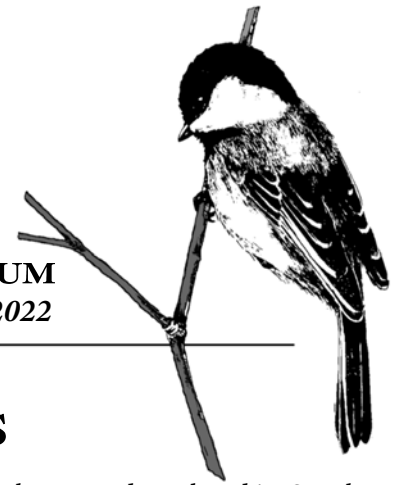


Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM
Volume 36

Fall-Winter 2022



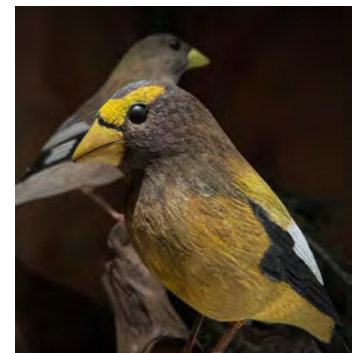
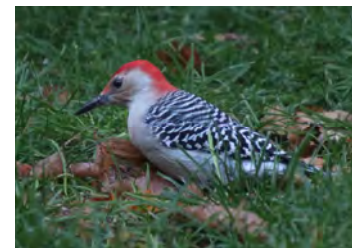
SITTING & WAITING FOR IRRUPTIONS

In October, the Birds of Vermont Museum participated in our 20th Big Sit! This occurs the second weekend in October and may very well be the most sedentary birding. Birders occupy a 17-foot circle for up to 24 hours, identifying and recording the all the birds species seen and heard. The Museum's circle is led by Jim Osborn, who lends his birdwatching eyes, his ability to identify species by their chirps, and his library of fun facts and excellent jokes. Over the past 20 years, our record year was 31 different species. Over the decades, we have recorded 69 species, although many don't arrive every year.

This fall, our excitement grew beyond just looking forward to the charming little kinglets and whatever Linda Hurd was cooking to the possibility of winter finches, because the anticipated *Winter Finch Forecast* had just been published.

Each year, bird and feeder-watchers in the northern half of the United States and southern Canada anticipate this news. Will certain finch species, who normally live and breed in Canada's boreal forest habitats, move "down south" to Vermont? When the finch forecast predicts an "irruption" year for species such as Purple Finches, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Red and White-winged Crossbills, Common and Hoary Redpolls, and Pine Siskins, we look forward to seeing and hosting a flurry of colorful, hungry seed-seekers. These birds prefer chowing down on Black-oil Sunflower and nyger seeds at feeders.

Irruptions, or sudden increases in populations outside of typical ranges, are wintertime migrations usually caused by a change in food availability. For finches, Spruce Budworm and Emerald Ash Borer outbreaks in the eastern boreal forests may provide food for young birds during the breeding season but reduce seed production and survival rates of spruce and ash trees. In the case of northern finches this year, cone-bearing conifers and berry-producing trees have



not produced an abundance of crop; thus, the finches are forced to find food sources farther to the south or west. This season, Eastern North America boasts a strong cone crop as well as Mountain Ash fruit for 2022-2023 all ready and waiting.

In addition to the winter finches, Blue Jays and Red-breasted Nuthatches could show greater abundance as northerly flocks might also move south this year.

Although we did see Blue Jays, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and kinglets, our sitting birders did not record any winter finches. However, luck was still with us: our group ate 47 doughnuts, recorded 26 bird species, and shared 53 jokes. Thank you to all who participated!

If you are interested in learning more about winter finches, irruptions, and winter biding join us on Wednesday February 8th on or read the entire finch forecast at <https://finchnetwork.org/winter-finch-forecast-2022-2023>

If you are interested in learning what kind of bird works on a construction site, then join us next year for our 21st Big Sit!



THE CARVER'S DAUGHTER

Part 24: My Father and Whales

Long before my father ever saw a whale, Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* was one of his favorite books. He liked the history, the details of nautical life, the descriptions, and the fact that the whale won. I'm sure that if he'd been born in an earlier time, he would have run away to the sea without a backward glance—imagine all the pelagic birds to be seen from the deck! Man-of-war birds, petrels, albatross! I could imagine him climbing the rigging to get better views, and at night I could picture him drawing in his journal by lamplight. He would have had to build a bigger museum—an albatross can have a wingspan of twelve feet!

I should have realized something was up when he randomly lent me his copy of *Moby Dick*. I was in sixth grade. It was a daunting doorstop of a book with very fine print and prose that read like the words were all tangled up. But he told me I'd like it, and so I drew a deep breath and dove in. By the second page, I wished I had a life jacket. My classmates looked at me like I was crazy and my teacher just got that look that teachers always get when they realized that their standard reading curriculum and I didn't have much in common. I remember asking my teacher a question when I was about half way through *Moby Dick*, and she sheepishly said that she'd never read it.

Well, I read the whole book. At least, I ran my eyes along every sentence in it. Did I get all of it? Yeah, no. But I plowed through the waves of words, and I learned that it's never a good idea to get hung up on revenge and not to believe all the people and portents telling you to call it a day and go home and not to keep chasing a whale that already had bitten off half your leg. When I gave the book back to my father two weeks later, pretending to limp and calling him "matey," he told me that he wasn't a pirate and that we were going on a whale watch next week. Armed, of course, with binoculars and cameras, not harpoons.

So that's why he'd wanted me to read the book.

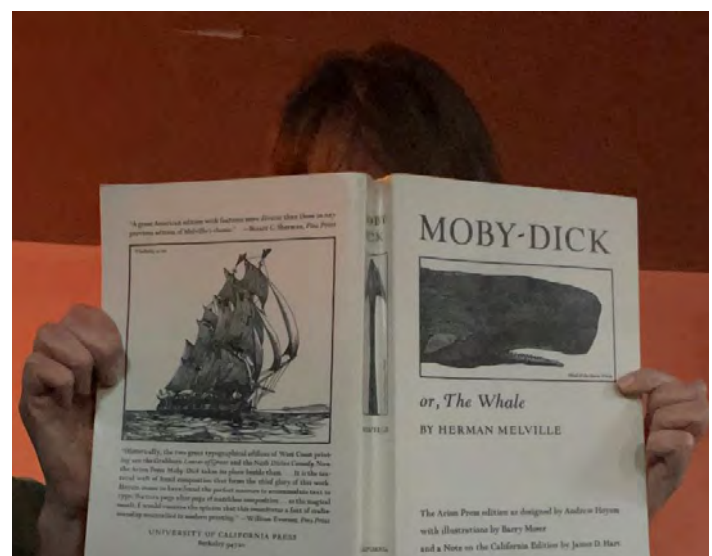
We sailed out of Newburyport, Massachusetts, a fine old whaling town of great renown, on a fleet ship that was not called the *Pequod* but the *Capt. Red*. Instead of masts and sails, our vessel was propelled by a diesel engine of great mightiness. A fine captain was in command of a hardworking crew who manned a galley that produced microwaved pizza and canned soda, but our voyage was

only for a day, so there was no danger of the dread scurvy. There was also a naturalist on board, well versed in the creatures of the sea. The passenger manifest was made up of landlubbers who desired to view the mighty whales that roamed the rugged New England coast in the summer, eating their fill of tiny krill before journeying to their southern grounds where they spend the cold seasons. Humpbacks we might see, and fin, and perhaps, if chance and luck were on our side, a glimpse of the illusive right whale, of which class the great Moby Dick himself had been.

One hearty birdwatcher of great renown who hailed from the diminutive but brave state of Verd Mont took to the bow of the ship with his fearless daughter of some twelve years. She was quick to partake of aforementioned pizza and canned soda, but once land was left behind, she fell under the spell of the waves and the salt air. Life list birds did quickly abound—eider and guillemot and shearwaters and petrels. Alas, no albatross adorned the sky that day, New England waters being out of their range. Her father, steadfast in the bow, never tired of calling her attention to their feathered companions.

But then, lo they came from the salty depths—the leviathans of old, the mightiest of creatures on this planet! A great shout went up as everyone called with one voice, "Thar she blows!"

Through the surface they breached, and with colossal tails and flippers they did smite the water, and their breath sent plumes of mist into the air. (Their breath



THANKSGIVING

Thank you to all of our 2022 volunteers and special donors. We would not have gotten through this year without you.

- ◆ Rita Sloan
- ◆ Evergreen Erb
- ◆ Jim Morris
- ◆ Dick Affolter
- ◆ Jayne Sheridan
- ◆ John Gergely
- ◆ Bill and May Mayville
- ◆ Ginger Lubkowitz
- ◆ Becky and David Cozzens
- ◆ Van and Carol Talmage
- ◆ Marie and Erik Johnson and Kas-
sel and Lachlan
- ◆ May Buckingham
- ◆ Lily Hinrichsen
- ◆ Brian Werneke
- ◆ Zac Cota-Weaver
- ◆ Charles Ritter
- ◆ Kari Jo Spear
- ◆ Shirley and Bob Johnson
- ◆ Erny Palola
- ◆ Debbie Duvall
- ◆ Megan Pratt
- ◆ Michele Patenaude
- ◆ David Sunshine
- ◆ Jim Osborn
- ◆ Kerry and Linda Hurd
- ◆ Mark Paul
- ◆ James Grant
- ◆ Amelia Lawson
- ◆ Sully Better
- ◆ Abi Barnes
- ◆ Levi Smith
- ◆ Morgan Barnes
- ◆ Ali Wagner
- ◆ Tom Jiamachello
- ◆ Spencer Hardy
- ◆ Jacob Crawford
- ◆ Elizabeth and Pat Spinney
- ◆ Anne Dannenberg
- ◆ Magnus Stien
- ◆ Northfield Savings Bank
(Richmond branch)
- ◆ Family and friends of Kaye Peck
- ◆ Family and friends of George
Hladik
- ◆ Jim Osborn
- ◆ Jane Sorenson and River Berry
Farm
- ◆ Kathleen Stutzman
- ◆ Fabrice and Alina deLacour
- ◆ Katie Gluck
- ◆ Brian Valentine
- ◆ Juniper Murray and Jessica Dow
- ◆ Luke Dowley
- ◆ Lynn Dube-Butler
- ◆ Debra Sprague

People volunteer in diverse ways and times! Some accomplish one-time projects. Some help out multiple times a week. Some prepare race trails, play music for visitors and staff, draw winning raffle tickets, maintain bird observations for community science projects, work with visitors, support other volunteers, earn academic credit, develop new skills, keep us organized, make the trails usable, serve on the board of trustees, assist during special events, teach about birds, build structures, and supply materials. Additional opportunities coming up: working with visitors and in the gift shop, entering data in ongoing projects, and expanding our publicity reach in print and online.

Below: Volunteers Rita Sloan, Evergreen Erb, and Jim Morris.



EVENTS FOR WINTER AND BEYOND

“THE GIFT OF ART” ART SHOW

Open by appointment and during events
November 1 – April 30, 2023

Our winter art brings together works from previous shows, selections from our gift shop, and elements of our long-term collections. See how art weaves together myriad media, styles, and visions.

BIRD MONITORING WALKS

Saturdays, January 28, February 25, March 25, April 29
8:00 – 9:00 am (7:30 am in April)

Join the monthly monitoring walk on the museum’s forest and meadow trails. Please bring your own binoculars and dress for the weather.

Suggested donation: \$5 • Outdoors



NESTLINGS EXPLORE WINTER

Wednesday, January 18 • 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Learn the secrets of winter bird survival! Could you do it?

\$5 (adult chaperones free) Dress for outdoors
Limit 8 • Recommended for ages 4 – 8

WINTER FINCHES



Wednesday, February 8
2:00 – 3:00 pm

It is an irruptive year! Sign up to learn what that means and to discover the surprising birds observed this winter.

Suggested: \$10 – 30 (includes admission)

Recommended for older children and adults

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Saturday, February 18 • 10:00 am– 4:00 pm

Drop in to share the Great Backyard Bird Count. Why do we count birds and how? What is an international community science project?

Free admission for members

CARVING CLASS:

Saturday, February 18 • 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Carve and paint a bird with Dave Tuttle of the Green Mountain Woodcarvers. Wood blank and paint provided. Bring mask, tools, gloves, and lunch.

\$45 (\$35 for Museum & GMWC members)
Limit 10, registration required, waitlist available

NESTLINGS EXPLORE WINTER

Wednesday, February 15 • 10:30 – 12:00 pm

Who hibernates and who’s just taking a nap?

\$5 (adult chaperones free)
Dress for outdoors

Limit 8 • Recommended for ages 4 – 8



FULL MOON SNOWSHOE WALK

Monday, March 6 • Dusk, about 1.5 hours

Take a walk through the property. If weather permits, we will have a fire and hot cocoa outside at the end of our walk.

Suggested: \$10 - \$30 • Outdoors

SEE IT, SKETCH IT

Wednesday, April 5 • 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Get ready for spring birding with this interactive program. Learn techniques for observing, describing, sketching and identifying birds that will immediately help you become a better birder.

Suggested: \$10 - \$30 (includes admission)
Recommended for older children and adults

See more and sign up at

<https://www.birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming>

Please check our website for updates or additions
<https://www.birdsofvermont.org/events>
Advance registration required for most events.

To register, visit
<https://www.birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming/>
then click or tap on the event name, or call (802) 434-2167

MAY BUCKINGHAM



I am from Lowville, NY and I am a senior at St. Lawrence University. In my time at St. Lawrence I have taken a number of ornithology courses that have convinced me that birds are my passion. Going into the summer I knew that I wanted an internship or job that was bird-related. When I came across the Birds of Vermont Museum, I knew I needed to apply, it was so fascinating!

Throughout the course of my summer internship, I worked on a number of projects for the Birds of Vermont Museum. The projects included taking inventory of the insect collection as well as uploading the species onto iNaturalist, a website that shares observations of species with naturalists across the globe! Another project I worked on was creating plant markers for the pollinator gardens. I did this by spending time in the gardens identifying as many species as I could. Then I wood-burned the names onto individual wooden cookies to keep with the theme of the museum. The last project I did involved going through each of the specimen skins, assessing their condition and determining if the

skins should be kept. In addition to these projects I helped with other tasks around the museum which included working at the gift shop, welcoming and assisting visitors, and other little tasks!

I absolutely loved spending my summer at the museum. It was so nice to spend my days in such a beautiful place, meet so many other bird lovers, and appreciate Bob’s breathtaking carvings. Overall my experience here at the museum was amazing and I wish I could stay!

— May Buckingham 

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE — STAY TUNED!

- Feb TBD *Slow Birding* with Bridget Butler, Bird Diva
- Mar & April *Ask-a-Naturalist* with Audubon Vermont
- April TBD *It’s Ghana Be Good* with Hank Kaestner
- May 2 *Opening Day for 2023 season*
- May 2 *Spark! 2023 Art Show opens*
- May & June *Early Birder Morning Walks*

Watch for more art workshops, birding opportunities, carving classes, and other special events.

Wish List

- » Volunteers for the welcome desk & gift shop
- » Donations for Solar Panels
- » Snow shoes, hiking sticks
- » Funding to support a summer intern
- » Pulk (a Nordic sled for hauling)
- » Pedestrian counters for trails / outdoor use
- » Binoculars for public programs
- » Gift cards to Guy’s Farm and Yard

Please contact us if you can help with any of these items, and we can provide more details.

Call to Artists : Spark! fueling a love for birds

Many birders have a “spark” moment that fueled their lifelong love of birds and birding and took them in unexpected directions. What’s your spark story? How did you start combining birds, birding, art, and science in your art? Does it show in your work?

The Birds of Vermont Museum seeks artworks for our 2023 show that tell a story of your spark as it relates and connects to birds, birding, conservation, science, art, love or something else. Show us tales and visions of your passion!


Links to full submission details will be on our website at <https://birdsofvermont.org/art/art-exhibits/>

RACE AROUND BIRDS

Congratulations to all the walkers, runners, and supporters of the third running of the Race Around Birds!

This year again we offered both “virtual (self-timed)” racing option and “in-person race day” option. People could run or walk, as they chose.

We had 31 people register, 8 of whom chose the “self-timed” option (not all of them submitted their times to us; that’s fine too). Based on what we saw from the museum, more than 8 people ran in the two weeks open for that option.

Check out the results in the table on the next page! 

We staff are totally impressed with *every* runner and walker. All of you inspire us with your determination!

*Photos on next page, from top:
Runners leaving the starting line; Molly M on the trail; runner Dave C and volunteers Becky C and Ginger L; race director Van Talmage.*

The Carver’s Daughter (continued from page 2)

smelt of dead fish, the fearless daughter noted, but kept that opinion to herself, not to dull her father’s great enchantment with the beasts.)

Such majesty, such hugeness, such grace! And so close did the mighty creatures come to the stalwart vessel that the daughter, trusty camera in hand, had to step back a pace from the railing as they filled up her camera’s frame. One bold humpback raised her head as she rolled past, and the daughter did see her eye. A moment, only a moment, but such a moment of connection between child and creature, as their gazes touched. And then the mighty whale did dive again below the waves to vanish into the depths where the child could not go and live. But that moment—that precious moment—she did remember all her life.

And then, far off in the distance, another whale broke the surface to partake of the lifegiving air, and the naturalist on board called out, “A right whale, hard astern!”

“Oh, wow,” the father said, low and quiet, but the daughter did hear him, and was glad.


Too soon, back toward shore did the trusty vessel turn. Toward the galley and more pizza did the daughter turn as well. Contentment she felt as she sat beside her father, while the land in the distance grew closer. Good were the photos she had taken, she knew. Even more vivid, perhaps, were the memories of sun and wind and salt waves and the majesty that lay beneath, which rose to our world only for moments and breaths of precious air. How different they were, she thought, and yet the same.

“Good?” the wise father asked.

“Call me Ishmael,” the daughter replied with a laugh.

“Well,” the father said, with that famous twinkle in his eyes. “Better than having to call you Kari Jonah.”

And thus did the vessel *Capt. Red* return to the harbor with laughter, all safe aboard, and discharge its passengers to the wharf. And the father, with the certainty of knowledge, led the way unerringly to a shop which proudly advertised the sale of frozen cream.

— Kari Jo Spear 

Kari Jo Spear, daughter of Bob Spear, is a writer of young adult novels and more. Her newest book, *The Carver’s Daughter: A Memoir*, is available in the museum, at Phoenix Books in Burlington and Essex, as well as from all major online booksellers. An eBook version is available from the latter. Her young adult novel, *Under the Willow*, is available through amazon.com.

Kari Jo is on the web at <https://carversdaughter.blogspot.com/>. You can also follow her on Facebook as Carver’s Daughter <https://www.facebook.com/Carvers-Daughter-105285684579200>.

Place	Bib	Name		Time
1	156	Nigel Bates	M 28	0:27:33
2	150	Norman Benoit	M 18	0:32:48
3	138	James Grant	M 23	0:34:15
4	146	Scott Silverstein	M 36	0:35:07
5	143	Evan Kaigle	M 16	0:37:55
6	149	Hannah Weiss	F 27	0:38:15
7	148	Molly Murtha	O 29	0:38:24
8	151	Hailey Lynch	F 23	0:39:50
9	132	Hannah Ades	F 18	0:41:33
10	153	Helen Hollenbach	F 36	0:41:51
11	147	Susan Ziegler	F 25	0:42:56
12	157	Jessica Dion	F 48	0:46:31
13	136	Benjamin Hogdon	M 48	0:46:39
14	142	Jennifer Kaigle	F 52	0:48:07
15	133	Stan Jennings	M 55	0:48:08
16	134	Kimberly Smith	F 53	0:48:08
17	203	Kristofer Anderson	V M 49	0:49:12
18	158	Vicky Gratton	F 51	0:52:08
19	155	Van Talmage	V M 76	0:58:01
20	154	Ken Pasciak	V M 56	1:00:00
21	204	Sandra Fon	V F 64	1:00:01
22	152	David Cozzens	M 73	1:04:01
23	201	Jim Spielman-Morris	V M 67	1:39:59
24	202	Pat Spielman-Morris	V F	1:39:59



BOLD = Overall winners in the male and female categories
 V = "virtual" runner

Birds of Vermont Museum
900 Sherman Hollow Road
Huntington, Vermont 05462
www.birdsofvermont.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SAVE THE DATES

January	Nestlings Explore Winter
February	Winter Finches
March	Full Moon Snowshoe Walk
April	See It, Sketch It

Last Saturdays Bird Monitoring Walks

Details inside and on our website. To register, visit
<https://birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming/> or
call (802) 434-2167 or email museum@birdsofvermont.org

Volunteers always welcome



#AskBob

Q: What is your pet peeve?

A: Those, who from ignorance or greed, damage the earth.

#AskBob comes from a collection of answers given in 1989 to John Johnson of the Burlington Free Press.

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Please send comments or changes of address to
Birds of Vermont Museum
900 Sherman Hollow Road • Huntington, VT 05462
museum@birdsofvermont.org • (802) 434-2167

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*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.*