

CHIP NOTES

The Newsletter of
The Birds of Vermont Museum



Volume 20

Our Twentieth Year

Spring 2006

MUSEUM TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY AND YOU ARE INVITED!

The Birds of Vermont Museum and Audubon Vermont are sponsoring a special open house on May 13th celebrating International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). IMBD is an annual celebration of one of the most important events in the life of a migratory bird – its journey between winter and summer homes. There are hundreds of birds that return to Vermont each spring from their winter habitats, and the events for May 13th are planned to view birds and learn about their natural habitats. A variety of interesting programs and walks are planned and the schedule is listed below. For additional information, call the Museum at 434-2167 or Audubon at 434-3068.

All events, including Museum admission, are free and open to the public.

- 6:30 – 8:30 am Important Bird Area (IBA) bird monitoring walk. Begins and ends at Birds of Vermont Museum.
- 8:00 – 11:00 am Bird Banding with Mark LaBarr, Conservation Biologist
- 9:30 – 10:30 am Family Bird/Nature Walk with Kim Guertin, Education Director
- 11:00 – 12:30 pm Live Bird Show with Carol Winfield, Wildlife Rehabilitator
- 11:00 – 4:00 pm Crafts for Kids

BRING YOUR LUNCH – PICNIC TABLES AVAILABLE

- 1:30 – 2:30 pm Family Bird/Nature Walk with
Kim Guertin, Education Director
- 1:30 – 2:30 pm Adult Bird Walk with Jim
Osborn, Bird Expert
- 2:45 – 3:45 pm Bald Eagles in Vermont with
Amy Alfieri, Hack Site
Coordinator.

Off Site Program—Birding in the Boreal Forest. Call Audubon Vermont at 434-3068 for more information.

ALL DAY EXHIBITS:
Artwork of the boreal forest.



Carol Winfield and Zachary the Turkey Vulture.
Photograph by Paul Hurd.

THE BOREAL FOREST!

In 1993 the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center initiated International Migratory Bird Day. This day educates and celebrates the spectacular migration of birds as they move from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds. Festivals celebrating migratory birds are held in Canada, United States, Mexico, and Central America. Every year, the International Migratory Bird Day has a theme highlighting an issue pertinent to migratory birds.

This year's theme is boreal forests. The North American Boreal Forest stretches from interior Alaska to the Atlantic Ocean. More intact forest is found in Canada than in the entire Brazilian Amazon. The boreal forest is home to at least 298 species, from waterfowl to warblers. For Black-backed Warblers and Northern Shrikes, more than half of their entire populations are found in these northern forests. The boreal forest is often called *The Bird Nursery of the North*. Up to a billion sparrows and 2 billion warblers hatch each year in these forests!¹

The boreal forests face threats from fossil fuel extraction and from the creation of wood and paper products. Paper products generally go to produce newspapers, promotional mailings, and catalogs—what most of us call junk mail—an average of 59 catalogs a year per US citizen!¹ Five acres of Canada's boreal forests are cut every minute for wood and wood products to be consumed in the United States.² In addition to the birds, the boreal forest is home to mammals, myriad amphibians, and a plethora of insects. In addition, the forest plays an important role as global carbon repository.

Examples of boreal habitat, with its spruce-fir forests and mosaic of bogs and wetlands, can be found in some of Vermont's Important Bird Areas. Victory Bog Basin and Nulhegan Basin in Victory are both places where a birder might see species like Spruce Grouse, Gray Jay, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Boreal Chickadee. In the winter, it might be possible to see Purple Finch, White-winged Crossbill, and Pine Siskin.³



The Spruce Grouse is an endangered species in Vermont. One of the best places to find them is in the Nulhegan Basin IBA. Spruce Grouse wood carving by Bob Spear.

Come to International Migratory Bird day here at the museum and learn more about birds and the boreal forest. We will have displays, speakers, kids' activities, and a boreal bird scavenger hunt. In addition, Bridget Butler from Audubon Vermont is leading a boreal birding trip to the Northeast Kingdom. If you are interested in, or would like to register for this program, please call Audubon Vermont at 802-434-3068.

References and websites of interest

- ¹ Tolme, P. 2004. The Bountiful Boreal National Wildlife October/November 2004 p. 22-30
- ² Hull, J. 2005. The final frontier by Jeff Hull Audubon September-October 2005 p. 46
- ³ Murin, T. and B. Pfeiffer. 2002. Birdwatching in Vermont. University Press of New England. 191 pp.

International Migratory Bird Day. No date. On-line: <http://www.birdday.org> [last accessed 11 April 2006]

Welcome to the Boreal Songbird Initiative. 2005. On-line: <http://www.borealbirds.org> [last accessed 10 April 2006]

Audubon Issues and Actions. 2005 On-line: <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/boreal.html> [last accessed 10 April 2006]

Too Much Junk Mail?

Save birds and reduce the clutter in you house by placing your name and address on a do not mail list. Information is available at
<http://www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist>

BRYAN PFEIFFER TO TALK ABOUT IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER

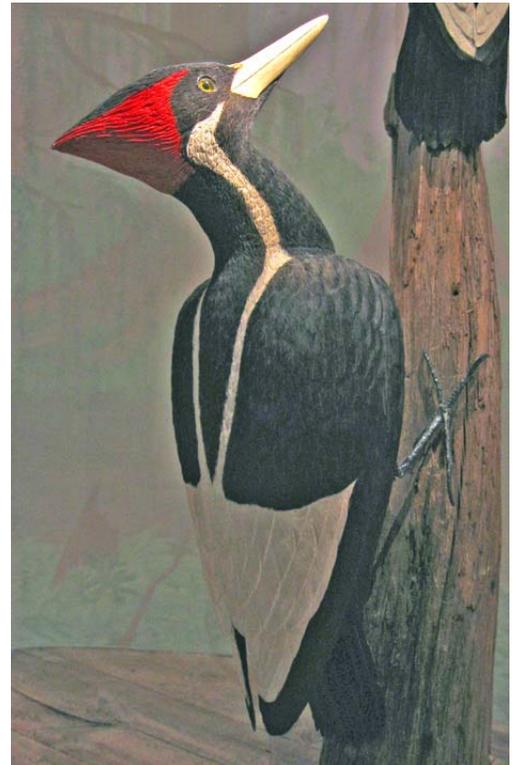
It has become one of the great mysteries in all of bird watching. Did the Ivory-billed Woodpecker actually cheat extinction? Was it recently discovered in the remote bottomland swamps of Arkansas? Or is the fuzzy video of a large black and white woodpecker nothing more than the common Pileated Woodpecker? Vermont naturalist and noted author, Bryan Pfeiffer, went to Arkansas to see for himself. Undaunted by prospects of venomous snakes, waist-deep muck and clouds of mosquitoes, Bryan and a team of Vermont biologists spent two weeks searching the Arkansas swamps for Ivory-billed. You'll see what they found during Bryan's engaging slide lecture. Preceding the lecture, enjoy wine and cheese with Bryan and Bob Spear, founder of the Birds of Vermont Museum.

Date: July 7

Time: 6:30 – 7:00pm Wine and Cheese
7:00 – 8:30pm Ivory-billed Slide Lecture

Fee: Members: \$15.00

Non-Members: \$20.00



Male Ivory-billed Woodpecker carving by Bob Spear.

WILDLIFE SAMPLER WITH SUE MORSE FROM KEEPING TRACK

Join nationally recognized naturalist and habitat specialist Sue Morse, the founder of Keeping Track, for two marvelous programs. Sue has thirty years of experience tracking and interpreting wildlife uses of habitat. She has focused her research on cougar, bobcat, black bear, and Canada lynx.

Program # 1 Slide Show and Discussion

Date/Time: September 14 6:30 – 8:00pm

Location: Birds of Vermont Museum

Cost: \$10.00 (Both programs only \$50)

Program # 2 Day at Wolf Run entitled Bobcats, Bears, Moose and More with fabulous foliage! A daylong outing with Sue Morse at Wolf Run at the Northwestern Flank of the Green Mountains. Bring your own lunch.

Date/Time: October 8 9:00 – 5:00pm

Location: Wolf Run

Cost: \$50.00 (Both programs only \$50)

For additional information, or to register, call the Museum at 434-2167.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

International Migratory Bird Day

May 13, 2006

8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Free admission

See page one for full description.

Going Batty – Bats, Bats, and More Bats

May 20, 2006

2:30 p.m.

Free program with Museum admission.

Kids as well as adults will enjoy Barry Genzlinger's bat program, a lively power point presentation with interesting props and lots of great information. Barry's bat houses and kits will be for sale.

Themed Nature Walks

Sundays, starting May 21—October 31

2 p.m.

Museum Admission + Walk: adults \$8, kids \$4.

Walk only: members \$3, kids \$1.50; non-members \$5, kids \$2.50

Bird Nests and Habitats (May), Pond Life (June), Wildlife and their Young (July), Wildflowers (August), Trees (September), Getting Ready For Winter (October).

Monthly Monitoring Bird Walks

May 29, June 26, July 31, August 28, September 25 6:30 am – 8:30 am

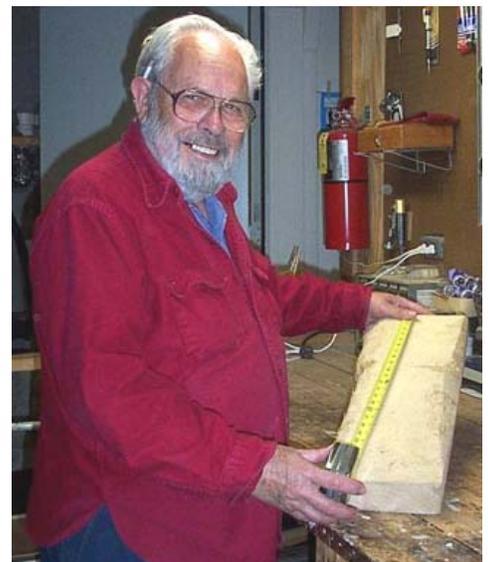
Donations appreciated.

The Birds of Vermont Museum and the Green Mountain Audubon Center make up one of Vermont's Important Bird Areas (IBA). Monthly monitoring walks happen on both properties (see <http://vt.audubon.org/eventsCalendar.html>). These monthly monitoring walks are an enjoyable way to start your week. Appropriate for Adults (beginning Birders)

Members Only Event—World Premier—Bob Spear—The Movie

June 22, 2006 6 – 7 p.m. Wine & Cheese 7 – 8 p.m. Movie

Museum members are invited to enjoy wine and cheese with Bob Spear and Museum Staff, followed by a premier showing of a one hour biographical movie about Bob Spear, created by Philip Fass.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Neighbors' Day

June 25, 2006

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Free Admission for Hinesburg, Huntington, and Richmond Residents.

Bryan Pfeiffer to talk about Ivory-billed Woodpecker

July 7, 2006

6:30 - 7:00: Wine and Cheese

7:00 – 8:30: Slide Lecture

Members \$15

Non-Members \$20

See description on Page 3

Green Mountain Wood Carvers Exhibit, Morrisville

August 19, 2006

9:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Come visit dozens of wood carvers from the New England area. See all the amazing things one can do with a piece of wood and a knife. Lots of carvings for sale! Venders will be selling carving supplies, such as wood, knives, books, paints, and brushes.

Members Only Event

August 20, 2006

2 – 4 p.m.

Bob Spear's 86 ½ Birthday, Pond Walk, and Ice Cream Social. Come join us for a walk to our pond, and another birthday celebration for Founding Director Bob Spear. We'll have ice cream and plenty of sunshine.

Wildlife Sampler with Sue Morse from Keeping Track

September 14

6:30 – 8:00pm

October 8

9:00 – 5:00pm

See description on Page.3



Clouded Sulphur (*Colias philodice*) on Cow
Vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Photograph by
Erin Talmage.

Fall Festival

October 14, 2006

10 – 4 p.m.

Live music, bird/nature walks, lectures, kids' activities, live raptor show.

ENCOURAGING EAGLES

The first time I saw a wild Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), I cried. Perhaps this is not surprising, since I'd grown up in Vermont, reading *Ranger Rick* in the 1970s when DDT was the big threat, putting the eagles on the endangered species list. Somehow, as a child, I'd come to believe I'd never get to see a wild Bald Eagle.

I am delighted to be wrong.

The Bald Eagle's federal status is no longer endangered, but threatened, and it may come off the Federal endangered species list entirely this year (2006). In Vermont, however, we can't yet do that, in part because we have no breeding birds here. The Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative aims to change that by "hacking" bald eagles. Forget what you know about computers, though. This is all about helping young Bald Eagles decide that Vermont will be a good place to be when they grow up.

And there's no good reason they shouldn't decide this, according to Amy Alfieri, the Hack Site Coordinator. Amy, former Museum volunteer, Museum intern, and Huntington resident, cares for young eagles down at Dead Creek Wildlife Refuge in Addison, Vermont. She has help from over 60 volunteers, and people from the partnering organizations. Over the course of the past two summers, they've fed, observed, protected, and freed 19 juvenile eagles. This year, she expects another 10-18 young birds will arrive at Dead Creek.



The young eagles arrive at about 6-8 weeks of age, and are freed when they fledge, at about 12 weeks. Why then? It turns out that eagles are likely to nest and breed within 100 miles of where they fledge, habitat permitting—and Vermont's eagle habitats permit. Our best eagle habitats are up and down the Lake Champlain region, and the Connecticut River Valley, as well as some good spots around Lake Memphremagog and other large bodies of water. We have nesting sites in use already... but no breeders yet. Yet they breed in both New York and New Hampshire!

It will take a few years before we know whether this aspect of the Initiative has succeeded, as Bald Eagles won't breed until they are adults in their 4th or 5th year. The first ones from this initiative will be 5 in 2009. Other birds from neighboring states might still beat them to the first egg. That'd be fine; we want 30 breeding pairs before taking the eagles off Vermont's endangered species list, so there's plenty of room for the hacked birds to take their places.

In the meantime, other goals of the program are coming to fruition: effective partnering of nonprofits, public utilities, and governmental entities; and excellent outreach to and education of Vermonters. The program is the joint effort of the National Wildlife Federation, Outreach for Stewardship, US and Vermont Fish & Wildlife agencies, Central Vermont Public Service, Jim Jeffords' office, and Vermont volunteers. Together they've arranged for the eagles, their care, feeding, transportation, and more; provided training and opportunities for citizens involvement; provided brochures and website materials; given talks and demonstrations; been the focus of local television news shows; collected eagle sighting information; and much more.

If you'd like to see the eagles then head over to Dead Creek. There's a viewing area just off Route 17, with an excellent view of the hack tower. You'll need your binoculars, of course. The first batch of young birds will be arriving sometime in early May. Some 6 weeks later, and you may catch sight of a juvenile

EAGLES (Continued)

bird—or several—in and around the area. If you do, watch for the bands: a US Fish & Wildlife band on one leg, and an Initiative band (white on black) on the other. If you're very lucky, you might spot a bird with a radio transmitter as well. This year the first 5 birds will be fitted with bird backpacks for further tracking and research.

For more information and volunteer opportunities (especially if you like to fish!) contact Amy at (802) 343-7454. She will be giving a talk at the Museum on International Migratory Bird Day, and is available to speak to other groups as well.

Additional information:

CVPS. No date. Bald Eagles: Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative. On-line: <http://www.cvps.com/eagles/> [last accessed 9 April 2006] Check out the webcam, beginning in May! This site is full of useful information.

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. No date. Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative. On-line presentation: <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/fw/fwhome/presentations/eagle/index.html> [last accessed 9 April 2006]

Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2003. All About Birds: Bird Guide: Bald Eagle. On-line: http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Bald_Eagle.html [last accessed 9 April 2006]

Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife: Nongame and Natural Heritage Program. 2005. Endangered and Threatened Animals of Vermont. Factsheet. Also on-line: http://www.anr.state.vt.us/fw/fwhome/library/Reports_and_documents/Nongame_and_Natural_Heritage/Rare_Threatened_and_Endangered_Species/Endangered_and_Threatened_Animals_of_Vermont-April_2005.pdf

This article was written by guest columnist and museum volunteer –Kirsten Talmage

EXTRA MONEY?

Are you looking for an unusual gift for that special someone? Do you have extra money to go to a good cause? Consider sponsoring an individual bird or an entire diorama. Please contact Dave Johnson at the Museum at 434-2167 for more information.

Thanks!

THANK YOU

A very special thank you to the following business for their generous support of our work to educate children and adults about the environment through the study of birds and their habitats.

Chittenden Bank

- For printing our brochures and for a grant to expand our work with children.

Key Bank

- For general support.

Delta Dental

- For support of the newsletter and for general support.

Chimney Sweep Fireplace Shop

- For the donation of a child-gate.

Northfield Savings Bank

- For general support.

Benjamin Moore Paint

- For support of our educational programs.

RAFFLE BIRD WON BY VERMONT

The raffle bird, carved by Master Carver Bob Spear in 2005, was won by Charlotte resident Tim Davis. The bird was a Hairy Woodpecker, and Eric was thrilled to receive such a wonderful treasure. Bob Spear does not sell his carvings, and carves one bird per year which is raffled off to a lucky winner.

Bob Spear has now carved 253 species of birds representing 475 carvings at the Museum. Be sure to visit the Museum in 2006 to view the newest carvings in the Wetland Diorama.



SAVE THESE DATES

- May 13** International Migratory Bird Day
Events all day 6:30—4:00 p.m.
- May 20** Going Batty—Bats, Bats, and More Bats
2:30 p.m.
- June 22** Bob Spear—The Movie
6:00 p.m.
- July 7** Ivory-billed Woodpecker talk
6:30 p.m.

For additional information, or to register, please call
434-2167 or check out our website
www.birdsofvermont.org.

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Thanks to Northeast Delta Dental for
supporting our newsletter.



*The mission of the Birds of Vermont
Museum is to educate children and adults
about the environment through the study
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