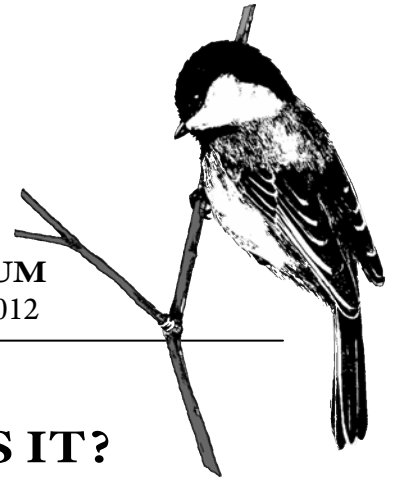


Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM
Volume 26 • Our 25th Year

Spring 2012



EGGS: IT ALL STARTS HERE—OR DOES IT?

The Museum opened its doors May 1st with **501 birds!** An incredible milestone, but of course Bob and the staff have plans for still more. But have we ever mentioned—in addition to the birds—how many carved *eggs* there are? So many of our bird displays are complete with parents, nest, habitat, and eggs, that it seems worth a mention. After all, which came first?

Often the closest we come to seeing bird eggs in the wild is finding an empty shell lying along a woodland path or suburban lawn—cast off remains, once vital to a developing bird's survival—and that's *eggsactly* as it should be. As animals moved onto shores and adapted to a terrestrial life, egg evolution favored a strong, protective covering to house and nurture the fertilized ovum through gestation—strong enough to remain once the chick has emerged.

Bird eggs are comprised of a calcium-rich, porous shell that surrounds several membranes that cushion, “ventilate,” or remove wastes from the embryo. The yolk supplies nutritional proteins and fats to the embryo. Tiny pores in the shell allow for gas exchange. A surface cuticle, whose texture may be smooth, glossy, chalky, or soapy, gives the shell strength and helps shield the egg against bacteria.

Just as there are myriad bird species and habitats, the sizes, shapes, and colors of eggs are remarkable and evolutionarily significant. In general, the bigger the bird, the bigger its egg. Hummingbirds lay the smallest eggs while ostriches produce the largest. Shape is often critical to avoiding egg breakage at a nesting site. Many seabirds, who nest on steep seaside ledges, characteristically produce pyriform eggs that tend to roll around in circles rather than rolling off. Interestingly, conical eggs can be arranged in the nest with the pointed ends together, affording all the eggs an even distribution of warmth from the brooding parent.

Spotting and streaking of color onto the shell occurs due to the egg's movement during pigmentation. Essentially, only two pigments are involved with egg coloration, both of which are associated with the red blood pigment hemoglobin. Bile is the source of bluish-green and white colors. Pigments appearing yellow to red or brown and black make up the other basic color. A combination of red and blue pigments results in an even wider range of hues. Birds such as owls and kingfishers lay white eggs, perhaps to make their eggs more easily seen in dark tree cavities or tunnels. Birds that depend on camouflaging coloration for their eggs are typically ground nesters, such as wading and shore birds.

The Museum is hatching up a few plans for egg-related educational displays and activities this celebration season. Please *get crackin'* and come on by! You can try to find all 535 unhatched eggs on display. (And discover which bird's eggs have hatched!)



A longer version of article also appears in our blog at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/2012/05/13/eggs-it-all-starts-here-or-does-it/>



How many eggs does this Woodcock have?

THE BIRD CARVER'S DAUGHTER

Part 3: Something's Going On Here...

I can't remember the first time I ever heard the "M" word. The fact that we were going to have a museum in the family happened very slowly, after a great many permutations and plot twists, and by the time it was a reality, it felt like it was meant to be from the beginning. But it didn't start out that way.

Some time after my parents divorced and much later after that when Gale entered the picture, I began spending a day every weekend with my father. He had a wood shop now—a old cement block building he'd fixed up and moved all his tools into. It was clean and had a nice work bench and a window with bird feeders outside. I thought he'd keep making chickadees to sell to gift shops. But I was wrong. He was making "keepers" now.

One late winter day when we walked into the shop, I saw a bunch of cattails with a bird nest in the middle of them standing in the center of the room. The cattails were stuck in a block of pure white plaster. My father



Bob Spear working on the Red-winged Blackbirds exhibit.
Photo by Kari Jo Spear, 1978

told me he was going to carve two Red-winged Blackbirds to perch around the nest.

"I want to show the habitat," he explained.

Well, that was cool, except that the habitat was taller than I was.

We looked at it a while, and then my father asked me, "Do you want to paint the plaster to look like mud?"

Me? Paint the mud?

Like a typical teenager, I searched for the catch. Was this his way of saying he wanted to include me in the project? That was cool. Obviously, I wasn't going to be doing any of the carving. But was painting mud all I was good for? It also crossed my mind that the height of the cattails was going to prevent them from being placed on the workbench, so whoever painted the mud was going to have to do it sitting on the floor.

Well, I decided to take it as an honor, and pretty soon I was sitting there with a palette of brown and green paint, happily dabbing away. There is a great variety in the color of mud, after all, especially with some algae mixed in. I threw my heart and soul into making the richest, muddiest mud that cattails ever grew out of. When I was done, my father looked down at it.

"Yup. Looks like mud."

I chose to take that as a compliment, too.

The next week when I came up, there were two Red-winged Blackbirds mounted to the cattails, the nest had eggs in it, and the whole thing was enclosed in Plexiglas and standing in the corner of the shop.

"Going to make the next ones smaller," my father said, nodding to the case. "All that glass is kind of expensive. I'll put them up on wooden bases. Maybe make covers with lights in them."

Okay, that sounded good, I thought. No more sitting on the floor. But I had say, "Wait, hang on. How many of these are you going to make?"

That's when I saw a glint in the corner of my father's eye, and I knew something was brewing. "Well, I don't know. I'd like to do all the birds that nest in Vermont."

I didn't know just how many that was, exactly, but it felt like a lot.

"And you're going to make a pair of each of them?"

That little glint got brighter.

Math had never been my thing, but even I could figure out that we were talking about hundreds of birds here. In protective cases, with habitats. But the wood shop was the size of, well, a shop, and Gale's house already had, well, house stuff in it.

So I asked the obvious question. "Where are they all going to go?"

There was a moment of silence. Then my father gave his normal response to any difficult question. "Hmm." Which meant, in this case, carve first and worry later.

We went back to contemplating the Red-winged Blackbirds.

I had no idea what had just begun.

—Kari Jo Spear 

This article is also online at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/2012/05/10/the-bird-carvers-daughter-part-3-somethings-going-on-here>

Kari Jo Spear's second young adult novel, *Silent One*, will be available in mid-June 2012.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We know it's not always possible to send a check to support the Museum and its mission. Never worry: there are many more ways to support your Museum! You could

- ◆ Tell a friend about us
- ◆ Donate books to our annual Used Book Sale
- ◆ Come to an event
- ◆ Bring a friend with you
- ◆ Send us a postcard from your birding trips
- ◆ Share our website and emails with friends
- ◆ Protect bird habitat
- ◆ Write a review of the Museum for your favorite travel guide (online, we recommend Find-and-Go-Seek and Trip Advisor)
- ◆ Give a gift membership
- ◆ Tell a teen or college student about our internship opportunities
- ◆ Volunteer some time with us
- ◆ Talk about us online, re-tweet one of our Twitter posts, or like us on Facebook
- ◆ Take a kid birding

Share your favorite way to help with us ... or better yet, tell a friend!

THANK YOU

Thank you, members, friends, organizations, birders, all, for your support in so many varied ways. This issue, we are especially grateful to

- ◆ Those who donated in honor of Bob Spear's 92nd birthday:
 - Dick and Nancy Allen
 - Delia Clark
 - Robert Coon
 - Shirley and Robert Johnson
 - Jason Kelley
 - Stewart Kirkaldy
 - Bill and Mae Mayville
 - Graeme and Ingrid Rhind
 - Hub Vogelmann
 - Gerry Wixson

- ◆ All the great people who helped out on Volunteer Work Day
- ◆ Artists who contributed to the decoy exhibit:
 - Dick Allen
 - Angelo Incerpi
 - Doug Kenyon
 - (more to come!)
- ◆ Steve Shover, of the Engraving Bench and Fine Gifts, Inc., for *beautiful* Art Contest trophies
- ◆ Northeast Delta Dental, for sponsoring the newsletter

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, SPRING *and* SUMMER 2012

"The Delight of Decoys"

decoys carved by a selection of artists

Daily, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



This spring's visiting art exhibit is a showcase of several decoy carvers and their work.

Free with admission



Sundays for Fledglings

Sundays, May 13 – October 28 (except June 3, August 19),
2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Find out about Birds from Art to Zoology! Ask about the Junior Birder program! Hike, create, explore, carve, act, write, and investigate with us. Each month has a theme to jive with the life cycles of birds.

Free with admission • Designed for ages 5-9

"Carving A Bird"

traveling exhibit

Daily through May, at the Hartness Library
Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT 05060
<http://kimballlibrary.org/>

Discover the process of carving birds from wood or soap. Images, tools, examples of various stages, resources, and finished carvings are on display.

Storytime in the Nestlings Nook

Second Tuesdays, May–October, 10:30 a.m.–11:15 a.m.

Join us for stories about birds and more, followed by a craft project, music, or nature walk, depending on the topics and weather. Got a favorite book about birds? Share it with us!

Free with admission • Great for pre-schoolers

Green Mountain Wood Carvers Carve-In

Saturday, May 12, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Take a little extra time in your visit to enjoy, observe, and learn from the wonderful Green Mountain Woodcarvers.

Free with admission

Early Birders Morning Walks

Sundays, May 13–June 24, 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.



Join us for an early morning ramble in our forests and meadows. Walks are led by experienced birders. Finish the walk with bird-friendly coffee at the viewing window. Bring binoculars and good walking shoes.

Free • Perfect for adults and older children.

Community of Observers:

Citizen Science Project with the Fairbanks Museum

Thursday, May 17, 6:30 p.m. at the Huntington Public Library

Learn about the *Community of Observers* citizen science program: data collection, 19 birds of interest, how you can take part, and how Birds of Vermont Museum resources can make your research easier, more robust, and more fun.

Free • Open to the public

Bird Day Festival

20th annual International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 19, 9a.m. – 4p.m.

Celebrate *Connecting People to Bird Conservation* with live birds, music, crafts, and science. And so much more! Check out the article on page 7 for details.

Free for members (with member card) / \$2 everyone else • Awesome for everyone!



Carving Demonstration

Saturday May 26, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Come watch a wood carver at work. Ask questions, collect fresh ideas, learn a new technique.

Free with admission

Bird Monitoring Walks

Last Saturdays, monthly. Walks starts at 7:30 a.m. in May-July, then at 8:00 a.m. for late summer and fall.

Join experienced birders on the monthly bird monitoring walk on the Museum's property. Please bring binoculars.

Free (donations welcome) • Best for adults and older children with some birding experience

Please call (802) 434-2167 to pre-register
and to confirm times (sometimes they change).

Email us at museum@birdsofvermont.org
with any questions or comments.

Heron Carving Class with David Tuttle

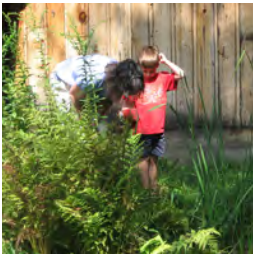
Saturday, June 23, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Beginners welcome at our one-day carving class with David Tuttle of the Green Mountain Wood Carvers. We will carve a smooth Heron. Materials, snack, and coffee provided. Please bring your own lunch. Tools may be for sale; call ahead, please.

\$25 for members of the Museum or the Green Mountain Wood carvers / \$35 non-members • Best for teens and adults. *Pre-register.*

VES Bug Walk

Sunday, July 8, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (if nice weather)



Experience Vermont's butterflies and insects up close! with Vermont Entomological Society naturalists and entomologists. Bring binoculars, magnifying glass, and/or an insect net if you have them.

Free (donations welcome) •

Terrific for everyone interested in our six-legged creatures

Birds and Wildlife of India

Thursday, July 26, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

For the first of our evening slide shows, follow along with Jim and Kris Andrews as they share their experiences with birds and wildlife on a recent trip to India. Wine and cheese at 6:30; the presentation starts at 7:00 p.m.

Suggested donation: \$10

Naturally Curious**Lucille Greenough Lecture Series**

Saturday, August 4, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Mary Holland, photographer, blogger, and natural historian, takes us on a virtual wander through New England. Wine and cheese at 6:30; the presentation starts at 7:00 p.m.

Suggested donation: \$10

Birds of the Galapagos

Saturday, August 25, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Join expert birder and experienced traveler Shirley Johnson for an evening of exotic and historical birds. Wine and cheese at 6:30; the presentation starts at 7:00 p.m.

Suggested donation: \$10

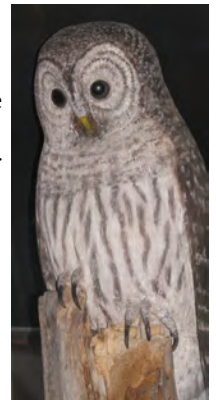
Blue Moon Owling

Friday, August 31, 7:45 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

(weather permitting)

Come along our twilight-into night ramble under the second full moon of August. We'll listen and call for owls, but all sort of night time may be heard...or none. You never know. Please wear quiet outdoor shoes. Flashlights should be covered with red plastic, if you wish to bring one.

Suggested donation: \$5 • Best for older kids and anyone comfortable in the evening forest. *Pre-register.*

**Follow us online for details about ...**

July: Our float in the 4th of July Parade
"Dream Big" Art program
—at Bristol's Lawrence Library

August: Nature at Night program
—at the Colchester Library

September: Museum Day

October: Dead Creek Wildlife Festival
Fall Festival & Used Book Sale
Potluck Birding

November: NEMA Conference
—(Innovation and the Future of Museums)
Winter Birds
—for the Milton Historical Society
Nuthatch Carving Class

All events are at the Birds of Vermont Museum
unless noted otherwise.

Check our website for updates and additions:
<http://www.birdsofvermont.org/events.php>

CARVERS REPORT

Ever since my first encounter with the Museum when I was 8, I have loved birds and woodcarving. I have been obsessed with discovering how Bob Spear, the founder and master carver of the Birds of Vermont Museum, created birds that are anatomically correct down to the width of each feather. Luckily, CVU's Graduation Challenge provided me with the perfect motivation to learn this wonderful art.

◆ Adam Kaminsky, "Whittling", Senior Report

As a senior at Champlain Valley Union High School, **Adam Kaminsky** committed to learning how to carve birds from wood as his year-long senior project. With Erin Talmage, the Museum's Executive Director, as his sponsor and facilitator, Adam produced four birds; created a set of samples of wood burning and painting techniques for a senior presentation; researched types of wood and the anatomy of trees, types of carving, and types of hand tools; and earned much admiration and praise for his efforts. In addition to carving on his own, Adam took two classes with **David Tuttle** of the Green Mountain Wood Carvers.

The **Green Mountain Wood Carvers** will join each other in the Museum workshop for their annual Spring Carve-in. This will occur on Saturday, May 12, 2012, from 10 am- 2 pm. Please stop in and observe as amazing carvings emerge in the hands of this talented group. Consider become a member, too. We are so pleased to have them here!

Bob Spear has returned from his winter retreat in Cedar Key, Florida. He is still at work on two big projects: the carvings of the Canada Goose and the Snow Goose, which will be featured in the Fall Wetlands Diorama. Welcome home again, Bob!

The Spring Wetlands Diorama is host to another pair of waterfowl created by **Dick Allen**: male and female Greater Scaups. A medium-sized diving duck, the Greater Scaup favors the seacoast and large bodies of water in both North America and Eurasia. This handsome couple (our 500th and 501st birds) complements the smaller pair of Lesser Scaups already on display.

As a special highlight this 25th Anniversary Year, our visiting art exhibit showcases **several decoy carvers** and their work. Many carvers get their start with decoys, and decoys may be one of the oldest practical



Adam Kaminsky carving a Downy Woodpecker

uses of art in human history. The wall of waterfowl is on display in our front hall, between the Gift Shop and the Viewing Window. As of this writing, we have three of our artists already on display; we expect several more artists and birds, including some antique decoys.

Keep your eyes on our schedule of events for carving classes. We're planning one-day workshops: a Great Blue Heron smoothie in the spring and a Red-breasted Nuthatch in the round for the late fall. David Tuttle will be teaching both sessions at the Museum.



WISH LIST

- ◆ Benches for special spots along the trails, including the pond overlook (\$250)
- ◆ Informational outdoor sign (\$250)
- ◆ Bookshelf (\$180)
- ◆ Sponsor an intern for a season (\$500-2500)
- ◆ Lighting for Russ Hansen's Photography Exhibit (\$250 - an additional \$250 has already been pledged!)
- ◆ Regular indoor and outdoor volunteers

Of course we welcome any and all contributions.

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.

VOLUNTEERS ARE ESSENTIAL



Marc Goudreau and his daughter Paige transformed the entryway to the museum, welcoming us with new brickwork, flowers, and decor. This was part of our very productive and successful Volunteer Work Day on April 28th. Volunteers helped us prepare for our 25th Anniversary Year by cleaning trails, brush hogging, vacuuming, organizing books in the library, preparing materials for kids' activities and programs, cleaning the bathroom and kitchen, and making the museum lawns beautiful. *Thank you!*

You too can volunteer as often as you like: once in a while, monthly, weekly, or daily. We can use your help indoors and out. We are particularly in need of lawn mowing, greeters, trail maintainers, birders, and data entry. In May and June we need extra help with special events. Check the schedule in this issue!

Interested in volunteering? Watch the website, subscribe to the events calendar, or let us email you with possibilities. You can also call (802) 434-2167 or email museum@birdsofvermont.org

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO BIRD CONSERVATION

The 20th (International Migratory) Bird Day Celebration

Share our Bird Day festival! Celebrate migratory birds, conservation, and the human connection. Although this event is international, we mark it with an all-day festival every year, co-sponsored with Audubon Vermont. It's an anniversary year for both Bird Day and the Museum, too: what a great time to celebrate *Connecting People to Bird Conservation*.

Everyone is welcome. Admission is \$2, but of course Birds of Vermont Museum and Audubon members who show their member card get free admission.

All day activities include: Arts and Crafts, scavenger hunts, raffle, food and drinks for sale. Our detailed schedule of events is subject to change; keep an eye on our website for updates, or call with questions.

More about:

Bird Day: <http://www.birdday.org/>

Green Mountain Audubon: <http://vt.audubon.org>

Birds of Vermont Museum:

<http://www.birdsofvermont.org>

Saturday May 19th

(This schedule may change without notice. Please call ahead.)

8:00 a.m. Bird Walk

9:00 a.m. Museum opens for the day. Craft Tables open for the day. Find out about the Great Sunflower Project!

10:00 a.m. Soap Carving

11:00 a.m. Live Birds

12:00 p.m. Live Music by the *Fiddleheads*

12:30 p.m. Soap Carving

1:00 p.m. Face Painting: choose a bird for your cheek

2:00 p.m. Children's Bird Program

3:59 p.m. Raffle Drawing! Winner does not need to be present.

4:00 p.m. Museum closes. Trails remain open until sunset.

SAVE THE DATES

May 12	GMWC Carve-in
May 19	Bird Day Festival
June 23	Heron Carving Class
July 8	VES Bug Walk
July 26	Birds and Wildlife of India
August 4	Naturally Curious
August 25	Birds of the Galapagos
August 31	Blue Moon Owling
<i>Monthly:</i>	Bird Monitoring Walks (<i>Last Saturdays</i>) Nestlings (<i>Second Tuesdays</i>)
<i>Weekly:</i>	Early Birders (<i>Most Sundays in May and June</i>) Fledglings (<i>Most Sundays</i>)

Details inside and on our website! To register, call (802) 434-2167 or email museum@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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