide variety of special events.

There will be a live bird show, bird walks, live music, bird banding demonstrations, face painting, kids activities, wood carving demonstrations, and a childrens' bird program.

Special highlights:

7:00-8:30 Morning Warbler Walk
(Warbler Workshop Part 2. Details on page 4.)

11:00 Live Bird Show

12:00-2:00 Bernd Heinrich will sign your copies of his books. His new book, *The Nesting Season*, comes out May 15th. Call or email by May 14th if you would like to reserve a copy and pick it up at Bird Day.

10:00-11:00 and **12:00-1:00** Bird Identification Game with North Branch Nature Center.

2:30-3:15 All About Birds kids program with Audubon Vermont.

Kids: Mystery bird quests, colorable bookmarks, and scavenger hunts available all day. Enter the annual Art Contest.

Migratory Birds in Vermont

More than 350 birds have been documented in Vermont. Many of these are migratory birds, returning to their summer territories as early as February and as late as the end of May. Warblers generally arrive in late April and May.

To celebrate Bird Day this year, we've picked one of those species, the *American Redstart*, to highlight. What's your favorite migrant?

American Redstart, *Setophaga ruticilla*



American Redstart
woodcarving by Bob Spear

This is a small songbird in the warbler family. The male is boldly colored in black, orange (sometimes reddish orange) and white (or cream). The females and juveniles are gray and yellow with whiteish feathers on breast and belly. They

eat insects and often nest in second-growth forest trees. Find out more at your next visit.

Historical Note

We keep old *Chip Notes* here at the Museum. We browsed some old ones to see how we celebrated International Migratory Bird Day in the past. Did you know we've hosted Bird Day events since 1996?

International Migratory Bird Day was created in 1993, by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. After almost a decade under the direction of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Bird Day is now coordinated by the Environment for the Americas.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK

You might have noticed over the past few years an obnoxious increase in insect populations in the spring, most notably the infamous mosquito. You are not the only one, and if you want some help from a few avian friends look no further. The common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) is not actually a hawk but a nightjar species that has suffered a tremendous decline in numbers over the past 50 years. The nighthawk is present throughout the U.S. with virtually no habitat limitations, ranging as far north as Canada, and south sparsely throughout Central America. As the name suggests, the nighthawk emerges at night hunting insects and darting around lights. This makes small cities and towns ideal habitat, especially on gravel rooftops, which they prefer for nesting areas in the spring.

With the recent decline of nighthawk populations in Vermont (the species is of *Special Concern* in the state), there has been a significant effort to bring these birds back into the greater Burlington area. This effort has spawned the Burlington Nighthawk Project through the University of



Common Nighthawk woodcarving by Bob Spear

Vermont and the Rubenstein School of Natural Resources. The goal of this project is to educate the public and local communities of the ecological importance of this avian species and ultimately provide suitable nesting habitat to bring these birds back to the area! If you are interested in installing a nesting site on your roof or are simply interested in learning more about nighthawks visit www.burlingtonnighthawks.yolasite.com.

Article contributed by University of Vermont students Marshall Willis, Samantha Welch, James LaPierre, and Ryan Kyle

VISITING ARTIST

“My aim is not just to show people my work but also to make people realize the importance and beauty of these co-inhabitants of Planet Earth.”
— Arsh Rup Singh

Arsh Rup Singh’s photograph exhibit *Birds of Punjab* will be on display at the Museum during May, June, and July 2010. The exhibit is a small part of a larger collection of photographs from *Bird Fauna of Punjab - A Visual Treat*. Singh’s book, co-authored with his mother, Prof. Dr. Pushpinder Jai Rup, was written in the hope of having his book serve as a reference for future generations of Punjabi people. The government agreed, distributing copies into every Punjabi school.

We thank Arsh’s brother, Arvind Rup Singh, for coordinating this exhibit.

BOARD UPDATE

The Board welcomes our newest board member. Brian Valentine is a lawyer with Mickenberg, Dunn, Lachs, Hazel, and Smith, PLC. He is a Huntington resident.

WISH LIST

- ◆ 2010 Art Contest Prizes (\$300)
- ◆ Art Supplies for Special Events (\$250)
- ◆ Speakers and Dock for iPod (\$100)
- ◆ Sponsorship of Summer Intern (\$3000)
- ◆ Two Recording Hygrothermographs (\$1600)

We welcome your help. Checks may be made out to the *Birds of Vermont Museum* and mailed to us at 900 Sherman Hollow Road, Huntington, VT 05462. If you wish to donate an item on the list, please call us at 802-434-2167.

Thank you!

CARVING REPORT

Although Bob spent part of his winter enjoying the sunshine of Florida, the birds of Vermont were never far from his mind, or from his hands. While in Florida, he set up a temporary shop on his deck. Reports through the winter told of carving progress and birds seen while carving. (His current list for birds seen while carving in his normal workshop is zero!)

Bob was carving for the Fall Wetland Diorama. He finished pairs of Surf Scoters, White-winged Scoters, and Black Scoters. Scoters are most commonly seen on Lake Champlain but occasionally appear at inland lakes during the fall months.

The Surf Scoter is the least frequently seen scoter in Vermont.

Bob also completed a Buff-breasted Sandpiper and a Stilt Sandpiper. The Stilt Sandpiper and the Buff-breasted Sandpiper are rarely seen in fall migration. In Vermont they usually appear in the Champlain Valley, most probably in the Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area.

Dick Allen, a Museum board member and woodcarver, has been crafting for the Museum collection as well. He has almost completed a pair of Lesser Scaup, also known as Blue-bills. Dick also put legs and created a stand for an Indigo Bunting carved by Ingrid Riga. This bird will be raffled off at the close of our 2010 season. Raffle tickets are available at the Museum.



Surf Scoter (male) woodcarving by Bob Spear.



Black Scoter (male and female) woodcarvings by Bob Spear



White-winged Scoter (male and female) carved by Bob Spear



Lesser Scaup (male and female) wood carvings by Dick Allen.

“Snow Birds”, Another Sort of Migrant

Have you heard the term “Snow Birds”? What does it mean to you? Dark-eyed Juncos? Chickadees? Or folks like Bob Spear, Master Carver and Museum Founder?

Welcome back, Bob, and many others who have come home to roost from your winter haunts.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEEKLY EVENTS

Early Morning Bird Walks

Sundays from May 9 - June 13, 2010

Time: 7:00 am - 8:15 am

Join us for an early morning bird walk around the Birds of Vermont Museum property. We will finish the walk with bird-friendly coffee inside the Museum. Bring binoculars and good walking shoes.

Appropriate for adults and older children.

Fee: Free, donations accepted.

Sundays for Fledglings

Sundays from May 9 - June 13, 2010

Time: 2:00 pm - 2:45 pm

We will be hosting short activities for children every Sunday this season. We may hike, create, explore, carve, act, write, or investigate. Our topic will usually be birds...but amphibians, mammals, trees, ferns, forests, insects, and other natural community members may be included. Details will be posted at the museum and online each week.

Appropriate for children and beginners of all ages. Some activities will be tailored for different age groups, and we'll note that with the week's details.

Fee: \$2.50 per child for Museum members, \$6 for non-members. Adults accompanying a child are free (donations accepted). Fee includes non-member child's admission to museum (members visit for free).

Weekly Carving Demonstrations

Saturdays May 29, 2010—October 31, 2010

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Come watch a wood carving demonstration

Appropriate for Everyone.



Member Graeme Rhind carving a songbird



Anna Kaigle measuring her "wingspan."

Fee: Free with Museum admission.

Volunteer Work Day

May 1, 2010

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Help the Museum prepare for the season by cleaning trails, painting, and getting ready for our celebration of Birds on May 22nd.

Let us know you'll be helping! Lunch will be served at noon.

Can't make it on the 1st? Interested in volunteering on another day? Please call us at 802-434-2167.

Appropriate for adults and older children.

Fee: Free, of course!

Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival

May 2, 2010

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Visit the Museum's booth at this all-day wildlife festival in Rockingham, Vermont. Call 802-722-2255 or see www.audubon.org/chapter/vt/ascutney for details and directions.

Appropriate for Everyone.

Warbler Workshop, Part 1

May 20, 2010

Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Get introduced to or brush up on warbler identification by sight, sound, and habitat. Follow up this learning group session with Part 2 (an early morning walk) on May 22.

Appropriate for adults and older children.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (continued)

Fee: \$10 for members, \$20 for non-members. Please pre-register.

Warbler Workshop, Part 2

May 22, 2010

Time: 7:00 am - 9:00 am

Go observing Saturday morning with experienced birders Erin Talmage and Alison Wagner. You do not have to attend Part 1 to join the walk.

Appropriate for adults and older children.

Bird Day

a.k.a. International Migratory Bird Day

May 22, 2010

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Audubon Vermont and the Birds of Vermont Museum are celebrating the return of Migratory Birds in an all-day celebration! There will be a live bird show, bird walks, live music, bird banding demonstrations, kids activities, and a childrens' bird program.

Appropriate for Everyone.

Fee: Free! Donations accepted.

"Tweet" day

June 20, 2010

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Wondering about "Tweet" Day? Follow us on Twitter or become a fan on Facebook.

Butterfly Walk

July 11 2010

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Join Vermont naturalists and entomologists to experience Vermont's butterflies and insects up close. Our hosts are members of the Vermont Entomological Society. Bring binoculars and an insect net if you have one. Pack a lunch if you would like to stick around after the walk. If it is raining on the day of the walk, call the Museum 802-434-2167 to see if we have rescheduled.



Black Swallowtail caterpillar

Appropriate for anyone with an interest in Vermont' six-legged creatures.

Fee: Free!

A Different Sort of Tracking

August 7, 2010

Time: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Insects, spiders, and other small creatures leave behind all sorts of mysterious objects and patterns as they go about their lives. Naturalist Charley Eiseman has compiled the answers to many of these riddles in his new field guide, *Tracks & Sign of Insects and Other Invertebrates*. Join him for a short slide show followed by a walk to explore curiosities like spider egg sacs, plant galls, slug toothmarks, and more!



Singing to Bob Spear on his half birthday in 2009.

Appropriate for adults and older children.

Fee: Suggested donation \$15, which includes admission to the Museum.

Bob's 90½th Birthday Celebration

August 22, 2010

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Join us for an old fashioned ice cream social to help Bob celebrate another glorious year.

Appropriate for Everyone.

Fee: Museum admission (free for members)

Additional late-summer and fall programs

- ◆ Birds of Panama with Kimberly Sultze
- ◆ Bears and their Natural History with Sue Morse
- ◆ Sketching Birds
- ◆ Nature Journaling
- ◆ Fall Festival and annual used book sale

Changes and additions will be posted at

NEW STAFF, NEW JOBS

The Birds of Vermont Museum is pleased to announce the hiring of two new staff members. Two part-time positions were created after the departure of Ingrid Riga (see our last newsletter). Ingrid had been with the museum for over 10 years and left some big shoes to fill.

The search committee (Executive Director Erin Talmage, Board Chair Shirley Johnson and Board Treasurer Dann Van Der Vliet) looked for individuals who represented a great fit for the museum, possessed the necessary skills for the positions, and would be flexible with the needs of the museum and its seasonal schedule.

The Program Coordinator is responsible for managing the museum's membership database, helping with publicity and PR, managing and growing the museum's programs, coordinating the museum's web presence, and scheduling special events such as the Lois Greenough Speaker's series. We hired Kirsten Talmage, or "Kir" as she likes to be called, for this position. She was chosen from a very strong field of individuals. Her background includes a MS in Environmental Studies and experience as an environmental educator for organizations in Ohio, Montana, and Vermont. She also has experience in marketing, database management, and website development. In addition, over the past six years Kir has volunteered for the Museum, worked as a temporary employee, and served as the Museum's webmistress. Under that role she updated the museum website (www.birdsofvermont.com) and set up the Museum's Facebook and Twitter pages (<http://www.facebook.com/BirdsOfVermont>, <http://twitter.com/BirdsOfVermont>), and is working on an online gift shop. Through Facebook and Twitter, the Birds of Vermont now reaches nearly 1000 friends and followers with timely updates on programs and events.

Kir began working in March and has been instrumental in getting programs lined up for the coming season, which begins when the museum opens on May 1, 2010.



Allison and Kirsten join the Museum staff

Also chosen from a very strong group of candidates, Allison Gergely joins the staff as Museum Aide. When visiting the Museum this summer it is likely Allison's smiling face will be here to greet you. She will be welcoming the public, working with school groups, and helping with numerous projects. In her spare time, she may be found outside checking, marking, and supervising the maintenance of our trail network. She began work in April.

Allison brings with her a wealth of knowledge about non-profits, volunteering, and teaching. She has a MS in Ecological Teaching and Learning and is a certified Science and Math teacher. Her volunteer work includes planting trees, monitoring rivers, and working as an interpreter and presenter at the ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain.

Allison and her family moved to Hanksville (Vermont) in 2007; her ties to Vermont date back more than 35 years.

Please be sure to stop by and say hello.

The Museum also welcomes new interns. We will write more about them and their accomplishments in our late summer newsletter.

Contributed by Dann Van Der Vliet, Board Treasurer

VOLUNTEERS

Hooray for volunteers! In addition to helping in the gift shop, with school groups, cleaning and organizing, counting birds, and many other tasks during our 2009 season they pitched in during the winter months too. Their hard work has given us a much-needed facelift, as they dusted, scrubbed, and painted the main gathering areas by the entrance, near the Raptor Gallery and surrounding the Viewing Window. Intrepid souls ascended ladders to paint the high slopes of our ceiling.

Thank you all.



Dann Van Der Vliet prepping for painting

BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS: 2010 Art Contest Call for Entries

We once again invite children and students of art to submit entries to our Art Contest. Entrants must be 18 years old or younger. Entries may be in any medium; flat work should be not larger than 8½" x 11"; 3-dimensional works should be 6" x 6" x 8" or smaller. Please bring entries to the Museum and include your name, address, and age on the back or (for 3-D works) on a card with the artwork's information.

We will display entries as we receive them!



Jeff Landa presents Northeast Delta Dental's support to Erin Talmage, Executive Director, and Shirley Johnson, Board of Trustees Chair

THANK YOU

We'd like to extend a special thank you for recent and ongoing support from:

- ◆ The family and friends of Sylvia Spear
- ◆ Artists' Mediums, Williston
- ◆ Delta Dental
- ◆ Guy's Farm and Yard, Williston
- ◆ Hardy Plant Club of Vermont
- ◆ Vermont Community Foundation
- ◆ Cedric Alexander
- ◆ Carol Dell
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- ◆ Paula and Michael Dill
- ◆ Robert Hurd
- ◆ Paul Hurd
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- ◆ Marie Losh
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- ◆ Dann and Susan Van Der Vliet
- ◆ Barbara Walling
- ◆ Roland Wilbur

Looking for a unique gift for Mother's Day, Father's Day, graduation, Grandparents' Day, weddings?

Sponsor a bird case.

Call to find out more, 802-434-2167.

SAVE THESE DATES

- May 20 Warbler Workshop, Part 1
May 22 Warbler Workshop, Part 2
and Bird Day!
June 20 "Tweet" Day
July 11 Butterfly Walk
August 7 A Different Sort of Tracking
August 22 Bob's Half-Birthday Party

Don't forget our weekly walks, demonstrations, and activities for beginners and children. For more information, please call 802-434-2167 or visit our website 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.

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Museum Staff

Bob Spear, Founding Director
Erin Talmage, Executive Director
Allison Gergely, Museum Aid
Kirsten Talmage, Program Coordinator

Thanks to Northeast Delta Dental for supporting our newsletter.



Northeast Delta Dental

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