

## 2014 Goodhue-Elkins Award

*Written and presented by David Donsker at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 20, 2014.*

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 the state's first great birders, and Kimball Elkins, who remains the model for critical observation and insightful record keeping.

No two individuals could be better choices as recipients of the Goodhue-Elkins Award in 2014, this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the founding of New Hampshire Audubon, than Allan Keith and Robert Fox. Their grand opus, *The Birds of New Hampshire*, was published by the Nuttall Ornithological Club in late 2013. It is the first publication attempting to include a listing of all bird species recorded in the state since Glover Allen's *List of the Birds of New Hampshire*, which was published in 1903, eleven years before the establishment of New Hampshire Audubon

By all accounts, *The Birds of New Hampshire* is a significant contribution to the ornithological literature of our state. Its 473 pages cover the occurrence, status and distribution of 427 species. Between its covers is a treasure trove of information concerning the biogeography of the state, a history of New Hampshire ornithology, and summaries of Christmas Bird Count, hawk watching, bird banding and breeding bird survey results. It accounts for the location of nearly 5,000 museum specimens associated with our state and has the most extensive bibliography ever assembled relating to New Hampshire birds...over 1,200 titles.

This book was 40 years in the making. Both Allan and Bob developed a strong interest in birds as young men. Through their mutual interest in birding, and their shared membership in the venerable Nuttall Ornithological club, they became close friends with Bob Smart. Each birded with him frequently in New Hampshire. Influenced by Bob Smart and inspired by Ludlow Griscom's and Dorothy Snyder's *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Massachusetts*, Bob Fox in the 1960s, and Allan in the 1970s, became interested in writing a book documenting the birds of New Hampshire. Allan took the sighting records from the 1950s and 1960s that Bob Smart had collected, added records he extracted from the next decade, and had written 192 species accounts by 1975. The project languished as both men focused on their careers, but their interest in birds never waned. Bob joined Allan's rekindled interest in this book over a decade ago, and further contributed to it by writing nearly half of the species accounts. *The Birds of New Hampshire* is truly a testament of their personal perseverance and determination to see this monumental work through to its completion.

In addition to this major work, Allan has authored or co-authored five other books including four substantial and important volumes on the birds of the West Indies. In his book, *Island Life*, Allan documents the biodiversity of Martha's Vineyard, the community in which he makes his home. Allan



*Robert Fox (left) and Allan Keith,  
co-recipients of the  
2014 Goodhue-Elkins Award.*

*Photo by Terri Donsker.*

has twice served as president of the American Birding Association (ABA). He has been a member of the Nuttall Ornithological Club since 1962. He is a life member of the all the major US ornithological societies, and has also been a member other international and regional ornithological clubs and societies. Allan has been previously honored by being chosen as an elective member of the AOU and has just received the ABA's Claudia Wilds Award for distinguished service to that organization.

Although he resides in Massachusetts, Bob, since his childhood, has spent most of his summers in New Hampshire. His serious ornithology roots go back to the days in which he was one of Ludlow Griscom's "boys," doing field work, collecting specimens and working with the material that would eventually end up in the Boston Museum of Science. He was elected to the Nuttall Ornithological Club in 1960 and has served as its secretary and as a member of its council. He is a life member of the Wilson Ornithological Society and is a member of many other ornithological organizations. He has authored papers published in *The Auk*, participated in the publication of Mass Audubon's first *Breeding Bird Atlas* and has contributed articles to *New Hampshire Bird Records*. He and his wife, Dana Duxbury-Fox, have given numerous presentations to several New Hampshire Audubon Chapters and to the Loon Preservation Committee.

Allan and Bob are intrepid world birders, both of whom have managed to see over 6,000 of this planet's species. But it is their contribution to New Hampshire ornithology for which we honor them today. No two individuals, especially in this centennial year, could better exemplify the principle of the Goodhue-Elkins Award by contributing substantially to the study and understanding of New Hampshire's birds. It is with great respect and admiration that New Hampshire Audubon presents the 2014 Goodhue-Elkins award to Allan Keith and Robert Fox, authors of *The Birds of New Hampshire*.

