

2008 Goodhue-Elkins Award

As presented at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, June 2008.

The Goodhue-Elkins Award is given annually by New Hampshire Audubon to recognize an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the study of New Hampshire birds. This award is named for Charles Goodhue, one of New Hampshire's first great birders, and Kimball Elkins, who remains the model for critical observation and insightful record keeping.

This year's recipient is Kay Dymont. Kay has been an active participant in the New Hampshire birding community for more than 50 years. She grew up in Concord and first got hooked on birding when she saw Common Redpolls in her backyard and went to the library to find out what they were. She remembers the Concord Bird and Wildflower Club coming to look for birds near her house when she was growing up—little did she know she would later become a member and lead club field trips for 60 years! Kay has been a major contributor of Concord bird sightings to New Hampshire Audubon's seasonal bird reports. These reports are part of the historic record available to researchers tracking changes in bird populations.

Kay has also led many local walks for New Hampshire Audubon, and introduced some of today's most influential bird conservationists to New Hampshire Audubon and birding. The very first Audubon field trip that Carol Foss went on was led by Kay Dymont and Norma Struckoff in the 1960s! Carol remembers seeing a Cooper's Hawk at Horseshoe Pond and getting drenched at the end of the trip when they were at St. Paul's School and a long way from their cars.

Kay has been a dedicated volunteer—reliable, consistent, and determined. Her many volunteer projects include the Breeding Bird Atlas, Osprey Weekend, Harrier Day, and Bald Eagle surveys. She became a regular winter eagle volunteer when the project began in the 1980s. In the early days, when eagles were few and far between, she was out once or twice per week all winter long as well as observing from dawn to dusk on coordinated watch days. One year, she and Dawn Stavros trailed an eagle, nicknamed Joe, who was wearing a radio transmitter. As Joe flew north along the Merrimack River they followed along the bypass in Concord with the receiving antennae out the car window! She has long been devoted to the North Country, especially Lake Umbagog, and hardly ever missed an Osprey Weekend or Harrier Day.

Kay was one of the stalwarts of the Breeding Bird Survey program for more than 20 years, rising early for the 4:30 A.M. start of her two survey routes each summer. Bob Quinn first met Kay in June of 1977 when he assisted her on her BBS routes. Bob went on to conduct many BBS routes on his own. Kay also trained another assistant, Dawn Stavros, who later took over Kay's routes.

This sharing of knowledge with less experienced birders is a hallmark of Kay's birding activities. She is a very modest person who has been an inspiration for many. Bob Quinn expressed it best when he said "Kay inspired me, and others, by her actions more than her words." New Hampshire Audubon is pleased to honor Kay and her many contributions with this year's Goodhue-Elkins Award.

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Betsy Janeway presents Kay Dymont with the Goodhue Elkins Award, June 14, 2008. NH Audubon photo by Rick Minard.