SANCTUARY

Newsletter of
The
White Memorial
Conservation Center
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Fall 2025

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
Sunday 12:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.
For Information
Phone: 860-567-0857
E-Mail: info@whitememorialcc.org
Website: www.whitememorialcc.org

Illustrations in Watercolor, Olivia Tonge, British
From her travels in India, 1908 –1913
Natural History Museum, London

Why Scientific Illustration Still Matters

by Gerri Griswold, Director of Administration & Development, The White Memorial Conservation Center

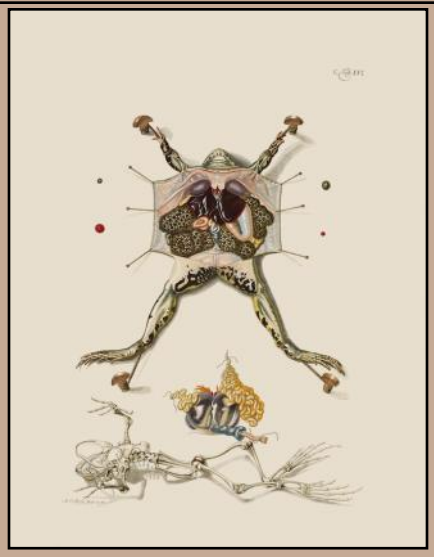
In an age filled with high-resolution cameras and digital renderings, it might seem like hand-drawn scientific illustrations are a thing of the past. But in reality, they're more important than ever. Scientific illustration is a unique way of communicating complex ideas and visuals that even the best photos can't always capture.

Columbine, Larkspur, and Wolfsbane,
Anne Pratt, British /
Watercolor from Wild Flowers, 1852

Unlike photographs, scientific illustrations can highlight specific details, remove distractions, and focus only on what's essential. An illustrator can combine information from different sources—like microscope images, written descriptions, and expert input—to create one accurate, detailed image. This helps scientists, students, and the general public better understand what's being shown.

A Young Hare
Gouache, Albrecht Durer, German, 1502
Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria

Another key benefit is that illustrations are carefully constructed to represent concepts or systems as clearly as possible. Take something like the solar system or the human cell: a photo might show one part of it, but a drawing can show the full picture, scale things to size, and even show what can't be seen in real life.



Hand-colored engraving of frog dissection from
"Historia Naturalis Ranarum Nostratium"
August Johann Rösel von Rosenhof , German, 1758

Scientific illustrations also play a big role in education. They break down complex ideas in a way that's easy to grasp. Whether it's textbooks, museum exhibits, or online articles, these visuals are powerful tools for learning.

Scientific illustration is more than art—it's a method of storytelling. It connects science to people by making complicated things understandable and engaging. On the following pages we'll celebrate modern illustrators who keep this exceptional art form alive.

Amanda Surveski

WILDLIFE ART

https://www.amandasurveski.com/

I am first and foremost an artist. I've always been drawn to and had an affinity for nature. Growing up, I was always surrounded by plants and animals as we lived in the rural woods of northwest Connecticut. We often viewed deer, turkeys, bears and copious amounts of birds right through our back windows. From an early age I started drawing, keeping a sketchbook of the things that inspired me. Sometimes it was a cartoon character from a TV show, other times it was the fruit in our fruit bowl. Everything was interesting to me and I always had questions; why is that bird in our yard? Where do the bears go in the winter? I always wanted to know more.

As I continued my education I excelled at biology and anything relating to the natural world, but I was always pulled back to the arts. While I considered majoring in biology or scientific illustration, I ended up at an arts college because I wasn't entirely sure what I wanted to do with my life, or with a degree. During my time in college, I was able to study abroad in Lacoste, France, part of the Provence region of the country. This was my first time leaving the US, and it gave me a chance to be thrown into an unfamiliar environment, to be unsure of who I was and to explore. Life moves slower in the French countryside, and I had a lot of time to think about what it was I really wanted to do with my life, what I really wanted to spend my time drawing and making. It was again outdoors in nature, in that small village, I came to realize that I have always been inspired by nature. I spent time wandering through orchards, hiking the valleys and exploring tiny medieval villages, and I realized I was always looking at the plants, the foliage, the birds in the sky, the snails hidden off the path…I loved nature, and I always had. I wanted to share that beauty and awe I felt with others. During my time in Lacoste, I continued to create artwork inspired by the landscapes and the wildlife, taking inspiration from the rabbits and early spring florals. I was fortunate to have my first work displayed internationally here, and to sell pieces that now reside in the French countryside.

Sometimes it just takes putting yourself in a new space to realize what you've known all along.

After four years I graduated with a BFA in illustration and minor in scientific illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design. I did not initially know what I wanted to do out in the big professional world, so I started working for myself as an illustrator and graphic designer. During that time I was working

A favorite picture from my time working in wildlife rehab

long hours, alone in my home, so to get out I started working in wildlife rehab. I volunteered for a few years with Audubon Sharon and was able to care for hundred of songbirds, waterfowl, birds of prey, small mammals and opossums (my favorite!). Getting to interact directly with native wildlife gave me so much inspiration and helped me focus my first few years out of college specifically on our native species. But also getting to interact with the public helped me understand how much of a gap there is between what we think we know about our world and how much we have to learn. It was during this time I decided to focus on the various species in our environment, so we can better understand their roles and the importance of conservation efforts. This knowledge can help us notice potential threats to wildlife, such as habitat loss, pollution, and climate change, even in our own small towns of rural Connecticut.

I continued to work on my small business; creating illustrations and graphics for Mystic Aquarium, mailings for White Flower Farm, audiobook covers for Tantor Media, and collaborating with other small businesses to create logos, product designs and much more. But I was always making art featuring our native wildlife on the side. I am now fortunate that I can take on less design work and mainly focus on creating wildlife art.

My background in illustration allows me to work in multiple types of media. I prefer graphite and colored pencil, but I also use watercolor and acrylic. I am constantly outdoors around my home or hiking or sitting by a river, sketchbooking and taking photos along the way, and finding inspiration all around me. I now sell my work in shops across New England (including White Memorial!), in galleries across the US and online. I teach workshops and classes on drawing and nature journaling. I was published in a series of nature coloring books, and had some illustrations featured in a French magazine. Two years ago I completed two large scale murals for the KidsPlay Museum. I even work as a naturalist, and have spent time working in Southeast Alaska as a naturalist for a cruise line. And through all of this work, I get to continually make art, draw nature, and enjoy each step of the process. Although, it's hard to pick what piece I want to start next! I've been fortunate do so much with my art, it's taken me across the world multiple times but there are still many places I hope to travel to in my lifetime (the Galapagos, the Amazon rainforest, and Antartica), and many I dream of returning to (the Masai Mara, Iceland and Alaska). And I hope to spend the rest of my days drawing out in the wild, cataloging the species I see along the way. Whether it's out in the African plains, or fjords of Iceland, I want to be anywhere there's nature and wildlife.

One of my favorite pieces made in recent years, Common New England Pollinators. It was such a compositional challenge to try and fit all these species of flora and fauna together. But it allowed me to really play with all the elements and work on creating a harmony that felt balanced and leads your eye around to each specimen. And at the end of the day, it provides the viewer with an opportunity to learn more about how much each and every species of insect, bird and bee matter towards pollination.

A deeper connection with wildlife can enhance our engagement and coexistence with nature, it reminds us that we are part of a larger ecological network that goes beyond our own day to day life. We can learn so much from the world around us.

Forest Fawn, Amanda Surveski

Death of a Voyager, Amanda Surveski

<u>The Raft, Amanda Surveski</u>

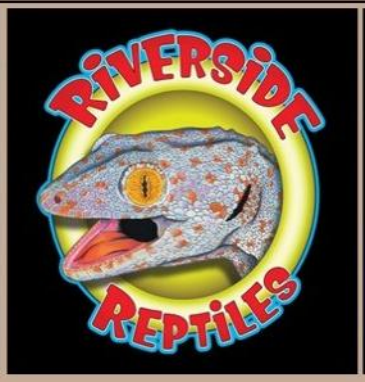
Inspired by my travels in Southeast Alaska, The Raft depicts what I often saw around Sitka and Glacier Bay National Park. Sea otters will group together in formations called a 'raft' and bob in the water, grouping for safety and security from predators. This piece was another compositional challenge that allowed me to bring some humor and expression into wildlife art. All the sea otters depicted are based off photos I took while traveling.

*This is one of the first pieces I made that really highlighted wildlife that was **not** native to New England. I continue to bring the wildlife I see and photograph during my travels back into my artwork.*

THE WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER
PRESENTS THE 43RD ANNUAL

FAMILY NATURE DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2025
11AM - 5PM + ADMISSION $6.00
CHILDREN UNDER 12 & CENTER MEMBERS FREE


FERNCROFT WILDLIFE RESCUE: OPOSSUMS
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Debby Mason - Printmaker

https://www.debbymason.com/

I come without formal scientific training, but my journey as an artist/printmaker has always been deeply rooted in close observation and a heartfelt love for the natural world.

Growing up by the sea, with family holidays spent rockpooling, crabbing and surfing - I was endlessly fascinated by the colours of the fish, seaweeds, and the rock pools appearing and disappearing with the tides.

Drawing from an early age, with endless encouragement from my family, art became my chosen path, with a BA (Hons) degree in Printmaking , then the setting up of a workshop.

Redfish (Norway Haddock)

My ideas start with patient observation, from diving beneath the surface to sitting quietly by the water's edge. I sketch from life whenever possible- whether that means drawing a fish freshly landed at the fish market or visiting aquariums or museums. Every detail matters, tiny scales, patterns and colours.

Illustrating marine creatures and wildlife has been both a creative challenge and a personal passion, requiring patience and a desire to capture the unique details and hopefully the

Brill

character of each subject. I illustrated a cookery book, 'The Game Cook', and wrote several recipes too - mainly birds which was a wonderful departure; feathers are so similar to scales! Little did I know how important birds were to become to me many years later.

It has been an honour to see some of my work used in scientific publications, a recognition that my illustrations can support and compliment scientific understanding.

The Artist in her studio, Oreston, Plymouth, Devon, England

Much of my work has been devoted to marine life, culminating in a fully illustrated guide (waterproof!) celebrating the rich diversity of our coastal waters. My hope for the guide is that it will awaken in the reader the same affection for the ocean and also educate and encourage determination to keep its marvels safe for generations to come.

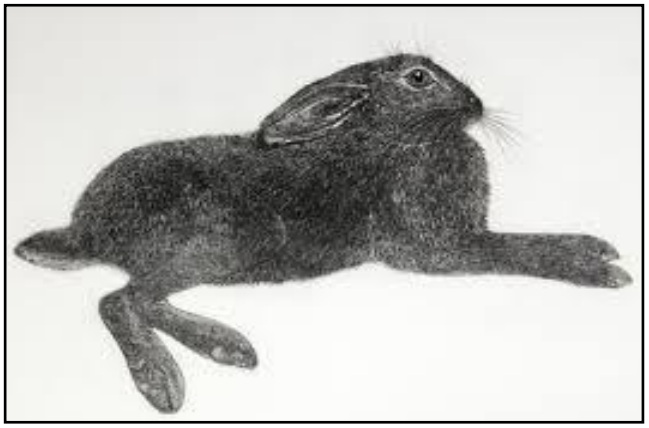
Canada Gosling

A dream project- I'm currently working on! The visits of Canada geese and their goslings to my seaside home have inspired a new, partly autobiographical book - an intimate exploration of connection, companionship, curiosity and the quiet bonds that have formed between us. From day old goslings being brought onto the garden to be introduced, one goose who flies up onto the roof of the cottage until I appear with some breakfast- he comes when called, but has flown into me on numerous occasions when he has misjudged his landing distances…to Angel, who has been coming back for ten years - he is blind in one eye and has a broken foot. Despite his disabilities, he follows me around the garden, tries to snatch food from my picnic lunches outside and has decided he is partial to a piece of croissant, with or without homemade marmalade!

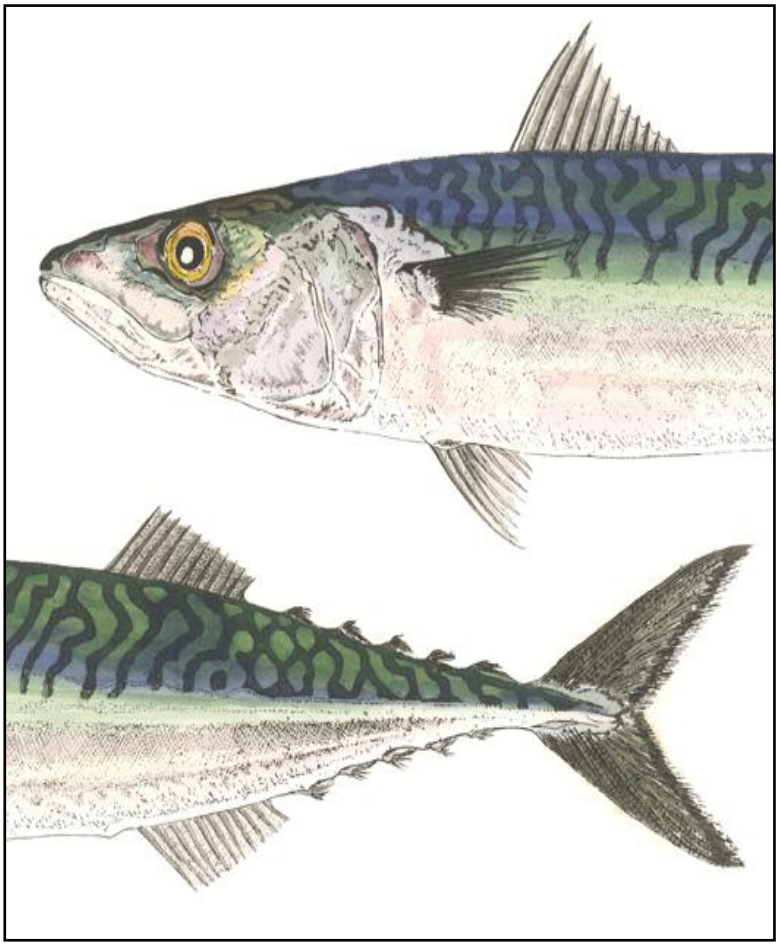
In all that I do, I am privileged to follow a long tradition, despite my lack of any marine biological, scientific background - early naturalists and scientists were also artists. Before photography and refrigeration, their discoveries had to be painstakingly and swiftly recorded by hand.

My marine guide and book will be a gallery of encounters, an invitation to wander with me and to share in the wonders that have shaped my career and my life.

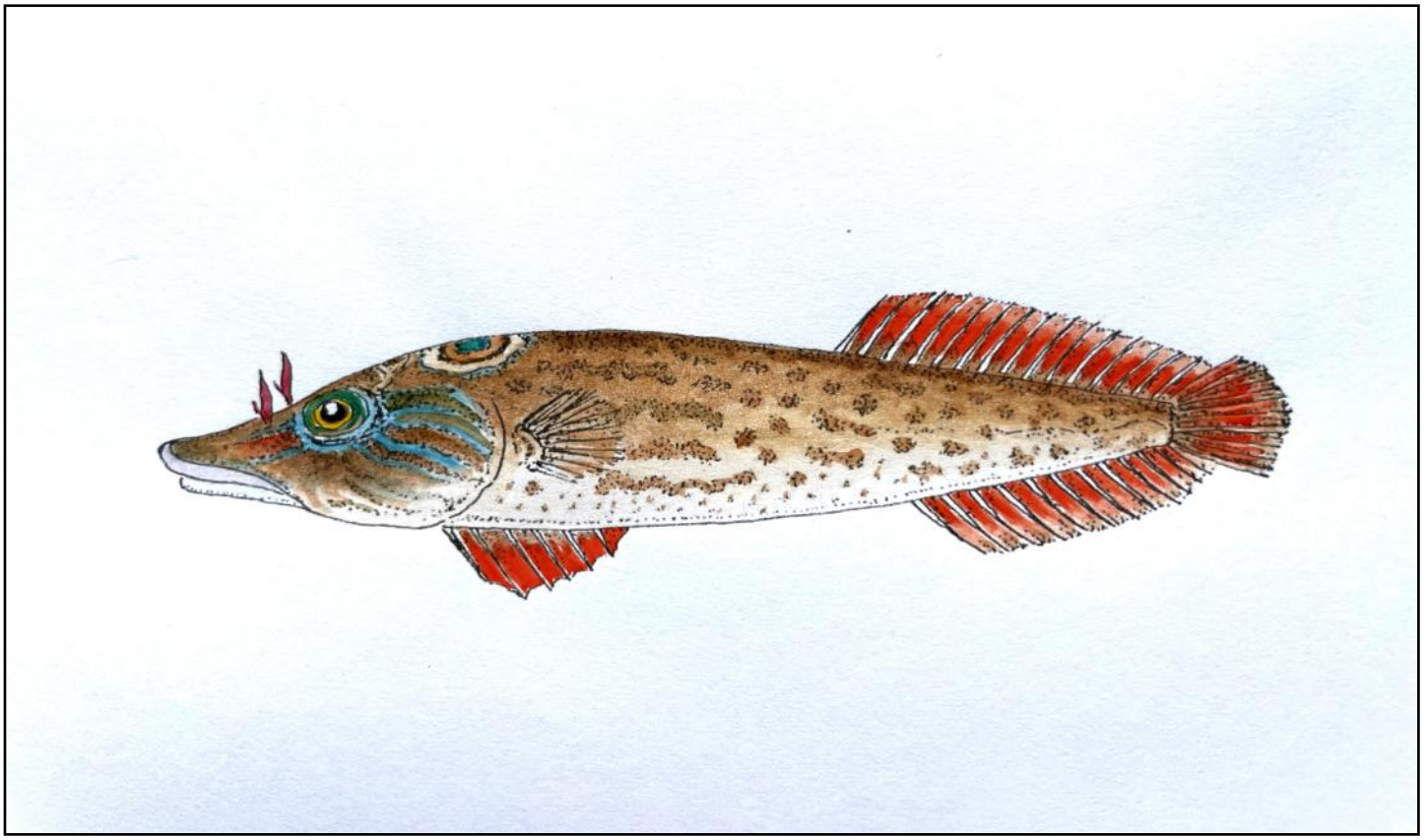
Green Crab, Debby Mason



Hare II, Debby Mason



Mackerel, Debby Mason



Cornish Sucker, Debby Mason

2026 ANIMAL CARE FUND APPEAL

The Conservation Center reaches out to you
for help in defraying the monumental cost of
caring for our
animal ambassadors throughout the year.

The annual expense of taking care of our birds,
reptiles, and amphibians is approximately $8000!

Your donation, no matter how small,
would be greatly appreciated!

Yes! I'd like to help the animal ambassadors at The White Memorial Conservation Center with my gift of:

( )$10 ( )$25 ( )$50 ( )$75 ( )$100 ( )Other $_____

Name:_____ Address:_____State:_____ Zip:_____

Please make your check payable to WMCC, 80 Whitehall Road, P.O. Box 368, Litchfield, CT 06759
Your donation can also be made on-line or over the phone by credit card! Visit www.whitememorialcc.org or call us at 860-567-0857!

Jerrod Cattey Trio Presents: A Charlie Brown Christmas

Experience the magic of the season as the trio brings to life the timeless music from the 1965 holiday classic ***A Charlie Brown Christmas***.
You'll be transported straight into the heartwarming world of Peanuts, offering the perfect mix of nostalgia and jazz in a performance suitable for listeners of all ages.

Saturday, December 13, 2025
2:00 p.m., Carriage House, Admission: New Gloves, Hats, Socks, Mittens, Scarves to be donated to F. I. S. H. of Northwestern Connecticut
Please pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org
THIS CONCERT IS MADE POSSIBLE BY A KIND SPONSOR

HIGH SCHOOLERS: "ALUMNI" HIKE UP BEAR MOUNTAIN
Saturday, October 25 9:30am-3:30pm

Do you miss the fun you had at White Memorial's summer camp or other nature programs? Let's meet up again for the "ultimate" climb in CT – Bear Mountain in Salisbury! If you are in 9th-12th grade and have attended summer camp or any other kids-only program at White Memorial, here's your chance to reunite with old friends and scale CT's tallest peak together. Education Director Carrie Szwed will be your leader. Portions of this hike are steep and difficult to climb. Wear your best hiking shoes and bring a snack, lunch, and water. *9:30am-3:30pm. Transportation will be provided by White Memorial to and from the site. Meet in the A.B. Ceder Room promptly at 9:30am. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required. To register, visit whitememorialcc.org to call 860-567-0857. Space is limited! Please inquire about financial aid as needed.*
Members: $30/person, Non-Members: $45/person

GRADES 1-6: ONE-DAY FUN DAY!
Grades 1-3: Tues, Dec. 30, Grades 4-6: Fri, Jan. 2 9:30am-3:30pm

Grab your coat, boots, and hat, and let's spend one of your vacation days learning about the natural world around you. Get outside, play games, make crafts, and meet live animals!
A morning snack will be served between adventures. Please bring a lunch and water bottle, and wear appropriate clothing for the weather. *Parents/Guardians are welcome to stay, but it is not necessary. Meet in the A. B. Ceder Room. 9:30am-3:30pm. Pre-registration and payment are required. To register, visit whitememorialcc.org to call 860-567-0857. Space is limited! Please inquire about financial aid as needed.* **Members: $40/child, Non-Members: $70/child**

Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

https://www.fauna.is/defaulte.asp

Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

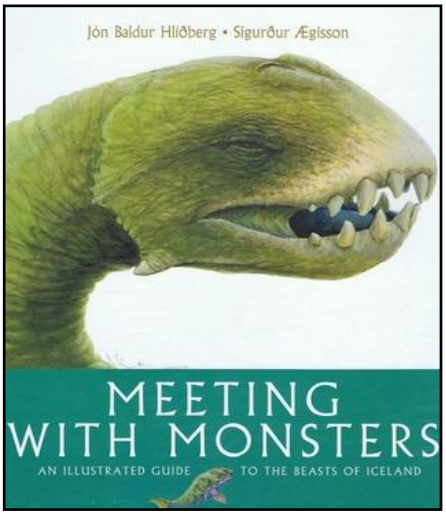
I guess I was always interested in scientific illustration. I still have somewhere pictures since childhood of taxonomic trees and I also remember a picture of our common shorebirds all together on a beach for comparison since I was around 10 years old. So I guess this "explaining " factor was always in my work.

I have no specific background that could explain why I am where I'm at except my deep admiration for all things living. I have been fascinated by birds primarily from childhood, a fascination that I needed to express which I did by starting to draw and paint. The 10-year-old me had a wall in my room where I painted a landscape full of birds; for this I used all kinds of surplus paint from the household, so there was a drive to express this love.

My teenager years were a long stroll through the desert. I abandoned my drawing and painting almost completely. I could always draw and doodled a lot which ended by an employer of mine pushing me to take art class after work when I was around 20. My teacher there pushed me to take the entrance exams into the *Iceland Academy of Fine Arts* (Listaháskóli Íslands) which I did and I was accepted. After this the ball started rolling and natural history illustration became what I wanted to pursue, despite serious objections from teachers at the academy who had no interest in such things..."Art" it was not and I was pressured to give it up, which I did not and gave up the school after a year and half out of four. I was however employed as a teacher at the academy about a year later.

I love my profession and a new project is always exciting. No specific part of the process seems challenging, but I do admit that the sheer amount of work I have undertaken has caused a bit of angst. Looking at printed excel sheets with 350 entries each representing a fish species to be painted from specimens looks like a mountain you need to climb, barefoot. The Flora project ended up with well over 1,000 images drawn. But you tackle it by never wallowing in the whole job, concentrate on each image and then the next and suddenly your halfway through.

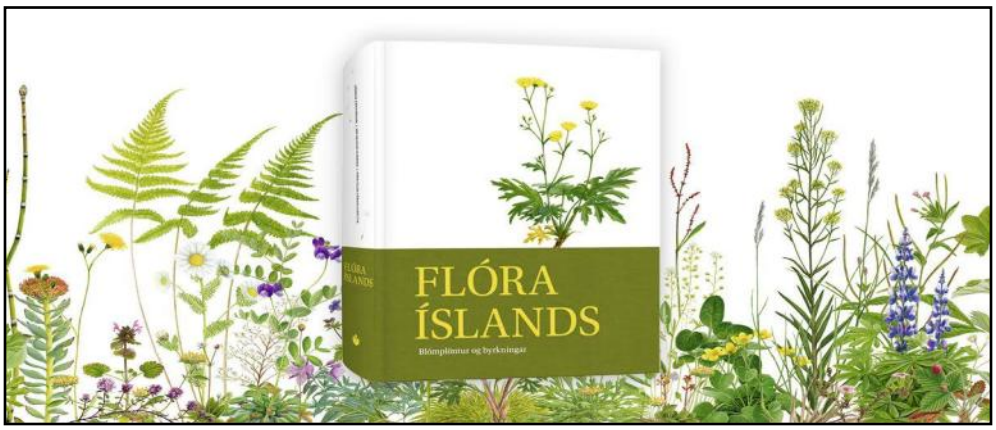
The most meaningful. I can't really say. As I was finishing my first large book, *The Birds of Iceland*, I started dreaming of doing 3 more books on Icelandic nature: the mammals, fish, and last the flora. Now they are all done and I tend to view these as one. So my 'life work" is one task delivered in 4 volumes. I usually focus very hard on each of my illustrations and at that time it consumes me and it is the most important thing I've done.



I must add that perhaps the most meaningful project was the *Meeting with Monsters*. That was almost untouched by prior illustrators and I managed to provide something that kicked new life into an almost forgotten sector of Icelandic folklore. Schools took it with open arms. It still sells and I can see its impact widely.

There are so many things I would like to do, I'll need to live another 300 years to do it all. Now that I look back and see that I have done what I set out to do as my life work, the pressure is off and I feel I can start perhaps a little more poetic career. I want to do the birds over again in a slightly different way. My 4000+ images of wildlife have mostly been to illustrate what they look like. Now I hope I can illustrate their personalities and how I see them in my mind...serenade each and every one...make a bridge between the scientist in me and the poet in me. I have done all this from love of nature. It's my dream to caress my friends perhaps with more feeling than cold hard facts.

I feel the effects of years piling on. I have never had the opportunity to indulge in styles or to take backroads or side streets on my journey. I have stayed on the highway in the fast lane to get the things done, so I really don't have any other styles or sideshows. I doubt that I will be able to evolve much from here on. I am content, and as I have embarked on two new large projects that will require years of work, I will probably just polish what I have a bit more before I dissolve physically and disappear into natures never-ending cycle of life and death.



Cod, Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

Icelandic Whales, Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

Maine Lobster, Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

Tiny Architects of the Wetland Floor

By James Fischer, Research Director, The White Memorial Conservation Center

How leaf-litter micro-habitats build dinner for little brown bats and other insectivores

At dusk, you can watch little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) fly above our marshes and swales, gleaning insects over the water. What we don't see is the quiet machinery that made those insects possible: the layered, oxygen-rich, moisture-holding micro-habitats in the leaf litter at the wetland's edge. Autumn is when that machinery gets rebuilt—one falling leaf at a time.

A mosaic underfoot

Wetlands aren't flat. They're a quilt of micro-topography—hummocks and hollows, sedge tussocks, sphagnum mats, seeps and tiny rivulets—each creating slightly different temperature, moisture, and oxygen conditions. Tussock sedge clumps keep litter aerated above the waterline; hollows stay saturated and cool; downed logs hold pockets of humidity; slow backwaters catch drifting leaf "packs." This fine-scale variety is what turns "dead leaves" into habitat.

Who lives in the litter?

Leaf-litter communities are busy and specialized:

- Shredders & grazers like amphipods (*Gammarus*), isopods (*Asellus*), crane fly larvae (Tipulidae), caddisfly larvae (Trichoptera) in submerged leaf packs, and springtails (Collembola) in the top layer. They convert leaves into tiny, energy-rich bits that move up the food web.
- Predators—rove beetles (Staphylinidae), ground beetle larvae (Carabidae), wolf spiders—hunt among the leaves and roots, keeping grazer populations balanced.
- Micro-engineers—fungi and bacteria—soften and pre-digest the leaves, changing chemistry and texture so animal shredders can finish the job.

Many of these creatures don't stay in the litter. As water warms in spring and early summer, midges and caddisflies complete their metamorphosis and take flight *en masse*. Those evening swarms over ponds and wet meadows are a buffet for little brown bats.

From leaf pack to bat snack

Diet studies consistently show the little brown bat capitalizing on aquatic-emerging insects, especially caddisflies, non-biting midges, craneflies, beetles, and moths—concentrated along wetland margins and over still water. In other words, when we protect the soggy, "messy" edges where leaf litter accumulates and decomposes, we're directly supporting bat foraging. The timing matters too. Autumn leaf-fall drives the detrital food web through winter, so there's a strong pulse of adult insects the following warm season—right when maternity colonies need energy for lactation and fledging.

How we are sampling the edges: light + ultrasound

To see how leaf-litter habitat translates into bat food, we pair UV light traps with ultrasonic acoustic recorders along wetland margins. The UV traps attract the emerging aquatic insects at the water's edge linked to leaf-litter food webs. In parallel, full-spectrum bat detectors record ultrasonic bat calls and we identify to species-level when call quality allows (e.g., little brown bat versus big brown bat). Because both systems run on the same nights, we can test a simple hypothesis—when prey is abundant along wetland edges, bat activity and hunting efficiency increase—and analyze patterns by distance from the maternity colony, weather and micro-habitat. Community members can help by joining a setup or morning check, recording weather and habitat notes, and leaving gear where it is placed.

Field notes: what naturalists look for

On your next walk, kneel and "read" the ground:

- Submerged leaf packs in backwaters or at the mouths of tiny channels—lift one gently and you may see caddisfly cases and amphipods flicking away.
- Sedge tussocks with a dry crown and wet skirt—peel back the outer leaves to find crane fly "leatherjackets" in the moist zone.
- Sphagnum carpets—cool, springy mats harbor springtails and beetle larvae.
- Coarse woody debris—the underside stays damp, a refuge during dry spells.

Please replace what you lift; the micro-climate matters.

Continued on page 12

Little Brown Bat, Watercolor, Kathy Goff https://artsfvac.org/portfolio/kathy-goff

Journey of a Scientific Illustrator: Dorie Petrochko

https://www.doriepetrochko-studio.com/

Dorie Petrochko

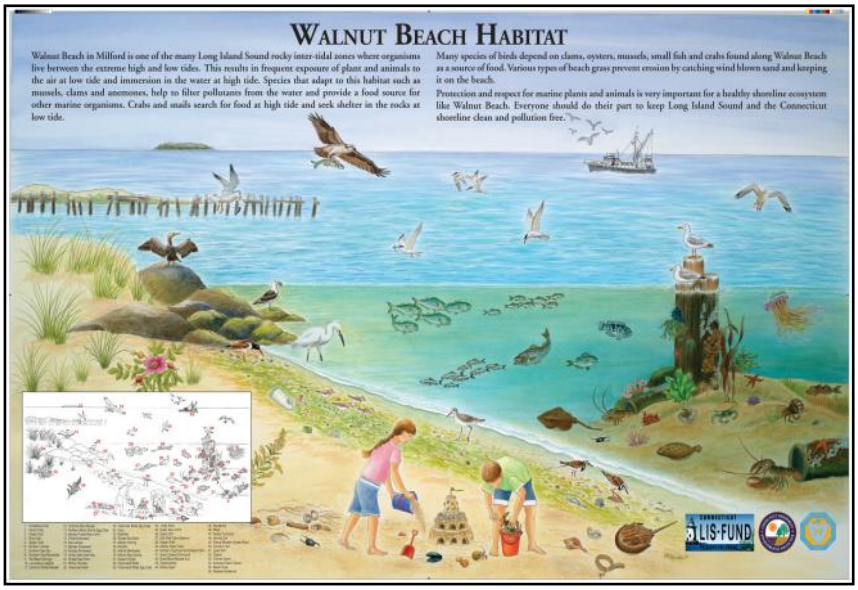
I began my creative journey at the age of 12 when I begged my mother for art lessons. In the summer of 1960, I took oil painting lessons from Robert Brackman, a renowned NY artist who had a summer studio in Madison, CT. I was not crazy about oils, nor did I want to paint nudes, but I did get a taste of what it was like to be around artists, and I adored that! That experience was instrumental in my decision to study art.

I chose art as my major in college and have never looked back. Art has always been my driving passion. Lingering in the background was my love for birds and all things natural science. I started birding with my father at an early age and began drawing birds in my early teens. Feeding a Swallowtail Hummingbird on vacation in Jamaica was a transformative experience. Being so close to something that fragile touched me profoundly. Since then, I have never lost my fascination for the natural world and how it impacts my work. Moved by a bird, animal, plant or insect, I feel compelled to create my unique version of its existence.

As an adult, my practical side kicked in and I chose to pursue a career as an art teacher. Logging in many years of teaching art to young adults took its toll. I felt that teaching was robbing my artistic soul. Luck had it that my teaching position was eliminated and I quickly acted to accept an artist residency in Costa Rica. Knowing that the flora and fauna of Costa Rica were breathtaking, I was not aware of the impact it would have on my future. I was unleashed to explore the entire country on my own and wasted no time in doing so. I became immersed in the lushness of color, the diverse habitats and their unique species of plants, animals and insects. This is where I wanted to be in my life. And this is where my journey of being a scientific illustrator began.

There was no turning back; In 2001, I proceeded to enroll in the New York Botanical Garden's Natural Science Illustration Certificate Program. For my final portfolio project, I chose to research and paint birds of the Everglades. For this project, I received the prestigious Don Eckleberry Fellowship award which allowed me to reside and paint in Florida. In 2007 I completed my certificate. It was a tremendous confidence builder, and I began to meet fellow illustrators throughout the *Guild of Natural Science Illustrators* and ultimately ended up as a volunteer in the Yale Peabody Museum's Vertebrate Zoology department, where I spent hours cataloguing birds nests, bones and eggs. I met some amazing people there and began using the bird specimens for my bird paintings. One thing led to another, and my fellow artist colleagues and I got wind of the availability of classrooms at Yale's West Campus. We were eager to start a natural science illustration program there.

In 2009, we were granted permission to teach classes in Natural Science Illustration at Yale's West Campus. Four of my colleagues from New York Botanical Garden and I formed an LLC: Connecticut Natural Science Illustrators, under the umbrella of the Yale Peabody Museum. We launched our program in 2010, and we are still in existence! There are students enrolled from 9 different countries and 13 different states in the US. In addition to being a successful program, it has provided us with a substantial part-time income.



Silver Sands Conservation Center Interpretive Sign

Being a natural science illustration instructor and being a member of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators opened many doors. I began entering shows and focusing on my bird paintings. The Guild chapter in CT scheduled theme shows at the Yale Environmental Center where members' work was exposed to the Yale community.

My most meaningful project was an interpretive outdoor sign for the Silver Sands Conservation Center at Walnut Beach. I was commissioned by the town of Milford to create a 2' x 4' illustration depicting the intertidal zone at Walnut Beach with its species that adapt to extreme high and low tides. This project involved a huge amount of research and rough sketching before it was finalized, but in the process, I came away with an education in marine biology!

Since my tenure at the Yale Peabody Museum, my illustrations have been published in *The Explorer– The Newsletter of the Yale Peabody Museum*, *New Haven Magazine, The Guild of Natural Science Illustrators, Backyard Pollinators* (a coloring book) and *The Why's of Bird Names* by Eleanor Stickney.

It is my dream to be accepted into *Birds in Art*- the world's most prestigious bird art exhibit at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin. I have been trying for 10 years! I have been analyzing the jurying process for years and am puzzled why some artwork is accepted and others not. Although I have sold 70% of my work, the acceptance into this show eludes me!

I work mostly from my own photographs or sketches of birds. Occasionally, if a birder friend takes a photo that is particularly good, I will ask their permission to use it for a painting. I have an interesting project I am now contemplating which is a circle of freshly banded baby kestrels. What I like about it is their eyes and their talons, all poised in self-defense mode. They are all in different positions in a circle looking straight at the viewer.

Outside of science/birds, I am an avid gardener (veggies and flowers) and that is a favorite source of inspiration. I am a member of Mad Gardeners, a group of very serious gardeners.

I do have a style thay I turn to which is less exacting. I enjoy creating mixed media backgrounds in which I often place detailed subjects. I like the mystery of not knowing the outcome and having the "surprise element" to both background and foreground. What is most challenging? I would say trying to rescue a painting that has gone astray.

In short, what people should appreciate about natural science illustration is that it has been in existence for billions of years. Cave paintings have existed as a testament to man's relationship to wildlife and the forces of nature. There is nothing more powerful than this.

Cypress Vigil, Watercolor, Dorie Petrochko

Stealth, Oil, Dorie Petrochko

Remembering Gene Marra

By Keith Cudworth, Retired Executive Director, The White Memorial Foundation

White Memorial's first Executive Director, Gene F. Marra, passed away on June 13, 2025 at the age of 100. Gene landed in Litchfield in 1978 after a long career as a school educator, administrator, and the leader of a state wildlife organization. The 1970's were a pivotal time for White Memorial both financially and operationally, and Gene was the right person at the right time to address these issues. During his tenure, the White Memorial Conservation Center was incorporated and an endowment fund established; the nature museum went through three renovations culminating in the major renovation in 1998; the Carriage House was renovated; numerous White Memorial-owned cottages and houses were sold to the tenants; the list goes on. Gene oversaw all of these projects and more, making White Memorial what it is today, and putting the Foundation and Conservation Center on solid financial and operational footing.

White Memorial Foundation Executive Director Lukas Hyder (center) flanked by his predecessors Keith Cudworth (left) and Gene Marra (right) at lunch on August 15, 2023. Marra served as Executive Director from 1978 - 1998.

Despite having been retired for 27 years, Gene kept up his interest and support of everything about White Memorial. He was interested in every project and freely offered his advice and opinions, good or bad. My last visit to see him was this past April, while he was in hospice. Despite everything going on, White Memorial was the main topic of the day. His insight and tenacity at the age of 100 was nothing short of amazing. He will be missed.

Become a member of
The White Memorial Conservation Center
and take advantage of the member discount,
along with free admission to the Nature Museum,
a discount in the Gift Shop,
and receipt of the quarterly newsletter.
Your tax-deductible fee will help sponsor a rich array of programs for children and adults.
A family membership is $60.00 per year. An individual membership is $40.00 per year.
https://whitememorialcc.org/join-renew/

Teachers, Parents, and Group Leaders,
Check out what we can offer your children!

PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS/GROUPS
can be presented at White Memorial,
at your facility, or even virtually!

The Possibilities are Endless...
Amazing Adaptations
The Wildlife Outside Our Windows
Animal Tricksters
Do the Locomotion
Rare and Remarkable
...Plus So Many More!

To view all program descriptions and for more information,
visit whitememomorialcc.org,
call 860-567-0857, or email
carrie@whitememorialcc.org.

Alumni Hike up Bear Mountain
For Highschoolers!
Saturday, Oct. 25 (see page 7)

One-Day Fun Day
Grades1-3: Tuesday, December 30
Grades 4-6: Friday, January 2
(see page 7)

Nature's Nursery (see page 20)
First Thursday of Every Month

After-School Adventures (see page 16)
Tuesdays and Wednesdays in October

SCOUT PROGRAMS
Custom-designed programs for cub scouts and girl scouts to help fulfill badge requirements!
We also offer free camping to all youth non-profits.

Virge Kask—Visual Science & Nature Communicator

https://www.linkedin.com/in/vkask-natureartist

Virge Kask

Growing up in Willimantic, Connecticut, I always loved being outside in nature. I remember as a little girl sitting under a cluster of birch trees in our front yard drawing things that I found. I always liked to look at something to draw it. I spent many summers at my family's camp on a small lake in central Maine fishing, canoeing, swimming, and drawing. I never liked "making things up" so I would find wildflowers to draw, or frogs and salamanders, or anything else I could find. I felt very connected to art and always knew I would do something with it, I just didn't know what. My father was an engineer and my oldest brother an architect, so drawing technically and precisely was in my genes.

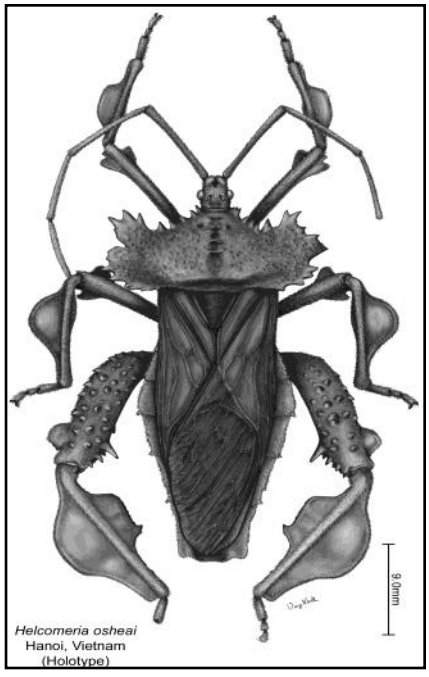
I loved taking art classes in grade school and it seemed to come naturally to me. I chose to attend the University of Connecticut (UConn), which was local and in-state, rather than an art school, as I wanted a broad education and to play sports. However, after 3 semesters as a commercial art major, I was still undecided with my direction.

One day my brother Val, who was pre-med at UConn, showed me a display in the biology building on Biological Illustration. It immediately struck me, my jaw dropped, and my eyes got big – it was truly an "A-ha" moment! It had never occurred to me that this could be a career – I always loved biology and nature - and art!! I loved dissecting earthworms and other specimens in high school biology and drawing what I saw. I finally found a way to put it all together! I went to the Illustration office where Molly Hubbard, an illustrator at UConn for 35 years, became my advisor and mentor, as did Mary Jane (Spring) Brush. As I already had a strong foundation in art, I changed my major to biology and Molly gave me a student labor job in the illustration office… the very same office I returned to in 1999 as the Scientific Illustrator and Academic Advisor for UConn Biology, coming full circle, until my retirement in 2021.

After graduating with a BS degree (1979) in Biology, I continued at UConn, receiving a BA degree (1984) in Geography with emphasis in Cartography. Upon leaving UConn, I spent many years working as a Cartographer, drawing maps for the USDA, oceanographic maps for a marine survey company in Old Saybrook, CT, and civil engineering maps in Stamford, CT before moving to North Carolina to work in the Medical Art Department at Duke University Medical Center as an artist/illustrator.

While in North Carolina, I developed a successful freelance business born out of some luck and taking a chance. I applied for an Art Director position at American Scientist (Sigma Xi) journal knowing I didn't want it nor was I qualified for it. However, my hope was that when they saw the collection of drawings I submitted with the application, they would call me to do their freelance work. Much to my surprise that is exactly what happened and so my freelance career was launched! I produced illustrations for a variety of publications in addition to American Scientist such as critical habitat posters, science journals, children's books, and K-12 science textbooks, among others. During my freelance years, I traveled to several locations such as Alaska, Belize, Surinam, and various places in the US researching habitats for creating critical habitat posters. They were printed as two-layered calendars whereby lifting the image printed on the acetate top layer, natural history information was revealed on the opaque bottom layer. These calendars were shipped worldwide by the client, Dupont.

Extinct Elephant Bird



Helcomeria osheai, Hanoi, Vietnam

In 1999, I jumped at the opportunity to return to Connecticut when the Biological Illustrator/Academic Advisor position became available at UConn when Mary Jane (Spring) Brush retired after 23 years. Staff positions at research universities are extremely rare so I was happy for this opportunity and to move back to my home state and my roots!

The primary functions as Biological Illustrator at UConn consisted of working with research scientists in all the biology departments (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Physiology & Neurobiology, and Molecular & Cell Biology) and affiliates, providing illustrations and graphic services in support of their publication and presentation needs, developing comprehensive graphics that clarify and augment their manuscripts. Much of my work as an illustrator is translating what researchers have in their heads into an illustration. Through my drawings, I try to bring life to everything from new species of insects to creatures that humans have not laid eyes on for centuries such as an elephant bird reconstruction.

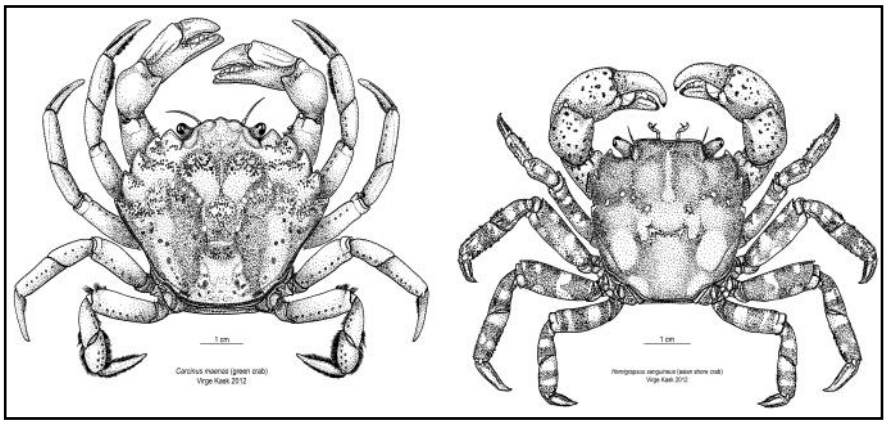
At UConn I also taught Independent Study courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels for students with an interest in learning Scientific Illustration. I also taught many workshops in Scientific Illustration to the public through the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and various conservation centers.

In my position at UConn, I tried to give back what was given to me – an opportunity for students to see that there are careers in art that people may not be aware of, but have far-reaching effects.

In my "retirement", I continue doing freelance visual science illustration for journals, children's books, textbooks, research manuscripts, and other science-related materials using traditional and digital techniques.

Frog Pond, Virge Kask

Fungi Diversity, Virge Kask



Crabs, Virge Kask

Arctic Wildlife, Virge Kask

Make a Difference

In her continuing series, Zoë Greenwood helps you find small ways to help the environment.

My Gramma used to say that weeds were just misplaced flowers. I think she was right, up to a point. But, man this year has been a year of weeds, at least where we live! Maybe it's the heat and humidity. Maybe it's the seed cycle. Maybe it's because I haven't been in the garden as much as normal because of the excess heat and humidity. I don't know. What I DO know, however, is that whenever I go out to weed, what should be a couple-of-hours job can easily turn into an all-day or even a multi - day project.

So, of course, that got me thinking about other ways to reduce or remove weeds, besides the back breaking, shoulder and wrist aching ways that I have done things up to this point. You already know, or should, I don't like to use non-organic methods on our little piece of heaven. There must be a better way. There is, of course.

As well as the season of weeds, it is also the season of garden produce and what to do with the excess. There is only so much that you can give away! So, that got me freezing and canning and drying. Drying doesn't require water…you're trying to remove that, but freezing and canning involve large quantities of hot, boiling water. When I dumped the boiling water from the blancher the other day, for some reason I decided to dump it outside instead of down the drain. Maybe I just didn't want the kitchen to be any hotter than it already was. Who knows? Right off the back steps is a field stone patio of sorts with plenty of crab grass and dandelions and other weedy things. I dumped the water on them. Problem solved. Water gone and kitchen same temperature. Imagine my surprise when I went to dump the compost later that

day…the plants that I had dumped the hot water on were dying. The next day, they were dead and only required a tiny tug to pull them out of the ground between the rocks. Hmmmm. Next day, a water bath canner full of water. Would that work on the driveway weeds? Sure did! But…I might not always have boiling water in enough quantities or at the right time.

Wonderful vinegar to the rescue! Vinegar and dish soap, mixed with water! Go to the hardware store and get 20-30 per cent concentration vinegar and mix it four parts vinegar to one part water and about an ounce of dish soap to help the vinegar solution stick to the weeds. You can also add salt, but that will cause the ground to become unfertile. Borax and water spray can help to destroy creeping plants - 1 teaspoon of borax to a gallon of water. Of course, all these methods should be used sparingly and only on weeds that you want to remove.

Sometimes, however, you're trying to remove weeds from a large area, like a place where you intend to increase the size of a garden. Cardboard or thick layers of newspaper will work there. Of course, that can be unsightly, so you'll want to cover the area with hay or wood chips or what not. Plus, it will take more time…at least one growing season. But, it works pretty well. We've done that in the vegetable garden on the pathways. We're planning on adding more cardboard… think several layers...and covering the whole area with pea gravel for better walkways in the vegetable garden…ones we won't have to mow. Plus, it will look nice and tidy!

As with most things in life, there are many solutions to the same problem. Sometimes you have to hunt and peck and try different things to get the results that you are looking for. But, if you keep at it and try, it is one small way to …

make a difference.

PRANCE ON OVER TO THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP FOR ONE-OF-A-KIND TREASURES!
Our shelves are brimming with... Stocking Stuffers, Maple Syrup, Soaps, Honey, Books, Plush Toys, Pottery, Wooden Bowls, Greeting Cards, and so much more...
Or...put on your jammies and shop online!
https://white-memorial-conservation-center.square.site/

AFTER-SCHOOL ADVENTURES

Grades 1-3: Tuesdays in October
Grades 4-6: Wednesdays in October (except the 1st)
4:00-5:15pm

Every session brings a new adventure—exploring a new part of White Memorial property, meeting a live animal, taking part in an outdoor activity! Children should be dressed for the weather with appropriate footwear. *Adults are welcome to stay, but it is not necessary. Meet in the A.B. Ceder Room.*

Pre-registration and pre-payment are required. Space is limited.
Please inquire about financial aid as needed.

Members: $9/child per session or $32/whole series
Non-Members: $13/child per session or $48/whole series

Tiny Architects *Continued from page 7*

Stewardship that helps bats (by helping litter)

Small choices add up quickly around wetlands. Here's what works:

- Let leaves lie within at least 100 feet of wetland margins. Rake away from culverts and paths, but keep the material on site as mulch.
- Keep buffers wild. Plant or allow native sedges, rushes, and shrubs to form layered edges; autumn is an excellent time to plant.
- Protect the water's "slowness." Avoid ditching or straightening tiny channels; those slack spots are where leaf packs form.
- Leave the logs. Downed wood stores moisture and moderates temperature swings.
- Go dark and gentle at night. Reduce exterior lighting near wetlands, or switch to warmer bulbs and shielded fixtures; bats and their prey both benefit.
- Skip fall pesticides. Pesticide products knock back the very invertebrates insectivores rely on.
- Mind the salt. When you manage driveways and sidewalks, avoid the deicers that are based on chloride. Keeping surfaces clear of snow and letting the sun melt the ice is a much better option in the long run.

Try this: a Leaf-Pack Explorer

Want to see the food web assemble itself? In late October, place a fist-sized bundle of mixed native leaves in a coarse mesh bag. Reuse an onion bag from the grocery store. Anchor it in a shallow, slow-moving spot or saturated edge. After 4–6 weeks, gently rinse the bag in a white tray and note who shows up—case-bearing caddisflies, amphipods, snails, cranefly larvae. Photograph and release everything back where you found it. Record what the leaves looked like before you placed them in the water versus afterwards. You might consider exploring if there are differences between the organisms that inhabit bags of a single leaf species, for example, maple versus oak. Do the leaves change? If so, how? Families and school groups can repeat this in winter and early spring to see seasonal changes.

Why it matters here

Our wetlands at White Memorial are unusually rich in microhabitats—sedge meadows graded into shrub swamps, backwaters off the Bantam Lake and River system, spring-fed seeps under hemlocks. Can you say the same for the wetlands near your home? They are likely close to roads and lawns where well-intentioned "clean-up" is common. Framing autumn leaves as habitat—not trash—helps us sustain the invisible foundation that supports the very visible darting of little brown bats and other insectivores next summer.

Bottom line: If we keep the edges messy, the wildlife stays lively.

A Well-Earned Rest

By Lukas Hyder, Executive Director, The White Memorial Foundation

John Grabowski will retire October 31, 2025 after 50 years with the White Memorial Foundation. John started here in 1974 on the crew, and he recalls that his first job was brushing out woods road edges with Dave Weik.

In the late 1970's he became the campground manager after working there for one or two summers, a position he held through this year. Winters he could be found working in the sawmill and wood shop. He has faced weather challenges, including periodic floodings of Point Folly, but the worst was the tornado of 1989, which destroyed over 200 trees and was closed for 5 weeks that summer.

John's handiwork can be found all over the property in the wooden signs and numerous picnic tables he has built out of White Memorial lumber.

On behalf of the Trustees and Staff at White Memorial, thank you John for your dedication to the campground these many years. We wish you all the best in the next chapter of your life.

Artists in Residence : White Memorial Staff Flexes Creative Muscles

By Gerri Griswold, Director of Administration and Development

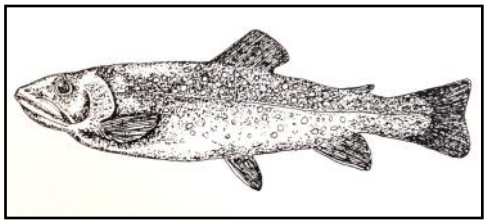
I'd be remiss if an issue of *Sanctuary* spotlighting the importance of illustration did not include work by White Memorial staff!

Although Colleen Harrak is the only one of us with formal training, Lukas Hyder and I share histories as illustrators.

The ever-humble Lukas chuckles when I ask to see his work. Forester Jody Bronson pushed our Executive Director to do more with his talent when Lukas worked for Jody at Great Mountain Forest.

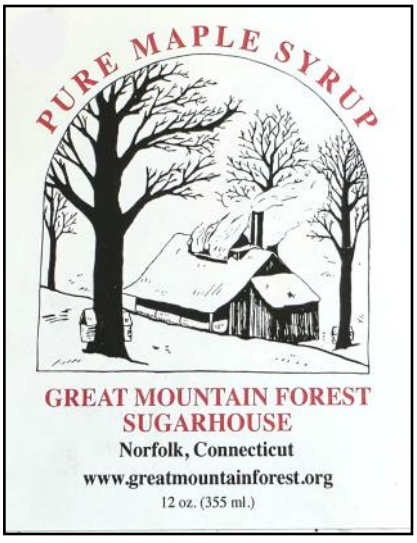
I began college as a studio art major but quickly retreated to the "safety" of art history. Eclectic careers eventually found me illustrating recipes for a gourmet food shop and producing illustrations for a cookbook at a prestigious architectural firm.

Although Lukas and I have retired from art, Colleen flourishes at White Memorial where she is the artistic force behind *Nature's Window*, serves as an art teacher, and creates all sorts of wonderful, whimsical crafts for our children's programs.



Trout, Gerri Griswold

Whitehall, Colleen Harrak



Maple Syrup Label, Lukas Hyder

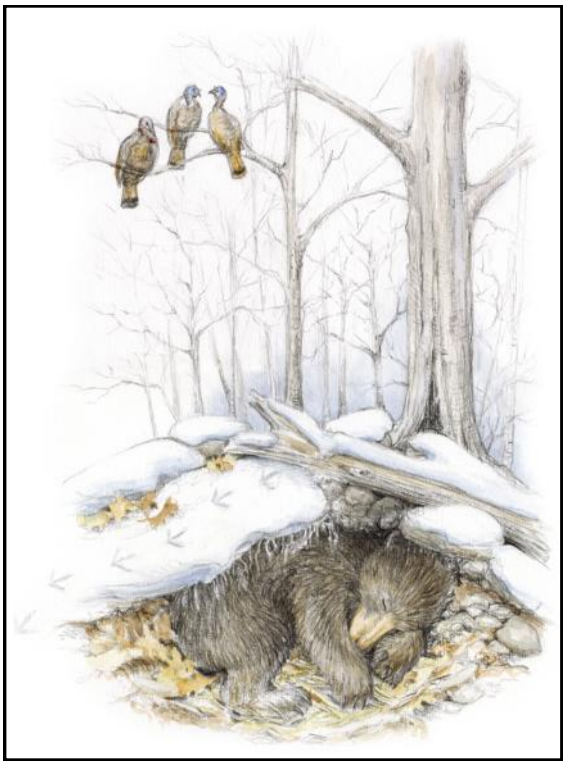
In a Land Down Under: Winter Hibernation

By Carrie Szwed, Education Director, The White Memorial Conservation Center

Have you ever wondered where some of our favorite wild creatures go in the wintertime? We know that many birds migrate south, but what about the animals that don't have the luxury of wings to take them to a more hospitable, food-rich place? The answer to this question lies just beneath the surface – literally! Many native animals survive Connecticut winters by hibernating underground or sometimes even underwater!

Take the groundhog (a.k.a. woodchuck) for instance. This famous hibernator, named after its affinity for living underground, will disappear for 4-5 months in the winter. How does a groundhog survive this long stretch underground without food or water? That's where the amazing phenomenon of hibernation comes into play. The groundhog is considered a *true* hibernator primarily because its body temperature drops significantly, while its brain, heart, and metabolic activity slow down too. In its deepest of sleep, a groundhog's temperature drops to a mere 40°F! Its heart rate slows to five beats per minute! Slowing down all these processes reduces the amount of energy needed to survive. Since energy comes from food, less energy required means less eating required, so the groundhog can fast throughout the winter. Prior to hibernation, the groundhog pigs out on food in the fall to gain some extra fat reserves. Maybe that's where the "hog" part of its name comes from!

While other mammals such as skunks, opossums, and chipmunks have periods of dormancy in the winter, they are not true hibernators like groundhogs because their body temperature does not drop as dramatically, despite their heart rate and metabolism slowing down. Their dormancy periods are known as torpor. Even bears, who have often been considered the quintessential hibernators, do not fit the definition of a true hibernator. Not only does their body temperature not drop significantly, but females will even give birth in their dens during January and February! Most moms would agree this feat is the opposite of conserving energy! There are only 3 mammals in CT that can be considered *true* hibernators: jumping mice, groundhogs, and some species of bats.



Artist: Kathy Goff
https://artsfvac.org/portfolio/kathy-goff

However, using hibernation as a broader term, we can also discuss how cold-blooded, or ectothermic, animals make it through the frigid days of winter. Have you ever thought about where those snakes we see in summer go in the winter? Well, they may even be right under your feet! That's right, they go underground and enter a period of dormancy called brumation. Brumation in reptiles is very similar to hibernation in mammals, with just a few differences in physiological processes. Because snakes rely on their external environment to heat them up, the winter weather does not serve them well. Snakes must find warm, cozy cavities to slip into. Ideal refuges can be under rocks, among the roots of trees, or simply under loose soil. Contrary to popular belief, most snakes cannot dig their own holes, especially in hard-packed soil, so they take up winter residence in pre-existing cavities. Multiple snakes will often hibernate together. When a cavity hosts a group of snakes, it is called a *hibernaculum*. One of these hibernacula was once found with 10,000 garter snakes in it!

If the idea of thousands of snakes tangled up in an underground cavity makes you feel a little squirmy, let's move on to another ectothermic creature that actually has legs, and a shell to boot! What happened to all those turtles we saw lazily basking on logs this summer? Well, they got even lazier and went into brumation for five months! However, most freshwater turtles do not go underground to hibernate. They spend their winters under*water,* buried in the mud. How can an animal with lungs and no gills stay underwater for several months at a time without taking even one breath of fresh air? Well, as chemistry class taught us, oxygen can be found in water too. By circulating that water over the soft tissues in their mouths and cloacas (the all-purpose orifice used to lay eggs, mate, and excrete waste), turtles can get the little amount of oxygen they need to remain alive while in a state of hibernation. So, if you have ever heard someone joke about turtles "breathing through their backsides," it's true!

Hibernation, in all its phenomenal forms, is a great way for wildlife to survive cold, harsh weather. If you ever find yourself missing your favorite wildlife in the dead of winter, just remember that many of them are still here; they're just in a land down under!

Dorie Petrochko

Virge Kask

Debby Mason

Jón Baldur Hliðberg

Amanda Surveski

Fall 2025 Calendar of Events

For more information on any of our programs, please call us at 860-567-0857 or register online: www.whitememorialcc.org

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 27th
43rd ANNUAL
FAMILY
NATURE DAY

See page 3 for details.

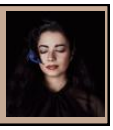
28-Oct. 4 Children's Free Week in Museum*
Courtesy of Joan and Jack Benham
honoring Wesley D. Parcell

OCTOBER

After-School Adventures
Tuesdays and Wednesdays in October
For grades 1 - 6
See page 11 for details.

Nature's Nursery Series
October 3, November 6, December 5
See page 15 for details.

3 ***Taxidermy Demonstration:***
Ring-necked Pheasant
with Gotham Taxidermy
See page 15 for details.



4 & 5 ***Learn the Art of Taxidermy***
with Gotham Taxidermy
See page 15 for details

4 ***The Fungus Among Us!***
with Dave Paton
See page 15 for details.

October 5, 18, November 1, 16
December 7, 13
Llama Walks with Debbie Labbe
Visit www.whitememorialcc.org for details.

October 7, November 4, December 2
Fresh Start Hiking Club
7:45 a.m., Meet in the A. B. Ceder Room

7 **Full Harvest Moon Hike**
6:00 p.m. A. B. Ceder Room.
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

October 9, November 13, December 11
Happy Hour Hiking Club
4:00 p.m., Meet in the Museum.

10 **Tiny Trekking: On the Water Edition!**
10:00 a.m., Meet at the boat launch
on Whites Woods Road.

11 **An Autumn Hike through Slab Meadow**
10:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum.

12 - 18 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In Memory of Tish Samponaro from her
husband Philip G. Samponaro

* Free Museum admission for children ages
12 and under when accompanied by an adult.

13 **COLUMBUS DAY/**
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY
Offices Closed

18 **Tower to Tower:**
Hike Through Mohawk State Forest
10:00 a.m., Visit www.whitememorialcc.org
for details.

24 **Star Party:** Meet tonight at The Shepaug
School Planetarium, 159 South St.,
Washington, CT 7:00 p.m.

25 ***Alumni Hike Up Bear Mountain***
For Grades 9 – 12
See page 5 for details.

25 ***It's My Fault!***
Living with Earthquakes
See page 15 for details.

26-Nov.1 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In Memory of Ron Hummel
from His Family and Friends

NOVEMBER

1 **Tiny Trekking with Kelly Orr**
10:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum.

1 **Forestry Walk with Mike Berry**
10:00 a.m., Meet at the trailhead Routes 61/63.

1 ***Macabre Curiosities***
of Nature with Colleen Harrak
See page 15 for details.

8 **Owl Prowl with Fran Zygmont**
4:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room. Pre-register:
www.whitememorialcc.org

9 - 15 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In honor of Louise W. Willson

14 **MEMBERS ONLY!**
Point Folly Bird Walk
with Carrie Szwed
10:00 a.m., Please pre-register:
www.whitememorialcc.org

15 ***Late Bloomers***
with Colleen Harrak
See page 15 for details.

18-20 ***Alphabet Soup: From Alpha to Ö***
with Marc Daniel Skipstað Volhardt
See page 15 for details.

21 **Star Party**
Astronomy program. Star gazing will follow.
7:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room

22 **The Pandemic Pantry: A Scottish Fling!**
12:00 p.m.,Microsoft Teams & Facebook Live!
Pre-register: **www.whitememorialcc.org**

23 - 29 Children's Free Week in Muxseum*
Courtesy of the Swift Family
In Memory of Betsy & Henry Swift

27/ 28 **THANKSGIVING**
Museum & Offices Closed

29 **15th Annual**
Walking the Cranberry Pond Trail
2:00 p.m., Meet at the Cranberry Pond
trailhead on Webster Road.
Pre-register www.whitememorialcc.org

DECEMBER

Two Wednesdays a Month
from December 3, 2025 to March 11, 2026
Dark of Winter Yoga
with Judith Ehrman-Shapiro (virtual)
5:30 p.m - 6:30 p.m., $12.00
Register by calling Judith: 860-309-9489.

5 **AFTER HOURS SIP & SHOP!**
See page 12 for details.

6 **Winter Fun for Kids!**
10:00 a.m. Tiny Trekking / Museum
11:00 a.m. Wildlife in Winter / Ceder Room
Register: www.whitememorialcc.org

7 - 13 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In Loving Memory of Jesse Kula
from His Family.

11 **The Eastern Coyote in Connecticut**
6:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room

13 ***The Jerrod Cattey Trio***
A CHARLIE BROWN
CHRISTMAS
See page 5 for details.

14 **Litchfield Hills Audubon**
Christmas Bird Count
To volunteer, email Dave Tripp
dtrippjr@gmail.com

20 **A Holiday Stroll Up Apple Hill**
10:00 a.m., Meet at the Apple Hill Trailhead
144 East Shore Rd. Pre-register online:
www.whitememorialcc.org

21-27 Children's Free Week in Museum*
Courtesy of Tara and Arthur Diedrick
In honor of Adele and Joseph d'Assern

25 **CHRISTMAS**
Museum & Offices Closed

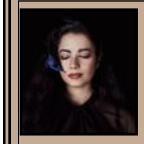
27 **A Winter Walk Through Catlin Woods**
10:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum.

One-Day Fun Day at White Memorial!
December 30, Grades 1 - 3
January 2, Grades 4 – 6
See page 5 for details.

31 **New Year's Eve Hike to Little Pond**
9:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum.
Festive attire is optional!

New Years Day
January 1, 2026
Museum & Offices Closed

Adult Nature Study Workshops & Saturday Programs: Fall 2025

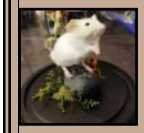


Taxidermy Demonstration with Gotham Taxidermy
October 3, 2025, 5:00 p.m., Lakeview High School
Students: $25.00, Adults: $35.00

Curious about the art and science of taxidermy? Join us for a rare behind-the-scenes demonstration featuring the vivid and iconic ring-necked pheasant. Expert Divya Anantharaman will walk you through the process of preparing, posing, and preserving this striking bird. An inspiring evening for artists, naturalists, and the creatively curious.

The Fungus Among Us with Dave Paton
October 4, 2025, 10:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum.
Members: $15.00 Non-Members: $30.00
Foraging is not allowed on Foundation property!

Spend a couple of hours in the forest with Dave learning do's and don'ts, basic identification, and stories behind the fungus among us! The program begins with a brief introduction in the Activity Shed to view some specimens. Dress for the weather!

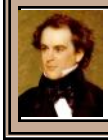


Anthropomorphized Mouse Taxidermy
October 4, 2025, 10:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $285.00, Non-Members: $350.00

Create your own storybook-style mouse! In this hands-on workshop led by renowned artist Divya Anantharaman of Gotham Taxidermy, you'll learn how to craft an anthropomorphized mouse in a whimsical pose of your choosing. This class will guide you through professional techniques to sculpt and mount your taxidermy creation. All supplies provided—just bring your imagination.

European Starling Taxidermy
October 5, 2025, 9:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $395.00 Non-Members: $425.00

Capture the iridescent beauty of a European Starling in flight or repose. In this full-day workshop, students will mount a naturalistic bird using professional-grade taxidermy methods. Led by master taxidermist Divya Anantharaman of Gotham Taxidermy, this workshop builds on foundational skills and introduces techniques for feathers, wings, and avian anatomy.



"I cannot endure to waste anything so precious as autumnal sunshine by staying in the house."
~ Nathaniel Hawthorne

It's My Fault! Living with Earthquakes
October 25, 2025, 3:00 p.m., Microsoft Teams
Members: FREE Non-Members: $10.00

October is Earthquake Awareness Month! Today our favorite physicist, Tom Alena (who lives near the San Andreas Fault), along with some international guests from Chile, Iceland, and Indonesia will discuss what it's like living with the constant threat of earthquakes.

Macabre Curiosities of Nature with Colleen Harrak
November 1, 2025 2:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $5.00, Non-Members: $10.00, Ages 8 & up!

Dare to discover the darker side of the natural world. From blood-drinking bats to fungi that turn insects into zombies, nature is full of real-life nightmares, and they're stranger (and cooler) than you can even imagine! Colleen opens the "Cabinet of the Wild and Weird" to explore & meet nature with creepy powers, sinister survival strategies, and haunting habits. Bring your courage and your questions. We'll bring our knowledge and cool live animals.

Late Bloomers with Colleen Harrak
November 15, 2025, 2:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $5.00, Non-Members: $10.00

In this family-friendly program, we'll meet the wild "late bloomers" of Connecticut—animals that hatch, are born, or come into their own just as the leaves begin to fall. From tiny box turtle hatchlings to woolly bear caterpillars preparing for winter, you'll discover the secret autumn lives of creatures great and small. With live animal ambassadors, we'll explore how nature times its surprises—and why being born late might be the smartest survival strategy of all.

Alphabet Soup: From Alpha to Ö with Marc Daníel Skipstað Volhardt, University of Iceland
November 18, 19, 20, 2025, 6:00p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Microsoft Teams & A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $30.00, Non-Members: $50.00

Marc returns with more linguistic tricks up his sleeve! Take a journey into the written word. From the ancient Greek alphabet to the elegant letters of Latin, Cyrillic, and more. Uncover how Europe's writing systems evolved, why they look the way they do today, and how they are used across the continent. You'll learn how to pronounce names and cities, and spot the hidden histories in everyday words and letters. Designed for curious minds—no language background needed.

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And INSTAGRAM: **@whitememorialcc**

NATURE'S NURSERY SERIES

Thursdays, October 2, November 6, and December 4

Ages 3-6 years
4:00pm

Join us on the *first* Thursday of each month from October–December for an engaging program designed just for your young nature lovers. Every session will last 45 minutes–1 hour and include a story, an encounter with a live animal, and an activity or craft. Some of our activities might be outside, so dress for the weather and wear good walking shoes. *Advanced registration is required. To register, visit whitememorialcc.org or call 860-567-0857. Space is limited. Meet in the A.B. Ceder Room. We require that one parent/caretaker stay for the duration of the program, but our room cannot accommodate more than one adult per child. Please inquire about financial aid as needed.*

Members: $9/child per session or $24/whole series
Non-Members: $13/child per session or $36/whole series

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS EDITION OF
SANCTUARY

WHITE MEMORIAL THANKS...

Stewart McPherson: Redfern Adventures + Thomaston Savings Bank
An Anonymous Donor + ACE Hardware of Litchfield + Jeff and Zoe Greenwood
Gerri Griswold + Miles and Ann Borzilleri + Ferncroft Wildlife Rescue
An Anonymous Donor + LSC Cards + New Morning Market
Litchfield Lions Club + Susan and Victor Atkins + All Star Transportation
The Connecticut Community Foundation / GIVE LOCAL
Monica Richman and Steve Lerangis

...for making our 43rd Annual Family Nature Day possible.

The White Memorial Conservation Center
P.O. Box 368
Litchfield, CT 06759

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