

Uniting People and Science for Conservation



VERMONT CENTER
FOR ECOSTUDIES

MISSION

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) advances wildlife conservation across the Americas through research, monitoring, and citizen engagement.

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Front: Northern Saw-whet Owl
© MICHAEL SARGENT
Back: View from Mount Mansfield
© JASON HILL

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ECO AmeriCorps Members:
Pete Kerby-Miller, Julia Pupko

Left: Chris Rimmer
Right: Peter Brooke



DEAR VCE FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

Many of us have had our breath taken away by stunning footage from *The Messenger*, an award-winning 2018 film that leads with a male Indigo Bunting flying gracefully, strongly, and purposefully, holding its precise position in an experimental wind tunnel. Most birders are also familiar with “kiting” in birds of prey and gulls—a behavior whereby flying birds maintain stability, even as their bodies are buffeted by wind. In many respects, 2020 proved to be a year in which VCE kited with astonishing success, managing to stay both steady and focused while the world around us was anything but. As we look back on a year that was chaotic and unpredictable, VCE can be proud that we achieved equanimity and that you—our friends, partners, volunteers, and supporters—did the same, enabling us to not only survive, but also continue to flourish during the COVID-19 era.

As the following pages attest, VCE stayed resilient and strong during 2020—and improvised, innovated, and invested to secure our robust future. As we execute our aspirational strategic plan (see vtecostudies.org/about-us/strategic-plan), we are thinking ahead to thoughtful growth, needed diversification, and inevitable change. The pandemic may have put a temporary crimp in our plans, but only in terms of their timing. The sense of unity and resolve that pervades VCE only heightened in 2020. From staff to board, community scientists to donors, conservation partners to the concerned public, every member of the extended VCE family pitched in. We experienced a few moments of uncertainty, to be sure, but never a shred of actual doubt about resolutely advancing our mission.

As we look ahead to 2021, we have all confidence that VCE will continue to kite through the inescapable turbulence that lies ahead. We'll also power through and beyond the squalls as we strive to magnify our conservation impact. With your help, we'll meet challenges head-on, embrace new opportunities, and make a difference for biodiversity.

CHRIS RIMMER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PETER BROOKE
BOARD CHAIR

*WITH YOUR HELP,
WE'LL MEET
CHALLENGES HEAD-
ON, EMBRACE NEW
OPPORTUNITIES,
AND MAKE A
DIFFERENCE FOR
BIODIVERSITY.*

Discovery

▼ Two bees from *Augochlorini* tribe on a coneflower

iNaturalist observation by marklisa91 (CC BY-NC-SA)



“As our activity profoundly alters the map of life, our response requires knowledge of plant and animal distributions across vast landscapes.”

—KENT MCFARLAND
VCE CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST

Biodiversity Data at Your Fingertips

From its inception, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies has been a leader in identifying and mapping the state's biodiversity. In 2020, VCE again broke new ground with the launch of the Vermont Atlas of Life (VAL) Data Explorer. It's the newest implementation of the Living Atlas platform, powerful software developed in Australia and gaining users eager to discover and share information in countries around the world.

"As our activity profoundly alters the map of life on local and global scales, our response requires knowledge of plant and animal distributions across vast landscapes and long periods of time," says Kent McFarland, VCE conservation biologist and project leader. "The VAL Data Explorer is a tool that brings us closer to that understanding."

The VAL Data Explorer offers users—free of charge—a way to explore millions of records of plants, animals, and fungi found in Vermont. It is a collaborative, open, digital platform that combines Vermont biodiversity data from multiple sources, making it accessible and reusable. VAL also links Vermont to worldwide biodiversity projects.

"There's a team of developers, centered mostly in Australia but also around the globe, who are continuously evolving the Living Atlas software, which comprises many interlinked databases and toolsets based entirely on free and open-source software," says Jason Loomis, the VAL project software developer who helped implement the software for VCE.

Vermonters have long upheld a tradition of documenting biodiversity. Biologists and volunteers recently completed major statewide atlases of birds, butterflies, reptiles, and amphibians, and new biodiversity information is added every day via Vermont eBird and the Vermont Atlas of Life on iNaturalist. Yet these efforts represent a fraction of the state's biodiversity data. The VAL Data Explorer connects the network of individuals, scientists, organizations, and governments collecting biodiversity knowledge here in Vermont and across the planet.

The millions of biodiversity records on the Vermont Atlas are a living legacy for Vermonters. They will continue to enhance life in the state by supporting scientists, natural resource managers, policymakers, and anyone in the community with an interest in the nature of Vermont. Start exploring at val.vtecostudies.org/data-explorer.



© MICHEAL SARGENT

▲ A duo of juvenile Northern Saw-whet Owls were captured in the same net just after dawn on Mount Mansfield July 22, 2020.

View from the Ridgeline

VCE's commitment to long-term wildlife monitoring was nowhere more evident in 2020 than on Mount Mansfield, where we completed our 29th consecutive year of studying the ridgeline's breeding birds. COVID-19 necessitated some adjustments, including using ATVs to move staff and gear in early June and wearing masks during banding. And although we were unable to host our customary visitors, we did have a surprisingly successful

season. Our final tally of 453 mist net captures (356 new bandings, 46 "returns" from previous years, 51 within-season repeat captures) of 36 species was slightly higher than in recent years. Blackpoll Warblers topped the charts with 63 individuals (59 new bandings, 7 returns), while Bicknell's Thrushes again proved the most site-faithful species, with 17 returnees among our 43 captures, the oldest a 10-year-old male banded as a yearling in 2011!



▲ Bicknell's Thrushes again proved the most site-faithful species, with 17 returnees among our 43 captures.

© CHARLES GANGAS

Numbers of two species—Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Purple Finch—easily eclipsed their previous single-year banding records, with 14 and 26 individuals, respectively. Our three Northern Saw-whet Owls also established a station record, and the capture of a Western Palm Warbler in September was our first-ever. With northeastern North America's only long-term, high-elevation bird banding station, VCE is in an enviable position to explain the population dynamics of montane forest birds. Moving forward, we will mine our rich repository of data for a 30-year retrospective, which is certain to yield intriguing insights.—Chris Rimmer



© COLLEEN GI VIA eBIRD

VERMONT eBIRD

Bid for Top Birding Honors

From the first day of 2020, when eBirders reported an incredible 81 bird species, to the discovery of a Crested Caracara in Woodstock, Vermont, birders scoured fields and fens, mountains and meadows in a friendly competition to find the most species during the 10th annual Vermont eBird County Quest. Part discovery, part conservation, and mostly fun, the year-long quest gives birders a welcome excuse to head outdoors in search of top birding honors. In the process, they also collect invaluable data for science and conservation. In 2003, Vermont eBird was the first state portal established for Cornell Lab of Ornithology's global eBird project. Since then, bird watchers have shared an astounding number of checklists, making Vermont eBird the largest community science biodiversity project in the state.

—Kent McFarland

▲ A Crested Caracara, a scavenging relative of falcons native to Florida, the desert southwest, Mexico, and southward, was observed in Woodstock in March 2020.



100,020

CHECKLISTS

Submitted to Vermont eBird in 2020, representing 293 bird species tallied by 3,340 birders.

Fifty-four percent of the total lady beetle observations ever made in iNaturalist in Vermont were made in 2020.

Rediscovering Lady Beetles

The pilot year of the Vermont Lady Beetle Atlas yielded some fascinating data. Most notably, community scientists rediscovered two species that had been lost for more than 40 years: the Four-spotted Spurleg Lady Beetle and the Octavia Lady Beetle. In total, 36 native lady beetle species have been recorded in Vermont since the early 1900's.

Enthusiasm for lady beetles was also high. Fifty-four percent of the *total* lady beetle observations ever made in iNaturalist in Vermont were made in 2020. Of 1,707 "research-grade" Lady Beetle observations uploaded since the inception of iNaturalist in Vermont, over half (914) were recorded this year. This clearly shows the tremendous data-gathering power of a mobilized legion of community scientists!

—Julia Pupko



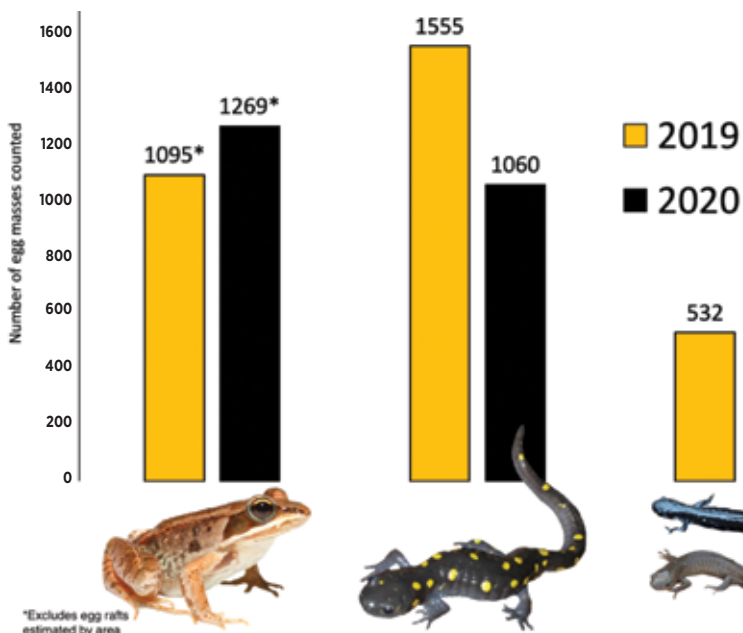
© DENIS DOUCET

Pooling Our Resources

We added 13 pools—for a total of 56—to cover more of Vermont's landscape during the third year of the Vermont Vernal Pool Monitoring (VPMon) Project. Many dedicated volunteers returned for their second or third year, bringing with them invaluable knowledge of their pool and the project. Although COVID-19 restrictions limited data collection, several eager monitors joined the VPMon team. This spring, monitors completed a total of 125 visits, including 28 pools that were visited three times. Each one provided a valuable snapshot of that vernal pool's ecology and phenology.

Although the number of visits was down, the number of Wood Frog egg masses was up. Monitors found fewer Spotted, Blue-spotted, and Jefferson Salamanders, but that's likely due to the reduced number of visits. Additionally, we started monitoring three more pools that contained fairy shrimp, which boosted our count to 990, from 123 in 2019. Monitors also counted an astronomical number of caddisfly larvae—2,741—compared to the 401 in 2019.

We look forward to using the data gathered to answer some important questions, among them how do Wood Frog chorusing times relate to ambient temperature year-to-year? Will pools dry earlier—and will frogs call earlier—as the climate changes? We hope that, as we build our community of vernal pool monitors, we can engage in research during multiple life stages and gain a more complete understanding of their ecology. —Kevin Tolan



◀ Comparing egg mass counts of vernal pool indicator amphibians (Wood Frog, Spotted Salamander, and Jefferson x Blue-spotted Salamander complex) between 2019 and 2020

Citizen Engagement

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies promotes wildlife conservation across the Americas using the combined strength of scientific research and citizen engagement.

▲ Community scientists collect data that help VCE create population health indicators for various species.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE OPPORTUNITIES



© MIKE ZIMMERMANN

Mountain Birdwatch

Each June, volunteers hit the trails to complete bird survey routes on 123 mountain ridgelines across the Northeast.



© SEAN MCCREARY

LoonWatch

On the third Saturday in July, volunteers conduct a one-day census of Vermont's breeding loons. Loon monitoring throughout the summer is optional.



© STEVE FACCIO

Forest Bird Monitoring

Each June, volunteers monitor breeding birds on 31 sites across Vermont in one of the continent's longest-running studies of forest bird population trends.



© ALEX WELLS

Vernal Pool Monitoring

In April, May, and September each year, volunteers visit and collect data to monitor "adopted" vernal pools following protocols and using VCE-provided equipment.

Exploring the Data

While data are indispensable to a statistical understanding of mountain bird populations, community scientists contribute much more than the sum of their datasheets. Outstanding ecological studies are often inspired by the direct observations of naturalists in the field. Birders survey the same routes year after year, developing a sense of how populations might vary at a site through time. Such observations are now a resource for other birders through two new VCE tools. ECO AmeriCorps member Pete Kerby-Miller designed two interactive R Shiny apps—available at VCE’s website—to enable anyone to explore the Mountain Birdwatch dataset gathered by hundreds of community scientists across nearly a decade. “Our goal was to develop tools to empower folks to look for their own patterns in the data,” says VCE conservation biologist Jason Hill.



▼ Blackpoll Warbler

© K.P. MCFARLAND

CROWD-SOURCED COMMUNITY SCIENCE TOOLS

Volunteers share observations of various forms of Vermont biodiversity in these digital projects:



© GLORIA TOWNE

eBird



© K.P. MCFARLAND

eButterfly



© K.P. MCFARLAND

Wild Bee Survey



© KAREN BOURQUE

iNaturalist Vermont

2

NEW VCE TOOLS

MAP EXPLORER
REVIEW MOUNTAIN BIRDWATCH DATA FROM 2010 TO 2018—BY REGION, SPECIES, AND SURVEY ROUTE.

ELEVATION AND LATITUDE EXPLORER
DISCOVER PATTERNS IN THE MOUNTAIN BIRDWATCH DATASET ACROSS ELEVATION AND LATITUDE.

2020

BY THE NUMBERS

COMMUNITY SCIENCE PROJECT VOLUNTEERS

LOON CONSERVATION PROJECT

352

MOUNTAIN BIRDWATCH

92



VERNAL POOL MAPPING

40

FOREST BIRD MONITORING

28



BIRDER BROKER

VERMONT WILD BEE SURVEY

9

23



WHIP-POOR-WILL PROJECT

LADY BEETLE ATLAS

332

20



© K.P. MCFARLAND

Whip-poor-will Project

On clear, moonlit nights in early summer, volunteers travel between roadside survey points to listen for Whip-poor-wills and record surrounding conditions.



© K.P. MCFARLAND

Phoenix Project

Volunteer naturalists help digitize an historic collection of bird observation records spanning nearly a century.



© JOANNE RUSSO

Moth Blitz

During National Moth Week in July, volunteers in Vermont leave the porch light on—or use special lights and baits—and help map moth species distribution.



© DAVID ENRIQUE

Lady Beetle Atlas

After a record-breaking year of lady beetle data gathering, the effort will help develop species occurrence values for all 36 native species.

Collaboration

▼ Many species, including Eastern Wood-Pewee, whose populations have declined in Vermont by 35 percent during the last 25 years, may benefit from bird-friendly maple management.



VCE is working with Audubon Vermont and the University of Vermont to help maple producers sustainably manage their forests for birds and sap.

Tapping Into Better Sugarbush Management

Forests that produce maple syrup can be managed in very different ways—some of which may provide better habitat for birds than others. In a new partnership with Audubon Vermont and the University of Vermont, VCE is spearheading a two-year study to test forest management guidelines for maple producers.

Traditional management techniques focus on maximizing sap production and frequently result in park-like, closed-canopy monocultures of mature sugar maple. This lack of plant diversity and habitat may reduce the forest's value for birds and other wildlife and make it more susceptible to disease and pests. To address these issues, Audubon Vermont, working with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation and the Vermont Maple Sugar Maker's Association, initiated the Bird-Friendly Maple Project to guide producers who wish to make forest management decisions with birds in mind. "The same northern hardwood forests that supply nearly one-half of our nation's maple syrup each year also support some of the highest diversities and abundances of breeding birds in the continental United States," says Audubon Vermont's Steve Hagenbuch.

Audubon recommends increasing the diversity of canopy tree species and forest structure by ensuring a range of age classes from seedlings to large trees, which in turn encourages forest regeneration, creates complex forest layers, and promotes long-term sustainability of the sugarbush. VCE's two-year Bird-Friendly Maple Efficacy Study aims to determine whether these management guidelines result in measurable benefits to the bird community. We began this summer by quantifying birds and their invertebrate prey in seven sugarbush stands and unmanaged forests. Ultimately, we hope the results improve Audubon's sugarbush management guidelines and advance biodiversity conservation in Vermont's working forest landscape.

—Steve Faccio



© BARE WOOD

▲ Loon with her chick on Kent Pond

96
PAIRS NESTED

65
PAIRS
HATCHED
120
EGGS

3
NEW NESTING
PAIRS
IDENTIFIED

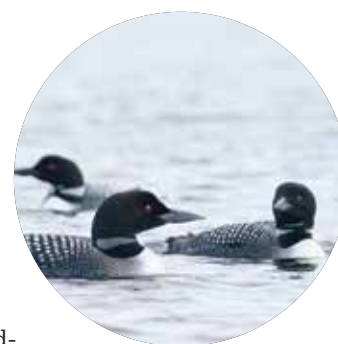
75
CHICKS
SURVIVED
THROUGH
AUGUST

125
LAKES HAD
LOONS
DURING JULY 18
COUNT

Loons By the Numbers

Everyone was looking for some normalcy in 2020 and the loons provided it. Based on the observations of hundreds of volunteers through the Vermont Loon Conservation Project, we found loon productivity was slightly below the record-breaking 101 nests of 2019. The Vermont chick survival rate was 74 percent—or 0.56 chicks per pair, above the North American average of 0.52 chicks per pair. The slight drop in productivity can be explained by a higher percent of territorial pairs not nesting and a lower nest success rate. Thirty-three pairs took the year off for various reasons, including competition, marginal habitat, possible mate switches, and low water levels. Predation seems to be the No. 2 cause of nest failure. On the bright side, after years of little success, three chicks fledged from two territories on Little Averill Lake.

—Eric Hanson



© LEE CORDNER

Caribbean Connection: Bridging Two Worlds

During 2020, VCE's Caribbean program hit the quarter-century mark and continued its dual focus, with field projects on both Cuba and Hispaniola. On Cuba, we wrapped up our four-year effort to clarify the status of Bicknell's Thrush in the country's mountainous southeastern region. Our dedicated local partners at the conservation group Centro Oriental de Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad led a weeklong field expedition to the remote El Toldo, a high-elevation plateau deep inside eastern Cuba's Alejandro de Humboldt National Park. Covering more than 60 miles on foot and conducting nearly 90 point counts, we learned a great deal about where Bicknell's Thrush are not (we found no birds). Our conclusion: Bicknell's Thrush is a cloud forest specialist on the island. VCE's Cuba findings reaffirm the strategic need to continue focusing conservation efforts in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Without doubt, Cuba provides critical and secure refuge for Bicknell's Thrush, even if it doesn't harbor a mother lode. Moreover, our Cuban colleagues are committed to collaborating to study and conserve this globally vulnerable species.

Our longstanding partnership with Dominican NGO Grupo Jaragua continued to bear fruit in 2020. VCE Advisory Council member Yolanda León spearheaded innovative efforts to conserve and restore degraded forests in the critically important Sierra de Bahoruco National Park. Beginning with purchase of a 93-acre degraded parcel adjacent to high-quality cloud forest, then signing of a sales agreement on a similar 247-acre parcel, and finally a carefully researched and executed reforestation plan, this work is both historic and exemplary. In the Cordillera Septentrional, a region known to be crucial for overwintering female Bicknell's Thrush, Jaragua's Andrea Thomen and longtime VCE collaborator Hodali Almonte joined forces to monitor thrush populations in recovering forests of the country's only private reserve and formulate best management practices for reforestation there.

As VCE's Caribbean strategy evolves toward supporting our local partners' on-the-ground conservation efforts, we are encouraged to see their (and our) hard work achieve tangible success.

—Chris Rimmer



▲ Field surveys confirm Bicknell's Thrush is a cloud forest specialist on Cuba.

➤ Chris Rimmer and Cuban colleague Jose Ramon Fuentes survey for Bicknell's Thrush in cloud forests of the Sierra Maestra's Pico Botella.



© NICASIO VINA DAVILA

© INSET: K.P. MCFARLAND; NICASIO VINA DAVILA

© SPENCER HARDY

▼ The Sunflower
Burrowing-Resin
Bee was discovered
in Vermont by Kevin
Hemeon.

Backyard Bonanza

Community scientists found a silver lining to COVID-19 restrictions in their backyards during 2020. With a concerted effort to recruit people to explore their backyards and neighborhoods for the Vermont Wild Bee Survey, we had 533 volunteers photograph and share 5,098 bee observations on the Vermont Atlas of Life on iNaturalist project, doubling 2019 numbers. This represented 125 confirmed species—including a new species for Vermont. Kevin Hemeon discovered the Sunflower Burrowing-Resin Bee near Bennington, part of an isolated population of this species centered around the Massachusetts-New York-Vermont border.

Across the state, VCE staff, volunteers, and our regional partners—including Green Mountain National Forest, Merck Forest and Farmland Center, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service—collected 4,834 bee specimens representing 262 different species—including 50 new species for Vermont. Coupled with our work in 2019, we have now identified more than 330 bee species. And we didn't have to go far from home: In a Montpelier backyard, I turned up Vermont's first record of the Constrained Cuckoo Carder Bee, a nest parasite of Resin Bees, which nest in old beetle holes in dead wood. This year we also documented 13 introduced bee species in Vermont that could compete with native bees for food and nesting areas.

—Spencer Hardy



Outreach



Nature Now

With more than 330 species in Vermont, bees play a far greater ecological role than providing honey for humans. Through July and August, Spencer Hardy, VCE Vermont Wild Bee Survey coordinator, introduced students to the mind-blowing diversity of shapes, sizes, and life histories of bees found in almost any habitat. In his North Branch Nature Center online class, Bees of the Northeast, Hardy also offered guided field challenges based on the flowers and bees currently active.



© CHRIS ALBERTINE

Outdoor Radio

Frogs and ferns, finches and fungi—anything is fair game for Kent McFarland and Sara Zahendra, cohosts of our popular monthly show, *Outdoor Radio*. VCE teamed up with Vermont Public Radio's chief production engineer Chris Albertine to educate (and entertain) listeners on the third Wednesday and Thursday of the month. In 2020, the crew joined forces with experts from around the state to explore invasive jumping worms, the mating calls of Red-wing Blackbirds, and the hoarding habits of Blue Jays. Listen to the show at vtecostudies.org/outdoor-radio.

Field Notes

Field Notes, our annual spring and autumn news magazine, offers in-depth explanations of the field work, science, and conservation efforts of VCE biologists and our community scientists. Learn about what we've been doing and how you can join us to study and conserve wildlife. Find past issues online at vtecostudies.org/field-notes.

eNews

Every month, VCE's electronic newsletter, *eNews*, brings the outdoors to your email inbox. We report on the innovative field work of VCE biologists and breaking news from the frontiers of conservation biology—here in Vermont and beyond. *eNews* is short and designed to inspire you to explore the natural world. Subscribe at vtecostudies.org/subscribe or find past issues at vtecostudies.org/enews.



▼ Each week, Julia Pupko explains how to make the most of iNaturalist.



© MICHAEL SARGENT

Perfect Pairing

Lunchtime Learning Serves Up Tutorials and Natural History

Ever wondered how to identify that species of lady beetle, set up a camera trap, or edit your iNaturalist profile? Grab a sandwich and sit down to

Lunchtime Learning with ECO AmeriCorps member Julia Pupko, VCE's community science outreach naturalist. From noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays she delivers a menu of iNaturalist tips through the lens of a seasonally relevant Vermont natural history topic. It's a bite-sized, interactive lesson to help you make the most of various iNaturalist features. Sign up for the series and find previous webinars at vimeo.com/showcase/7718869.

Suds & Science

Hosted by VCE biologist Jason Hill, Suds & Science is definitely not a lecture—it's a community conversation where fans of science can enjoy local craft beer and engage with experts from a variety of fields. Jason interviews scientists about the intersection of their lives and their research—often incorporating questions from the audience. If you were one of the hundreds of folks who attended VCE's 2020 lineup of thought-provoking evenings—first at the Norwich Inn and then virtually from the comfort of your living room—you learned about fascinating topics such as the migratory habits of salamanders and frogs and the uncertain future of the more than 330 species of wild bees in Vermont. Find videos of past events and learn how to register for the next lively conversation at vtecostudies.org/suds-and-science.

▲ *eNews* and *Field Notes* inform and inspire you to explore the natural world.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

	AS OF 12/31/20	AS OF 12/31/19
CASH	\$1,072,561	\$770,848
CONTRIBUTION RECEIVABLES	33,781	23,994
GRANT RECEIVABLES	52,202	58,544
PREPAID EXPENSES	16,529	10,279
CURRENT PORTION PLEDGES RECEIVABLE	29,540	—
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,204,613	863,665

INVESTMENTS

EQUIPMENT, VEHICLE, WEB, NET 28,100 35,495

PLEDGES RECEIVABLE, LESS CURRENT PORTION SHOWN ABOVE 9,715 —

TOTAL ASSETS \$1,769,915 \$899,160

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE 34,982 14,017

ACCRUED PAYROLL & RELATED TAXES 110,215 82,952

DEFERRED REVENUE 604 16,995

CURRENT PORTION OF CAPITAL LEASE OBLIGATION 1,347 1,207

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES 147,148 115,171

CAPITAL LEASE OBLIGATION, LESS CURRENT PORTION 1,072 2,597

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$148,220 \$117,768

EQUITY

UNRESTRICTED 1,221,782 444,014

TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED 399,913 337,378

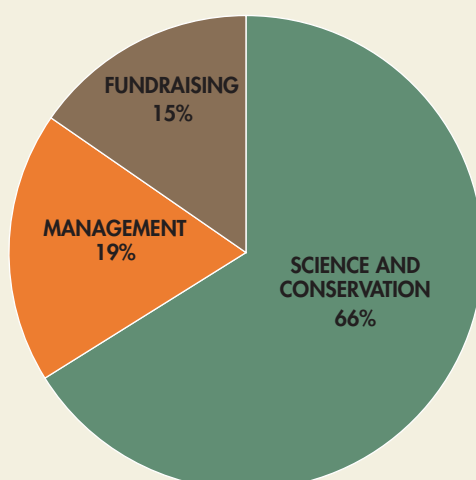
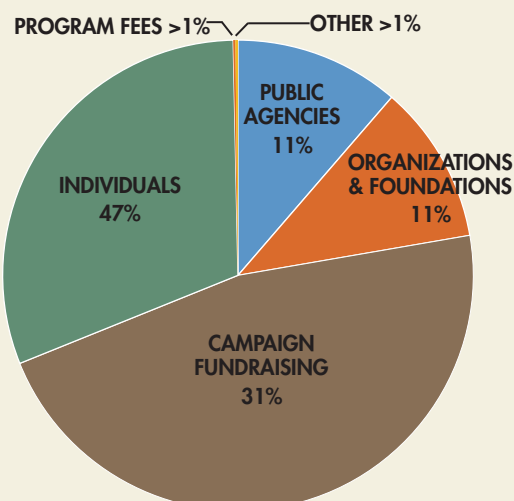
TOTAL NET ASSETS \$1,621,695 \$781,392

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$1,769,915 \$899,160

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

2020 REVENUE

PUBLIC AGENCIES	\$224,725	CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING	610,175
ORGANIZATIONS/FOUNDATIONS	216,922	PROGRAM FEES	2,946
INDIVIDUALS	924,124	OTHER	3,518
TOTAL REVENUE			\$1,982,410



The figures that appear in the financial summary shown above have been audited and received an unqualified opinion.

VISIONARIES

\$25,000+

Anonymous (3)
The Estate of Jeffrey Bendis*
The Sarah K. de Coizart Article Tenth Perpetual Charitable Trust
Binnacle Family Foundation
Peter W. and Ruth H. Brooke*
Annette Gosnell*
Jared and Songmei Keyes*

LEADERS

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Anonymous (3)
Estate of Anne T. Aversa
Peter A. Brooke Fund at the Boston Foundation
Erika and Brian Dade
Robert and Lisa Holley
Horne Family Foundation
Gale Hurd
Warren and Barry King
Emily Landecker Foundation Inc.
Clare C. Rimmer*
David Roby
The Ruml Leithner Family Fund
Ruth Stewart*
TechFoundation Inc.

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\$5,000 to \$9,999

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George Clark*
Conroy Family Foundation at Fidelity Charitable
Birgit and Andy Deeds
Gillette Hill Fund at Fidelity Charitable
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Wendling Fund of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
Wilson Conservation Trust
The Wildwood Foundation
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\$1,000 to \$4,999

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Charitable Science & Wildlife Conservation Foundation

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 John and Margot Ernst
 Fidelity Charitable (3)
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 Jim and Susan Ford
 Judy Geer and Dick Dreissigacker
 Jonathan Gibson and Eliza Mabry
 Susan Gillotti*
 Donna Goldberg
 Goldman, Sachs & Co. Matching Gift Program
 Mary and Stephen Gorman Fund of American Endowment Foundation
 The Grace Jones Richardson Trust
 Donald Graham and Carol Barr
 Great River Hydro
 Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society Inc.
 Norman and Jane Hanson
 Andrew and Mandy Hoar
 Donna Hollinger
 Sarah Jones
 Barbara M. Jordan
 Gregory Kaufman and Ellen Seidman
 Krusi Beisswenger Contribution Account at TIAA Charitable Giving Fund
 Lawson's Finest Liquids
 Steve Leach and Kathy Kirkland
 LOTS Family Fund at Vanguard Charitable
 John and Carolyn Marsh
 Gade McArdle LLC
 Stephanie and Philip McCaull
 Martha McDaniel and Stephen Plume
 Winifred McDowell and John Follett
 Kent and Clare McFarland
 Gary and Nancy Meffe
 Bill Mercia
 Harriet and Harry Mitiguy Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation
 Morgan Stanley Donor Advised Fund
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VCE COMMUNITY SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR

JASON CROOKS

The pandemic's restrictions greatly hampered the Mountain Birdwatch survey program in 2020, closing many trails to overnight camping and limiting observers' access. Despite these restrictions, Jason Crooks' unwavering dedication to mountain birds prompted him to find a way to safely and compliantly survey three routes—continuing a commitment to the program he has been fulfilling for almost 15 years. VCE has honored Jason's efforts with its inaugural VCE Community Scientist of the Year award in 2020.

"If you didn't encounter him during your day hike last June, you'd be forgiven—you'd have needed infrared goggles and a much earlier start to see Jason hiking up a couple of his routes at 3 a.m.," says conservation biologist Jason Hill. "Four hours later, he was on his way back down before most hikers had hit the trail."

The Westford, Vermont, resident currently surveys a route on Worcester Mountain (elevation 3,293 feet) and two routes on Mount Mansfield (4,393 feet) with his stepson, Sage. Jason also conducts annual surveys through VCE's Forest Bird Monitoring Program and monitors a falcon nest on Nebraska Notch on Mount Mansfield as part of Audubon Vermont's Peregrine Falcon Recovery Project. "I look forward to spring each year," says Jason, "partly because I know I'll be sitting quietly on a mountainside listening for my avian friends to return."



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JULIE NICHOLSON COMMUNITY SCIENCE AWARD

JOANNE RUSSO



© GERRY BIRON

JoAnne Russo joined iNaturalist in 2012 and has since recorded 1,068 moth species in Vermont and helped identify almost 26,000 entries for other moth observers. "It is hard to talk about moths and iNaturalist without JoAnne immediately coming to mind," says VCE conservation biologist

Kent McFarland. "One of the region's foremost (and self-trained) moth experts, JoAnne has helped keep the taxonomy of the Vermont Moth Atlas up to date, never failing to alert us when a new moth for the state is reported and confirmed." VCE recognized her dedication to science and conservation in 2020 with the Julie Nicholson Community Science Award. The award honors the legacy of VCE volunteer Julie Nicholson and her commitment to birds and wildlife conservation through her tireless work as a community scientist.

JoAnne's fascination with nature began as a child. "My parents bought me my first field guide, and I used my grandmother's opera glasses to identify the birds," she says of watching birds at the feeders of her family home in Connecticut. When she and husband Gerry Biron moved to Rockingham, Vermont, JoAnne continued looking for new birds. "I started entering my lists in eBird in 2006 and continue to this day," says JoAnne, who also serves as an official counter at the annual Putney Mountain Hawkwatch raptor count. She worked with naturalist Alma Beals on the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid survey in southeastern Vermont, participated in VCE's Vermont Bumble Bee Atlas survey, and joined former Vermont Forest Health entomologist Trish Hanson in curating the state's insect collection.

Learn more about this award and JoAnne's service as a community scientist at vtecostudies.org/about-us/community-science-award.

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**"Keep up the good fight!
VCE packs a lot of punch
in a small package."**

—JEREMY COLEMAN

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In honor of the Bennington Men's
Adventure Book Club
Ray Canning
In honor of Peter Brooke
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Ecotudies
Nancy Tehan
In honor of Vermont Center for
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In memory of Thelma Rodriguez
Greenwood Lake Association

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Great River Hydro
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Forest Ecosystem Monitoring
Cooperative
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Conservation Group

FEDERAL - UNITED STATES

Green Mountain National Forest
National Park Service
U.S. Dept. of Defense Legacy
Program
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service Office of
International Programs
U.S. Geological Survey
White Mountain National Forest

INTERNATIONAL

Atlas of Living Australia
Centro Oriental de Ecosistemas y
Biodiversidad (Cuba)
Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano
(Dominican Republic)
Environment and Climate Change
Canada
Grupo Jaragua (Dominican Republic)
Insectarium Montreal (Canada)
Space for Life in Montreal (Canada)

NONPROFIT - DOMESTIC

Adirondack Center for Loon
Conservation
Adirondack Mountain Club
Appalachian Mountain Club
Acute Mountain Audubon Society
Audubon Vermont
Birds Caribbean
Birds of Vermont Museum
Biodiversity Research Institute
California Academy of Sciences

Cornell Lab of Ornithology
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Loon Preservation Committee
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Atlas

State - Maine

Maine Dept of Inland Fisheries &
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State - New York

N.Y.S. Dept of Environmental
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Vermont Agency of Transportation
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Department

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Tufts University Wildlife Veterinary
Clinic
University of Arizona
University of New Hampshire
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In memory of Daniel Rome
Wally Malley and Garet
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In memory of Deborah Williams
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GIFTS TO THE ALEXANDER DICKEY CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP FUND

Berger Family Fund at the New
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John and Lucy Douglas
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Charlotte S. Metcalf
Alyssa Rimmer and Matthew
Henderson
Nick Scheu

2020 CROWD-SOURCED DATA PROJECTS

VERMONT ATLAS
OF LIFE ON
iNATURALIST

6,176

VOLUNTEERS

177,850

OBSERVATIONS

6,622

SPECIES
IDENTIFIED

eBUTTERFLY
IN VERMONT

544

VOLUNTEERS

38,500

RECORDS TO
THE VERMONT
DATASET

8,300

CHECKLISTS

eBIRD
IN VERMONT

2,850

eBIRDERS

977,840

BIRD RECORDS

100,020

COMPLETE
CHECKLISTS

22,000

PHOTOGRAPHS

523

SPECIES

ONE SPECIES NEW
TO THE STATE:
EUROPEAN
COMMON BLUE
(*Polyommatus icarus*)



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