

2017 Goodhue-Elkins Award

Presented by Bob Quinn at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 23, 2017.

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

The 2017 recipient of the Goodhue-Elkins Award is Pam Hunt.

Dr. Pamela Hunt is a Senior Biologist for NH Audubon who received her PhD in Ornithology from Dartmouth College in 1995. She joined NH Audubon in 2000 where she specializes in avian conservation. For those who know Pam, you know that this award is long overdue. The extent of her contributions to our knowledge of New Hampshire birds is tremendous. She began doing this from the time she moved to New Hampshire as a graduate student at Dartmouth in 1989, almost 30 years ago! Initially an avid birder and reporter, in 1991 she moved into the role of volunteer Season Editor for *New Hampshire Bird Records*. Her contributions continued to grow – reporting thousands of bird sightings, conducting regular bird surveys, serving as a Christmas Bird Count compiler and volunteer, and being very involved with the birding community in general.

The challenge for the Awards Group was that Pam works for NH Audubon and current NH Audubon staff members are not eligible to receive this award, except under “exceptional circumstances.” After years of discussion, the Awards Group defined what qualified as “exceptional circumstances” and thus Pam could finally be considered. The primary emphasis of this award must also be on work done as an avocation. Despite the many contributions to our knowledge of New Hampshire birds that Pam has made through her job, this award recognizes her contributions above and beyond her vocation. All this points to the extraordinary level of achievement needed for a current NH Audubon staff member to be considered as a recipient of the Goodhue-Elkins Award.

And Pam passed this high bar with flying colors. She is an exceptional candidate for this award and exemplifies all the criteria – from her extensive field work to compiling data, to leading many a field trip and sharing her extensive knowledge of birds.

Her contributions to *New Hampshire Bird Records* extend far beyond the role of Season Editor. She has written numerous birding articles, promoted the submission of bird sightings, and provided invaluable assistance to the Managing Editor (in part because she works in the same office!).

She has been a lead inspiration for human powered and local birding – promoting both activities, involving others, and leading by example. Local birding resonates especially well with this award since both namesakes, Goodhue and Elkins, were very local birders.



Bob Quinn presenting NH Audubon's 2017 Goodhue-Elkins Award to Pam Hunt.

Photo by Dyanna Smith.

Pam's list of accomplishments is long so we provide an example here to illustrate her way of gathering data while involving and educating others. Pam has conducted *weekly* walking surveys at each of the places she has lived in New Hampshire since October 1989. These include in Enfield, Northfield, and Penacook. Each week she walks about six miles on a standard route. She records all of the birds she sees, enters the data into NH eBird, and shares the highlights to the NH Birds e-mail list, often providing context and information, such as how her numbers show migration or lack thereof, and how these numbers compare with the average for that date. But it doesn't stop there. She is constantly inviting others to join her on these surveys, all of which are human-powered. She makes them even more enjoyable by celebrating birding anniversaries or adding a shared meal at the end.

Pam has provided a welcoming atmosphere for many people to join in birding, whether by creating the Concord November Challenge, leading a field trip in full Renaissance regalia, or instigating a big day effort in an under-birded New Hampshire county. Bottom line: She makes it fun for people to bird with a purpose! And incidentally she was on the team that still holds the big day record for the most species seen in 24 hours in New Hampshire.

So it is with great pleasure that New Hampshire Audubon presents the 2017 Goodhue-Elkins Award to Pam Hunt.

