

Goodhue-Elkins Award to David Killam

Since 1995, the Audubon Society of New Hampshire has presented the Goodhue-Elkins Award to recognize individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the study of New Hampshire birds.

The award honors the memory of two of our state's greatest birders from the past two centuries. The first, Charles F. Goodhue, lived from 1854 to 1937 and wrote *Birds of Webster and Vicinity* in 1877, which is a detailed record of the local bird life that was far ahead of other accounts of its day. The second, Kimball C. Elkins, was born in 1903 and passed away just three years ago. He embodied the collective qualities of critical observation, careful record-keeping, and community involvement that we also recognize in those who have received this award.

Its five previous recipients, in the order they have been honored, are Tudor Richards, Art Borrer, Elizabeth Swift, Dawn Stavros, and Bob Vernon.

This year's honoree hails from our state's northernmost county, where he taught music in area schools for many years. In addition to that passion, he has also had an enduring love of nature, particularly for birds. He faithfully conducted a Breeding Bird Survey route along the Connecticut River for 20 years. After Audubon and N.H. Fish and Game jointly established the state's Endangered Species Program in the early 1980s, he stepped forward annually to volunteer his time for both Osprey Weekend and the Peregrine Falcon Cliff Watch events. During the *N.H. Breeding Bird Atlas* project in the mid-1980s, he surveyed nearly 20 *Atlas* blocks located in Coös County.

Carol Foss, who coordinated the project, tells me that he may have more *Atlas* blocks to his credit than any other single participant in the entire project. He is well known in Columbia and adjacent towns along both sides of the Connecticut River as the one to ask about that unusual bird seen on the neighbor's fencepost last week. He is active in Audubon's North Country Chapter. He has filled out untold hundreds of those little *N.H. Bird Records* reporting slips, and his submissions undoubtedly amount to a majority of all bird sightings ever submitted to the database from the Colebrook area.

But perhaps most emblematic of his personal commitment to birds and to people is the following: for more than 15 years, on a summer's day in August, he and his wife, Barbara, opened their home to a dozen or so folks from south of the Notches, providing us all with a comfortable gathering place for Audubon's Harrier Day surveys. However, their support and hospitality far exceeded what was asked. For two summers, they also hosted a graduate student from Massachusetts who was studying harriers. And, in preparation for Harrier Day every year, David and Barbara, often hiking together, managed to find a way to do a lot of advanced scouting of potential harrier nesting sites in areas that also just happened to produce abundant crops of native raspberries and blueberries, which always seemed to find their way into delicious pies that appeared like magic on the picnic table each Harrier Day!

I am delighted to present the 2000 Goodhue-Elkins Award to David Killam.

Chris Martin

David Killam receiving the 2000 Goodhue-Elkins Award from Richard Moore (left) and Chris Martin (center) at NH Audubon's Annual Meeting, July 22, 2000.

