

2010 Annual Report



Fiscal Year Ending 12/31/2010

Uniting People and Science for Conservation



The Vermont Center for Ecostudies envisions
a society that sustains healthy ecosystems
through informed decision-making.

We seek to guide conservation with sound science,
inspire ecological responsibility, and foster
local and international collaboration to effect change.

VCE advances the conservation of wildlife

Director's Message

With our third full year of existence now behind us, VCE can't help feeling both fortunate and incredulous. Since taking independent flight in October of 2007, with a healthy mix of resolve, confidence and trepidation, much has transpired. We have solidified our science-based wildlife conservation agenda. We have diversified our breadth, added key staff, and pushed the envelope with our projects. We have managed to stay fiscally robust through challenging economic times. We have built a strong Board of Directors, begun formation of an Advisory Council, and initiated a 5-year strategic plan, which we'll unveil in mid-2011. Most importantly, we have kept you, our stakeholders, engaged – as citizen scientists, collaborators, conservation partners, fellow naturalists, donors, and friends. As this report highlights, your diverse contributions constitute VCE's programmatic and financial lifeblood.



© Steve Faccio

As VCE enters its next crucial phase of evolution, one that we expect to bring maturity and longer-term stability, you will continue to underlie our success and fuel our passion. We sincerely thank each and every one of you for your support, in all its many forms.

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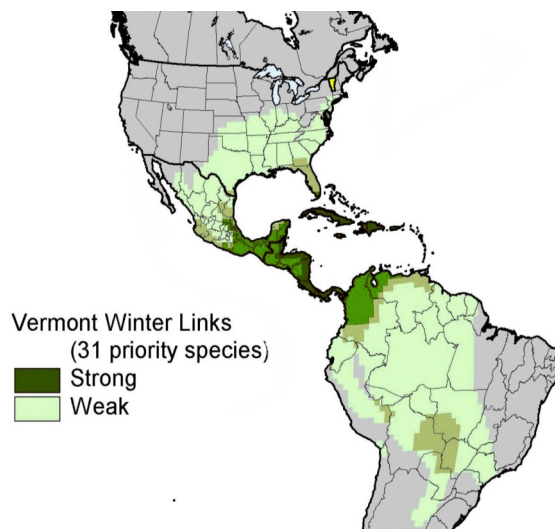
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across the Americas

Hundreds of bird species that breed in the U.S. migrate to Latin America and the Caribbean each year. Conservation efforts in our immediate bioregion will not be sufficient to protect the many migratory wildlife populations. Conservation is needed on breeding grounds, along migratory routes and in wintering areas. By collaborating with local, regional and international partners, VCE's work targets priority wildlife species and habitats both in the Northeast and **across the Americas**.



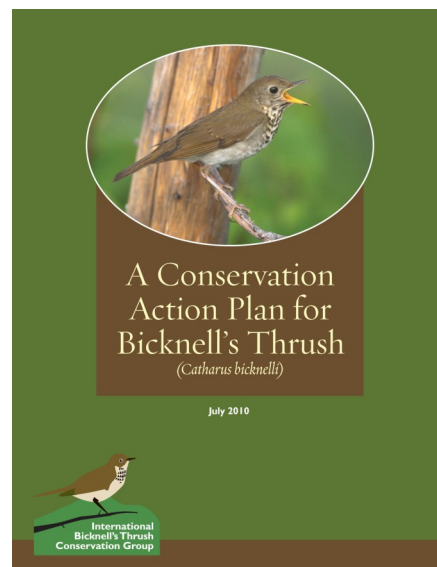
Wintering grounds of 31 high priority migratory species that breed in Vermont. The "strong" areas in dark green denote a higher diversity of species.



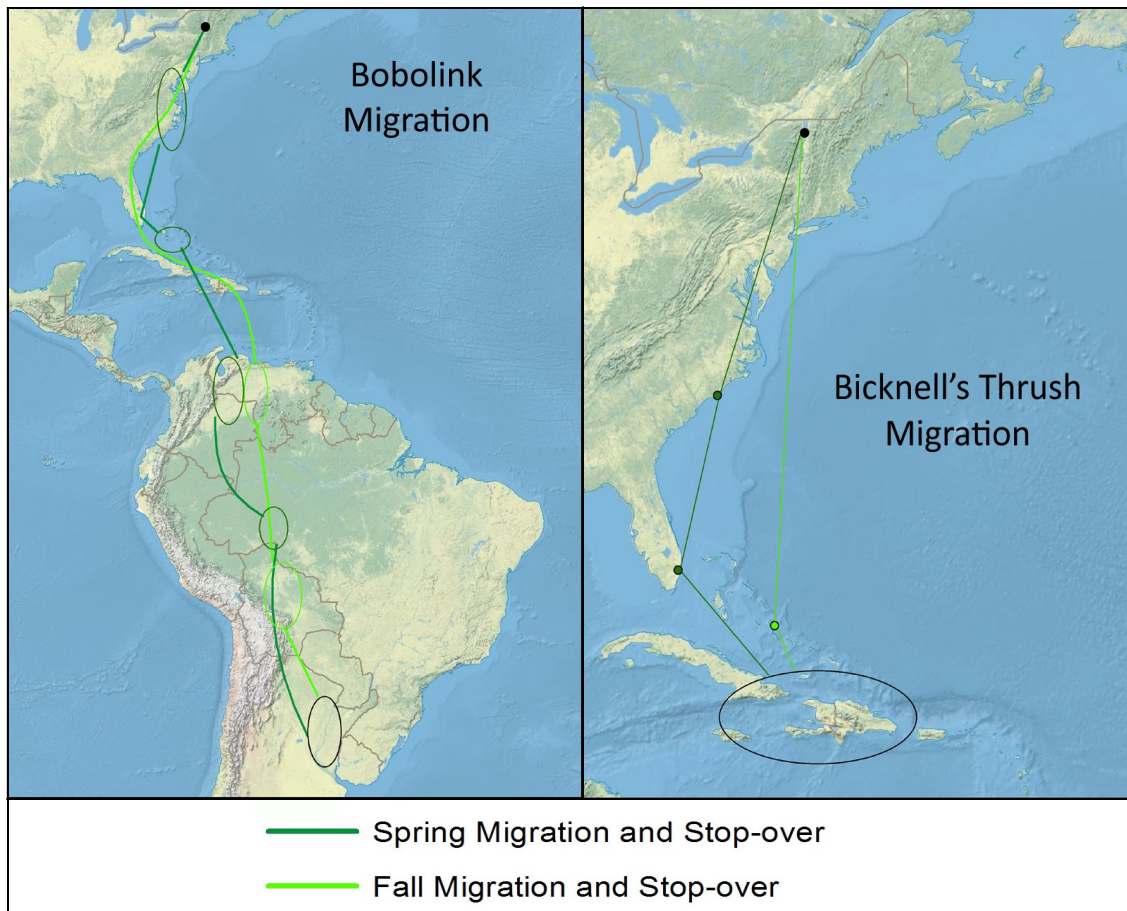
*Haitian biologist, Enold Louis Jean,
holds a Western Chat-Tanager*

2010 saw a surge of activity in VCE's **Hispaniola Bird Conservation Program**. Highlights included: (1) our innovative field study of Bicknell's Thrush habitat use in the Cordillera Septentrional; (2) a 10-day intensive training workshop for 10 Dominican and 1 Cuban conservation partners; (3) a radio telemetry study of diurnal and nocturnal home range use in endemic Western Chat-Tanagers; (4) attachment of solar geolocators to 28 overwintering Bicknell's Thrushes in March and recovery of 4 of these in November; and (5) our historic meeting of the International Bicknell's Thrush Conservation Group in Santo Domingo, involving 60 participants from 7 countries.

A major VCE accomplishment in 2010 was the July release of **A Conservation Action Plan for Bicknell's Thrush**. The culmination of sustained hard work with our many partners in the International Bicknell's Thrush Conservation Group, this trilingual Plan and its non-technical summary documents (available on the VCE website) chart a course of action to secure the species' future. The IBTCG's ambitious overall goal: to increase the global population of Bicknell's Thrush by 25% over the next 50 years (2011-2060), with no further net loss of distribution.



Effective conservation of migratory birds requires an understanding of their ecology throughout the annual cycle. In 2009, VCE biologists employed the pioneering technology of **geolocators** - miniaturized data loggers that estimate a bird's daily location throughout the year - on Bobolinks and Bicknell's Thrushes. After a long, nail-biting, wait, VCE and our collaborators returned to the field in 2010 and retrieved a total of 20 geolocators from recaptured birds (17 Bicknell's Thrushes and 3 Bobolinks). The logged location data revealed migration timing and routes, and for Bobolinks, the wintering grounds of different breeding populations. We deployed new geolocators with an improved attachment method to boost sample sizes for both species in 2011.



The **Vermont Invertebrate Database Alliance (VIDA)** is tackling one of the 21st century's great conservation challenges: how to harness knowledge of biological diversity and the ways it shapes the ecosystems on which all life depends. Over 750,000 invertebrate specimens are believed to be housed in Vermont natural history collections, with likely well over a million invertebrate specimen records from Vermont housed around the world and in published literature. Perhaps fewer than 10% of these occur in a searchable database or are georeferenced in some manner. The mission of VIDA is to bring over 100 years of accumulated knowledge of Vermont invertebrate diversity into currency for science and society. VCE's work over the last two years represents just the initial phase of VIDA - planning, development and initial infrastructure. We have shown that VIDA can unite biologists and their collections across the entire spectrum of invertebrate zoology and conservation. As our world changes at an ever rapid rate, whether from threats of wildlife pathogens, climate change, invasive species, or land development, land managers and conservationists need reliable biodiversity data at their fingertips.

monitoring

After its second year of remote mapping and field work, the **Vermont Vernal Pool Mapping Project** has identified a total of 2,428 potential vernal pools across northern and central Vermont; 260 of these have been field-verified by a hardy and committed corps of volunteers. During field visits, the most commonly detected species was Spotted Salamander, whose eggs or larvae were found in 69% of confirmed vernal pools.



© Julie Hart

Volunteers learn how to identify vernal pools and indicator species.



© Steve Faccio

VCE MBW technician, Chris Mulvey, uses a clinometer to determine forest canopy height.

VCE launched our improved high-elevation monitoring program, **Mountain Birdwatch (MBW) 2.0**. Our team of 9 dedicated technicians waded through bogs, climbed over blowdowns, and donated blood to voracious black flies while setting 529 survey points across four Northeastern states. Volunteers conducted their final year of MBW 1.0 surveys on existing routes and will adopt our new routes in 2011.

The **Vermont Loon Recovery Project (VLRP)** completed another record season in 2010. VLRP documented attempted nesting by 72 loon pairs, with 57 of these successfully hatching chicks, of which 70 survived through the summer. Of the 72 known nests, 26 were on VCE-placed nesting rafts, 22 on islands and 24 on shorelines.



© Robin Key

David Key & Eric Hanson build a loon nesting raft.



© Steve Faccio

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

The **Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas** has been steeped in its final phase: translating results into user-friendly education and conservation products. Volunteer writers used the data collected by 350 citizen scientists during 2003 - 2007 to contribute 207 species accounts for the Atlas publication. By the end of 2010, most accounts had received both internal and external reviews. We wrote chapters to provide background context and summaries of Atlas findings. We created a website to display Atlas results with tables, maps, and bulleted information about each species, including trends, conservation status, threats, and management implications. By mid-2011, the entire project will wrap up, with book materials to be in the hands of a publisher, and the website to become public.



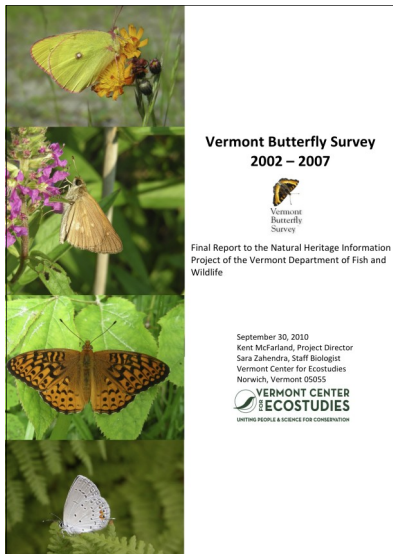
Ruth Stewart, a self-proclaimed citizen scientist, enjoys a visit from a winged friend.

In 2010, 42 skilled birders volunteered with the **Forest Bird Monitoring Program** to survey breeding birds at 25 study sites across Vermont, and at 11 different National Parks and Historic Sites from Maine to New Jersey. In the process they contributed to a growing database, consisting of 62,032 individual records of 159 species, that provides critical, long-term data to evaluate effects of climate change and other environmental stressors on forest bird populations.

*"I have thoroughly enjoyed doing this survey since 2006 and I thank you for the opportunity."
-- Randy Little, FBMP Volunteer, Morristown National Historical Park, Morristown, NJ*



© Steve Faccio



From 2002 - 2007 volunteers scoured fields and fens, mountains and meadows, even their own backyards, to document the status of Vermont butterflies. Despite their lofty status among the insects, butterflies were largely a mystery in Vermont. There was no atlas of their distribution, no scientific assessment of the threats they face, and no statewide conservation concept. With help from over 180 people, VBS amassed over 36,000 individual records of 103 butterfly species from across the state. This trove of data enabled us to determine that 34 species (33%) are of conservation concern in Vermont, and it helped prioritize where we might begin important conservation work. From students to landowners, nature enthusiasts to conservation biologists, the **Vermont Butterfly Survey** provides essential information about the butterflies of Vermont to help us both enjoy and conserve our natural heritage, now and for future generations.

The **Norwich 2010 Birding Quest**, conceived by VCE and several local birding enthusiasts, proved a fun, engaging and informative yearlong initiative. Challenging ourselves to identify as many species as possible within VCE's home base of Norwich during 2010, in part to better document the town's birdlife, we also provided a public venue for birding and outdoor discovery. The Quest's final tally of 168 species easily eclipsed our original goal of 150. Importantly, 773 eBird checklists were entered, > 200 local residents participated in monthly outings, and our single-town effort spawned the statewide 2011 Vermont County Birding Quest!



© Kent McFarland

Doug and Spencer Hardy search for an elusive species during the Norwich Birding Quest

engagement



MBW surveys can be a family affair!

There has been a lot of bad buzz about bee populations of late, mostly involving the decline of European honeybees that are important crop pollinators across North America. What most people don't know is that about 275 native bee species occur in Vermont. For most, we have little or no information on their distributions. VCE plans to launch the **Vermont Bee Survey** in 2012 to help change that. We will catalogue bee diversity across Vermont from 2012 - 2017, with the help of an army of trained citizen scientists—yet another way of engaging people to learn more about our natural heritage and how we can conserve it.



Volunteering for the first VT Bee Survey will help identify the conservation status of bees such as this Tricolored Bumblebee



Roy Pilcher scoping out birds for the 2011 VT County Birding Quest.

Ready for a birding challenge and some “friendly” cross-county competition? Grab your binocs, shoulder your spotting scope, and join the **2011 Vermont County Birding Quest**. Expanding from the 2010 Norwich Quest, all 14 counties have challenged one another to identify as many species as possible during 2011. The Quest's main goal is to get people out birding, promote camaraderie, and better document Vermont's bird life. So, head out doors, find some birds, and enter them all on Vermont eBird.

In 2011, our **Vermont Vernal Pool Mapping** and training workshops will focus on the southern third of Vermont, including Rutland, Bennington, Windham, and southern Windsor counties; field-verification will continue state-wide. We are also offering five free volunteer training workshops throughout the southern region to educate community members about vernal pools and provide them with the information they need to participate in field surveys. Check our website for details.

"The Vernal Pool Mapping Project has stimulated me to get out in the woods, especially off the usual paths, to find and record pools, and along the way there's always something else to experience."

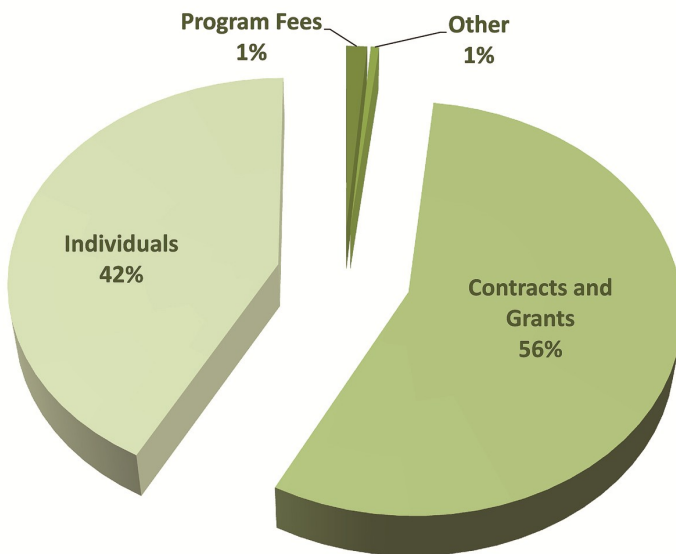
-- Dr. Tom Ziobrowski, VPMP Volunteer, Danville, VT



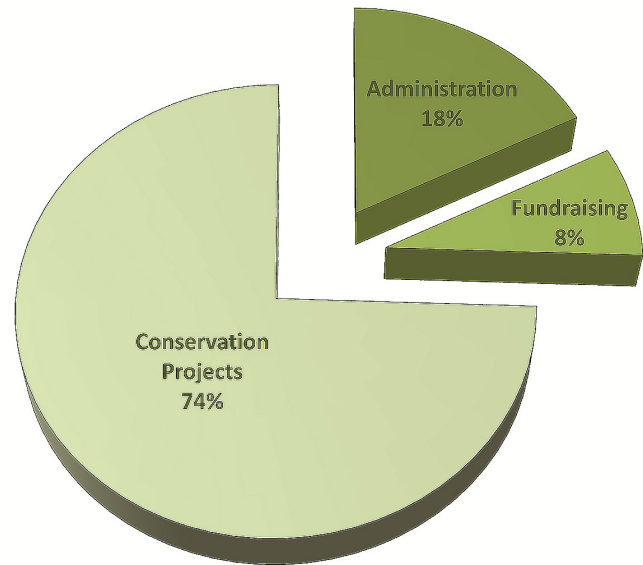
If you would like to volunteer as a citizen scientist, please contact Sara: szahendra@vtecostudies.org or 802-649-1431

Accountability

2010 Revenue Sources



2010 Revenue Uses



2010 Profit & Loss

Income

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Restricted Project Income | 378,694 |
| Program Income | 9,200 |
| Donations | 285,508 |
| Investments | 957 |
| Other | 3,619 |

Total Income 677,978

Expense

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Personnel | 452,214 |
| Business | 3,383 |
| Contract Services | 48,755 |
| General Office | 36,677 |
| Mailing | 4,485 |
| Travel | 35,074 |
| Meeting & Entertainment | 473 |
| Equipment | 11,263 |
| Facilities | 15,600 |
| Insurance | 4,995 |
| Bank Fees | 947 |
| Miscellaneous | 1,531 |

Total Expense 615,396

Net Income 62,582

2010 Balance Sheet

Assets

Current Assets

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Operating Accounts | 297,500 |
| Accounts Receivable | 127,570 |
| Prepays | 5,347 |

Total Current Assets 430,417

Fixed Assets

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Furniture and Equipment | 4,428 |
|-------------------------|-------|

Total Fixed Assets 4,428

Total Assets 434,844

Liabilities & Equity

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Accounts Payable | 2,597 |
| Credit Cards | 3,477 |
| Accruals | 28,660 |
| Deferred Revenue | 40,215 |
| Payroll Liabilities | 234 |

Total Current Liabilities 75,184

Total Liabilities 75,184

Equity

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Unrestricted Net Assets | 297,079 |
| Net Income | 62,582 |

Total Equity 359,660

Total Liability & Equity 434,844

Tributes

Gifts Given in Honor

Tadgh Bannon
Amy Bannon

Charles Baxter
Terry Rich

Dorothy "Pete" Blackador
Patricia Stewart

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Margaret Borden
Bernard Buteau
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Jerry and Gretchen McFarland

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Frank Miller

Don and Amy Peterson
Judy Peterson

Judy Peterson
Donald Peterson
and Amy Rader

Roger Tory Peterson
Anonymous

Oscar Ravenel
Curtis and Mallory Ravenel

Redpoll's Arrival
Sherman and Laura Kent

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Chris Rimmer
DB Blockstein
Charles and Wynne Browne

Iain Edward Wallace
Jim Wallace

Thelma White
Libby Hillhouse

Dave and Karla Widness
Kristine and Scott Woelber



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In honor of **Sally Buteau's** birthday, friends and family contributed donations to the **Vermont Loon Recovery Project**

(Above: *Chris Rimmer enjoys a visit with Sally and her uncle, Abbott Fenn*)



Gertrude Anderson was never happier than when she was watching loons and other lake wildlife. Her connections with the real world kept her young.

Gertrude Anderson
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Meredith Morgan
Donald and Bertha Pease
Mary Van Iderstine
Vernon Elementary School
Alice Williams

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Sally Buteau

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Bartram Cadbury
Mrs. Virginia Cadbury

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Anne Dannenberg

R. Allyn Culver II
Tina Culver

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Rufus Niles
Frances Niles

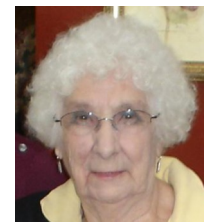
Dr. Dennis W. Pett
Jean Pett

Esther Renfrew
Virginia Renfrew

David Sargent Rogerson
Anita Rogerson



VCE and the Peacham Pond community bid a sad farewell to **Robert "Bob" Franklin**. A strong advocate for preserving the beauty, wildlife and peace of Peacham Pond. Bob, and his wife, Aileen, were especially passionate about the resident loon pairs and their chicks.



Patricia Jarvis loved watching the loons on Lake Eden. She was always excited to know whether they would have twins or just one baby. If she saw a loon nearby, she would grab her binoculars to get a better look and her camera for a few pictures.

Byron "Connor" Roosa
Richard and Kathryn Roosa

Lucille Roy
Anonymous

Toddy Sloan
Emily Sloan

Elizabeth A. Straus
Ramsay Ravenel

John Tarbell
Monica Ray and Albert Key, Jr.

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Memorial photos provided by family & friends.

VCE wishes to thank its contributors and partners.

Zadock Thompson

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Peter Stettenheim and George Clark
enjoy the VCE Anniversary Party

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