

2016 President's Award

As presented by Doug Bechtel at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 17, 2016.

Pat (Patricia) Niswander began volunteering in the NH Audubon Nature Store in 1986 and has continued almost without stop since then – for 30 years. Pat said she was looking for something to do and it seemed like a fun place to be. What keeps her coming back is that “she doesn’t want to miss anything.” She enjoys meeting new people and keeping up with the activities of the staff and other volunteers. She has enjoyed helping people in the store and introducing visitors to NH Audubon.

She has introduced her own children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to NH Audubon. All of her local children are members of Audubon, either in New Hampshire or their home state.

In addition to working in the Nature Store (which she still does weekly even at the age of 90), she has helped with various bird surveys including winter eagle surveys for *many* years – back in the days when reports were done on paper. She and her survey partner, Margot Johnson would often add a pink flamingo to their sighting list, just to “jazz it up a bit” and keep the biologists on their toes. Peregrine Falcon watching was one of her favorites, and she monitored many nest sites including Franconia Notch, and her favorite, Owl’s Head.

In addition to helping NH Audubon she is an active member of the Concord Bird and Wildflower Club and has been for at least 45 years. She remembers one of the first gatherings she attended in the 1970s when one of the members called, all excited, “I have a Tufted Titmouse in my backyard.” This was in the time when the titmouse, cardinal and mockingbird were just showing up in New Hampshire.

When asked how she got interested in bird watching she replied, “They were always around me. I grew up in Tamworth, we lived in the country, nature was everywhere and we paid attention to the birds. The first bird that caught my attention was the Wood Thrush. I would sit on my porch in Tamworth and listen to its wonderful song. It still gives me shivers when I hear them.”

She has enjoyed birds and wildlife in her own backyard for decades, and also traveled all over the world to observe them. She’s been on many trips with Bob Quinn, several through NH Audubon with Mark Suomala and others, and she still enjoys weekly trips with the Concord Bird and Wildflower Club, during the warmer months.

Pat has a spirit to admire. When not birding, volunteering or helping others, she loves to do the NY Times crossword puzzles . . . in ink, even the Sunday edition! She has recently started trying Sudoku puzzles too, because it’s something new and challenging.

Pat is truly an inspiration and I am very happy to honor her with the 2016 President’s Award.



Pat Niswander about to receive the 2016 President's Award from NH Audubon President, Doug Bechtel.

Photo by Dyanna Smith.

