

Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM
Volume 27

Spring 2013



THE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS:

Science and Art

The *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds of Vermont*, the product of a state-wide research project that has spanned ten years from start to finish, was published in mid-April. The atlas covers breeding bird records collected throughout the state from 2003-2007 with 57,000 observations by 350 volunteers. It epitomizes a successful citizen science project. The data were pulled together by Vermont Center for Ecostudies into one beautiful reference book. The completed atlas has already helped scientists and policy makers decide how best to work and plan for avian conservation. With

full-color photographs, maps, graphs, and insightful interpretations for more than 200 species[, it] will become a classic reference for birders, ornithologists, conservationists, land use planners or anyone who cares about Vermont wildlife.

Documenting changes in breeding bird distributions since the 1985 Atlas, this second generation Atlas will guide our understanding and management of bird species across the state for decades to come.

In addition to accounts of the status of each species breeding in the state, the 576-page Atlas includes a guide to the biogeography of Vermont; and essays on changes in habitats, climate, land use and their impact on Vermont's bird communities over the past quarter century. (from <http://www.vtecostudies.org/vbba/>)



The Birds of Vermont Museum is collaborating on an exhibit with Vermont Center for Ecostudies to highlight some of stories that have emerged. Which birds have expanded into our changed landscape? What habitats have changed? What species need our focus for better protection? Our exhibit, another example of “*where natural history meets art,*” comprises revelatory maps from scientific research illustrated by diverse expressions of birds from artists within our community. Conservation relies on all of us, from many walks of life and many perspectives, to be successful. We hope this blend of our varied voices and solid data will add to that, just as the many participants have contributed to, and strengthened, the Atlas.

Roz Renfrew, of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies and editor of the second atlas, will be at the Museum on May 6th at 6 p.m. She will discuss the project, answer questions, and sign copies of the book. Light refreshments will be served.

Kestrel, multi-media, © 2013 Colin Walsh. Red-bellied woodpecker, ceramic, © 2013 Shannon Morrison. Images used by permission of the artists.



THE BIRD CARVER'S DAUGHTER

Part 6: Habitat Shots

"Take a shot in that direction." My father pointed down toward the brook through some hemlock trees. "Good ruffed grouse territory."

"Okay," I said. My job was to take an interesting photo. So I crouched down, trying to get into ruffed grouse mode, going for an eye level perspective. If I was a grouse, I'd lay my eggs right under the trees. Of course, I wasn't a grouse, and this was another of my father's crazy attempts to get me into his "carve all the birds in Vermont" project. He thought it would be helpful to have a plastic sleeve hanging from each display case with some facts about the bird and a photo of its nesting habitat. I thought all the leaves and flowers and stuff he was putting in the cases would be enough to clue people in, but he wanted photos, too. Wouldn't it be nice if I took them?

Well, I liked taking photos, and my father's fancy Nikon with interchangeable lenses was pretty cool. But nesting habitat was not exactly an exciting subject to photograph. We'd been hiking for hours, and I'd been dutifully taking shots of deciduous trees, evergreens, moss, and even dead stumps. That part wasn't really so bad. The real problem was that habitat shots had to be taken in the spring when the birds were nesting. The birds needed to take advantage of insects, who were also doing their multiplying thing. Right now, every black fly in Huntington was taking advantage of their favorite food source—me. They didn't care about my artistic endeavor, they didn't care that I reeked of insect repellent, and they didn't care that I was allergic to them. My eyes were going to be puffed shut tomorrow, I knew it.

I am a grouse, I thought. I snapped two more shots down toward the brook, even climbing into the brush to get a nice, curving limb to frame the top.

"Okay," my father said. "Now I want to go to a farm up the road. There's a pair of cliff swallows building under the eaves of the barn. We can get barn swallow habitat inside. And all the apple trees are in bloom. They're real pretty, and they'd be good blue bird habitat."

Anything to get away from the buggy brook. I swatted my way out of the woods—flies never seemed to

bother my father—and scratched my way up the road to an old farm that looked as though it had been there since the glaciers moved out. I liked the way the buildings nestled into the hillside. Sure enough, there was a small colony of cliff swallows building their funny little jug-like nests under the eaves. I didn't even ask how my father had known they were there. While he chatted with the farmer, I photographed the eaves, then some rafters inside where some barn swallows were busy irritating the cows, and then I wandered around the apple trees in full bloom and thought about how nice a big bee sting would look right between my puffy eyes. Maybe some poison ivy to set it off. Then I tripped over a branch buried in the new spring grass and landed in a woodchuck hole, twisting my ankle.

My father got the car and drove me home.

Fortunately, I wasn't bleeding—my father was not good with blood—and the camera was okay, so there was no harm done. "An old war horse," my father said, seeing me looking at it on the seat between us.

I didn't think he was referring to me. A young warhorse, maybe.

"You may as well keep it," he added.

"Until next weekend?" I asked, wondering if my ankle would be up to more traipsing around.

He kind of shrugged. "Till whenever. If I need it for something, you can bring it back."

"Oh," I said, it slowly sinking in that he'd just given me a really nice camera. On a kind of permanent borrow.

"Might as well take the lenses, too." I noticed that they were in the back seat. A 300mm lens and a wide angle.

"Thanks," I said, meaning it.

"It's a good camera," he said. And that was that. Then he added, "But we need to get the film developed right away."

"What's the rush?"

"Montpelier."

Right, I thought. The state capital.

"Library," he added.

“You’re going to carve books next?” I’d believe anything.

He shot me a look. “No. Going to have the carvings there next week.”

“What?”

“There’s an art gallery upstairs in the library,” he said patiently. We’re going to have a big opening. Newspapers will be there.”

I looked at him, wondering how he’d known how to set up something like this. He’d probably enlisted Gale. He didn’t even look nervous. I’d be frantic.

“We’ve got to start getting people interested in the project, you know,” he went on. “Need to find someplace to house them.”

At the rate he was carving, he wasn’t going to have room to breathe in the shop much longer.

“There’ll be a reception. With food.” He looked at me hopefully.

“Of course I’ll be there,” I said. And not just for the food.

“Good,” he said. And then he smiled, just a little. “It’s upstairs. Your ankle will be better by next weekend, right?”

Of course it would be. Who wouldn’t want to get all hot and sweaty lugging bird cases to an upstairs gallery? I heaved a sigh. I’d never figure out how he managed to talk me into getting deeper and deeper in this project of his.

The next morning, I limped into school with my eyes puffed mostly shut, my arms and legs sunburned and dotted with red spots, and my left ankle wrapped up.

“What happened to you?” my homeroom teacher asked. All around us were kids with honorable injuries,



Kari Jo and Bob Spear, examining *Habitat Shots* 1981, Photographer unknown

acquired by heroically sliding into home plate or after bursting through a finish line. Everyone turned to me, waiting to hear my glorious tale.

I dropped into my desk with a sigh. “Wood chuck hole.”

Everyone’s eyebrows went up.

I nodded wisely like this was a big deal. Lowering my voice, I said, “Okay. Let me tell you guys about ... *habitat shots.*”

—Kari Jo Spear

Author’s Note: Visitors to the museum will notice that there are no photographs hanging from any of the cases. My father finally realized, as someone had tried to tell him, that people would get the idea where the birds nested from all the leaves and flowers and stuff in the cases. The habitat shot phase passed quickly, but to this day if I take a photo with no apparent subject, my father will look at it, smile a little, and say, “Looks like a habitat shot to me.”

And I still have the camera, tucked away somewhere safe. Permanent borrow: thirty-five years and counting.

This article is also online at <http://bovm.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/the-bird-carvers-daughter-part-6-habitat-shots/>

Kari Jo Spear’s young adult novels, *Under the Willow* and *Silent One*, are available at amazon.com, bn.com, and in Phoenix Books (Essex and Burlington, Vermont).

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS: SPRING & SUMMER 2013

Volunteer Work Day

Saturday, May 4 • 9:00a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Help us prepare the Museum for the 2013 open season! Do windows, clean nest boxes, spruce up trails (weather permitting), prepare handouts for visitors and school groups, add bird data to online databases, and much more. We provide lunch! Please let us know you're coming.

Breeding Bird Atlas Exhibit

Opening and Special Presentation

Monday, May 6 • Exhibit: All Day; Presentation: 6:00p.m.

Roz Renfrew of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies opens our Breeding Bird Atlas exhibit with a discussion of the project. The exhibit opens at 10 a.m. and the presentation is in the evening. Listen, learn, and admire the art and science. Buy your own book—and ask Roz to sign it!

Free, donations welcome • Adults & teens

Loon Carving Class

Saturday, May 11 • 9:00 a.m. –4:00p.m.

Carve and paint an 11-inch Loon with David Tuttle of the Green Mountain Woodcarvers. Wood blank, eyes, snacks, and coffee provided.

All carvers / all levels welcome! Bring tools and gloves if you have them; if not, let us know. Dave often brings some knives, gloves, etc. to sell. Great for teens and adults.

\$25 for Museum and GMWC members • \$35 for everyone else • *Pre-register*

Early Birder Morning Walks

Sundays, May 12 – June 30 • 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Enjoy the start of the day with us, birds, and other woodland inhabitants. Walks are led by experienced birders familiar with Vermont birds. Come to several walks to hear the changes in who calls and when!

Finish the walk with bird-friendly coffee at the viewing window inside the Museum. Bring binoculars and good walking shoes.

Free, donations welcome • Best for adults and older children

Bird Day Festival!

Saturday, May 18

Annual celebration of migratory birds! Birds, music, birds, crafts, birds, walks, birds, face painting, birds, bird food, birds, carving, birds, treats! And did we say birds?

While most of our *fabulous activities* are yet to be pinned to our calendar, we do know we will have the Swing Peepers playing for us at 11 a.m.!

Other choices before and after might include: bird banding, raffle, soap carving, bird art, nature walks, face painting, picnics. Stay tuned for more details, or call to *volunteer*.

\$5 (*Free* for members) • Great for families

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. Intended for pre-schoolers but all ages are welcome. Stories are followed by a craft project, music or nature walk, depending on the topic and the weather. Got a favorite book about birds? Share it with us!

Free with admission; donations welcome

Sundays for Fledglings

Sundays, resuming May 26 • 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Outdoor science and play for kids ages 5-12. Are you a Junior Birder? Want to become one? Come develop mad skillz in observation, research, and goofing around!

Free with admission • Pre-registering is helpful

Visit Our Friends and Volunteers Out and About

Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival

Sunday, May 5

Demonstrations, education, storytelling, adventures, birds, and much more. More about the Festival online at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Herricks-Cove-Wildlife-Festival/>

Family Bird Quest

Let us help you on your quest! The *North Branch Nature Center* is running a program to help you learn more about birds, get outside, and have fun. There are even prizes! Details at <http://www.northbranchnaturecenter.org/fbq.html>

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.

Bird Monitoring Walks

Last *Saturdays*, monthly • 7:30 a.m.–9:30a.m.
May 25, June 29, July 27, August 24

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.

Day Camp: A Bird's Eye View

Monday-Wednesday, July 1-3 • 9:00a.m.–3:00p.m.

Birds, Maps, and Habitats from the science side of things: a day camp for kids aged 8-12. Details below.

Fee: TBD • Limit 10, *pre-register*

Find us online for more information, updates, changes, and additions



And looking ahead...

August: Teacher Training Workshop
Sept: International Vulture Appreciation Day
Museum Day
October: Fall Festival
Annual Book Sale
And More!

Bug and Butterfly Walk

Sunday, July 10 • 10:00a.m.–noon

Experience Vermont's butterflies and insects up close! Join Vermont Entomological Society naturalists and entomologists at the Museum. Bring binoculars, magnifying glass, and an insect net if you have one. Pack a lunch if you would like to picnic after the walk.

Free! (Donations welcome) • Fun for large and small

THANKS!

The following people have given us new opportunities, much-needed funds, and extra dedication.

- ◆ Northeast Delta Dental and Jeffrey Landa
- ◆ Catherine Griset
- ◆ Darren Marcy and the *Vermont Great Outdoors Magazine*
- ◆ Kari Jo Spear
- ◆ Northfield Savings Bank
- ◆ Roland Wilbur
- ◆ Douglas and Claudia Sherry
- ◆ Nona Hurd
- ◆ Marty Hansen
- ◆ John Gergely
- ◆ Bob and Shirley Johnson
- ◆ Gerry and Geni Wixson
- ◆ Ingrid and Graeme Rhind
- ◆ Bill and Mae Mayville
- ◆ Lyn Jarvis

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW: MAPPING THE TERRITORY

New for kids! Attend our summer day camp, July 1-3.

Although neotropical migrants will have been nesting and raising their offspring on the Museum grounds by the time our campers arrive, our mission begins back in April and May, when local songbirds return to the area searching for suitable habitat to raise a family—which is why we host our Migratory Bird Day Festival each May.

During this three-day summer session, we will explore, document, and model the rich habitats which attract and sustain our summer nesters. We will immerse ourselves in creating 2D and 3D maps, which will utilize and reinforce engineering and math skills, the use of technology, and the science supporting a bird's selection of an appropriate nesting site as well as issues related to environmental sustainability. This program is designed to align with the newly developed Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science educators and their students nationwide. *A Bird's Eye View: Mapping the Territory* will appeal to both the creative and analytical thinker in each participant.

*Each camp day will run from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. with afternoon snack provided. Water, morning snack, and lunch should be brought from home. Dress for the weather; pack extra if rainy.

*Perfect for ages 8-12. Please pre-register with the Museum at 802 434-2167 or museum@birdsofvermont.org

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>

CATHERINE GRISET, DOUBLE INTERN

This spring I was happy to engage in my *second* internship with the Birds of Vermont Museum. It was very different being the museum's intern in February, March, and April than it was in the summer. I missed all the visitors, but still had an incredible learning experience spending time with the staff. Since the Museum doesn't open for the season until May 1st, I was able to focus on a wide variety of personal goals and projects during my time.


As an Environmental Studies Major graduating from the University of Vermont, my work with the Museum filled the role of a senior capstone project. Through the course of this internship I met and exceeded many of my learning objectives. Despite the off-season, I loved the opportunity to interact with the public (volunteers, members, and visitors alike) during the various events and programs this late winter and spring. I also spent time working on projects around the museum, both independently and with staff and volunteers.

One such project, organizing the Resource Library, was spearheaded by one of the Museum's most committed volunteers, Stewart Kirkaldy. On my own, I researched and created an exhibit about climate change and the birds of Vermont. I also researched



and wrote an article about a notorious hawk identification challenge, Sharp-shinned or Cooper's, for the Museum's blog.

Simply by working around the museum and its community of intelligent, passionate and dedicated people, I learned a great deal. From Erin, Allison and Kir, I learned about museum management, environmental education, the local community and much more. From Bob Spear and Gale Lawrence I learned about their fascinating lives and the incredible history of the Birds of Vermont Museum. Thank you all for being so welcoming and making my time here so amazing!

—Catherine Griset 

THE GIFT MULTIPLIER

An easy way to make your gift of support to the Birds of Vermont Museum go further is to take advantage of your company's matching gift program. Not every company has such a program of course, but it may be worth your while to investigate and to take advantage of your employer's largesse. Some companies provide this benefit to retired employees as well.

There are many different matching gift programs, but most offer a dollar for dollar match, and most make it very easy to use payroll deduction to make a gift in each pay period. Chances are you can sign up online, quickly and easily. So check out your employer's benefits handbook (retirees too!) or website for the specifics. Keep your gifts coming to the Museum, and *make them count twice!*

—John Gergely,
Member and Hewlett-Packard employee

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Every five years the Birds of Vermont Museum's Board evaluates and re-writes the Museum's strategic plan. During this time, we reflect and gather information, then develop guidance for the next 5 to 25 years. In 2013, each of the Board's quarterly meetings will focus on further learning and brainstorming. Topics range from exploring the Museum's vision to long-range trends in tourism and marketing. These sessions will be followed by a retreat in November to evaluate, discuss, revise, and finalize the next strategic plan. The five-year cycle allows us enough time to reflect, explore and ultimately focus on how best to further our mission while efficiently and effectively using the resources available.

Do you have ideas of what you would like to see the Museum do, exhibit, teach? We know some of you provided ideas in last year's survey; all of you are welcome to continue or add to those suggestions. Please let us know!

BIRDS BY PETER PADUA

Special Carving Exhibit

The Museum will showcase the work of Peter Padua, a 90-year old Middlebury resident and woodcarver. An article by John Flowers (for the *Addison Independent* last November) paints a picture of a dedicated woodcarver with a passion for natural inspiration and materials and an eagerness for new challenges.

Sounds a bit like Bob Spear don't you think? These life-long carvers have followed similar paths at times too, brightening many homes and outlooks through their talent and efforts.

Padua was a New Jersey high school senior in wood shop class when he felt moved by a photograph of a deer to try his hand at carving its image. His instructor encouraged Padua's interest. After a few months of careful work, he produced his first piece: a small, expressive deer.

Padua's future lay in work as an engineering draftsman, but he made time during lunch breaks and off hours to add to his growing collection of fish, bears, Christmas holiday ornaments for his three children, and birds, including representations of all of the state birds.

Padua's workshop occupies a portion of his basement where his tools suggest an evolution of technique, style, and technology over the years. Basswood is his medium of choice. Padua officially retired twenty-five years ago, yet allows very few days to go by without spending time on or with his carvings. He is very excited about sharing his work with the Birds of Vermont Museum's visitors and we are delighted to bring it to you. Please come and enjoy!

Exhibit dates are May 1–October 31, 2013.



Kestrel, by Peter Padua. Photo © Trent Campbell

HINESBURDERS

Alison "Ali" Wagner, friend, Museum volunteer, teacher, and avid birder, has started a new program to introduce young students to the world of birds. Ali works at a local elementary school in Hinesburg, Vermont. It was there that the afternoon program, *The Hinesburders*, was hatched.

Students meet after school for 6 weeks to learn about birds through games, creative activities, short video clips, and walks. Ali volunteers her time for the entire session and parents "pay" for the program with a new or renewed family membership to the Birds of Vermont Museum. In exchange, the Museum provides educational supplies, props, tools, and an occasional diagram.

This is a great way to teach children about birds, sparking their creative and curious sides. One of our Junior Birder Fledglings is in the program, sharing and expanding her knowledge and enthusiasm. It's also been delightful for us to converse and share learning with Ali, as her experiences help us improve our programs and, we hope, vice versa.

Thank you, Ali Wagner!



WISH LIST

- ◆ Regular indoor and outdoor volunteers
- ◆ Gift certificates to *Guy's Farm and Yard* for bird seed (\$10-\$100)
- ◆ Annual Plants for containers and window boxes
- ◆ Classroom thermometer (10 x \$8.65)
- ◆ Activity Table (\$180)
- ◆ Handheld GPS
- ◆ Bookshelf (\$180)
- ◆ Sponsor an intern for a season (\$500-\$2500)
- ◆ Lighting for Russ Hansen's Photography Exhibit in the Nesting Birds Gallery (\$250—an additional \$250 has already been pledged!)
- ◆ Updated introductory video (\$3000)

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.

SAVE THE DATES

May 1	Opening Day
May 4	Volunteer Work Day
May 6	Breeding Bird Atlas
May 11	Loon Carving Class
May 18	Bird Day Festival
June	more Bird Walks and Kid programs
July 1-3	Day Camp: Bird's Eye View
<i>Monthly:</i>	Bird Monitoring Walks (<i>Last Saturdays</i>) Nestlings (<i>Second Tuesdays, May—October</i>)
<i>Weekly:</i>	Early Birder Morning Walks (<i>mid-May—June</i>) Fledglings (<i>Most Sundays, May—October</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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