

## 2022 Goodhue-Elkins Award

*Presented by Robert A. Quinn at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 17, 2022.*

The Goodhue-Elkins Award is given annually by New Hampshire Audubon to honor an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the study of New Hampshire birds. The 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.

NH Audubon is honored to present the Goodhue-Elkins award to Rob Woodward. Rob is eminently qualified for this prestigious award as the list of his birding accomplishments attests. But first, let's think of him in the light and *spirit* of Charles Goodhue and Kimball Elkins themselves. Rob is like them in many ways including his outstanding field skills, his passion to learn more about the birds in his local area, his generosity in helping newer birders, his humility and sense of humor, and his years of selfless and low-key efforts to enhance the New Hampshire birding community and our bird conservation efforts. I cannot emphasize enough how much he has encouraged and nourished new birders. All of these characteristics are hallmarks of the Goodhue-Elkins award.

His list of birding accomplishments is long and is headlined by his expert leadership on hundreds of local field trips. He also created several "citizen science" projects on his own such as his Turkey Pond Survey and the long-standing Common Nighthawk Migration Watch in Concord. And few people know that his idea was the brainstorm that resulted in the Carter Hill hawk watch in Concord.

It is worth mentioning some of the details of these projects. From 2002 to 2016 he completed a regular weekly survey around Turkey Pond in Concord and ultimately created a bird list for the area. Those efforts have produced an unparalleled amount of bird data for the city of Concord.

As mentioned, Rob pioneered the surveying of the Common Nighthawk migration statewide. He conducted the Concord watch from 2008 to 2016. He expanded the watch from five nights the first year to approximately three weeks, spending every evening from late August through early September on the roof of a parking garage counting nighthawks. He counted thousands of birds and just as importantly he welcomed many visitors to join him. This important survey continues to this day, now run by others who were inspired by Rob.



*Rob Woodward receiving NH Audubon's 2022 Goodhue-Elkins Award.*

*Photo by Dyanna Smith.*

At the same time he was one of the first people to recognize the potential of Carter Hill in Concord as a hawk watch site. Starting with his idea, and with help from NH Audubon, Carter Hill became an official site that produced valuable data for ten years, all because of Rob.

As you now realize, Rob emphasizes birding locally, which greatly expands our knowledge of a given area. Most recently he has focused on the lesser-known Belknap County where he spends his summers. Rob has a penchant for nest finding, a challenging skill that he honed by following his own tactic of “walking the same path twice” or, in the case of the Turkey Pond Bird Survey, hundreds of times!

Less well known are his contributions behind the obvious curtain of birding. For years he was an officer in the Capital Area Chapter of NH Audubon, ultimately becoming the President. Also, he is a former member and Chair of the NH Rare Birds Committee.

But his heart and passion are always in the field, often with other birders. That is how he has touched so many people. He has always been a favorite leader who made his field trips fun by doing things like bringing cider and pie to his fall sparrow trips. He has a wonderful sense of humor and can always turn a clever phrase. When Rob was leaving the state (thankfully not forever), Kathleen Brockett wrote:

*“Rob has been one of my favorite trip leaders. He has taught me so much about bird identification and has inspired me to be a better birder. I will certainly miss him.”*

We are lucky to still have Rob Woodward with us for part of the year and NH Audubon is honored to present the 2022 Goodhue-Elkins Award to him for his decades of service to the birding community.

