

## **2010 Goodhue-Elkins Award**

*As presented at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, June 2010*

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.



*Bob Quinn receiving the Goodhue-Elkins Award, June 2010. Photo by Ed Quinn.*

The 2010 recipient was Robert A. Quinn. Bob is a native of New Hampshire and well-known and respected in the state's birding community. He has led innumerable field trips, always generous with his time and knowledge as he encourages beginning birders, and challenges experienced birders, to look at birding in new ways. He makes field trips special by knowing where and how to find the birds, helping each person to see the bird, and sharing his deep knowledge about those birds. Bob spurs birders on to learn more about the birds in their own area by looking for nesting or watching for when even common species arrive and depart.

When he was a teenager growing up in Concord, he was introduced to birding by his older brother, Joe. But it was in the fall of 1972, while visiting York, Maine, that birding truly captured him. He noticed some black and white birds on the ocean, picked up his binoculars to look at them and hasn't put them down yet!

After graduating from the University of NH in 1976 with a degree in Zoology, he spent three months birding and traveling around the lower 48 states. After that he started as a volunteer and then staff member for New Hampshire Audubon, becoming its first staff ornithologist. He has continued to this day as an active volunteer for the organization and an active birder in the state.

Bob's contributions to our knowledge of New Hampshire's birds are many and varied. He has conducted innumerable bird surveys, with his favorites so far being Pondicherry Wildlife Sanctuary – providing data to support the creation of the National Wildlife Refuge there; Lake Umbagog to the far north; and Turkey Pond following Tudor Richard's interest in this local sanctuary. In 2003 he was recognized by the US Breeding Bird Survey for having completed 50 cumulative routes in NH – that's 50 mornings of getting up to begin surveys at 4:34 am! He took part in the NH Breeding Bird Atlas, another of his favorites, and gathered data for the Dunbarton Conservation Commission that helped them expand the conservation lands at Kimball Pond. He has been gathering bird data for the Concord area, both past and present and encouraging others to contribute to our knowledge of the town's avifauna.

He has participated in just about every aspect of birding in the state. He began the New Hampshire Rare Bird Alert phone hot line in 1977 and was the recorded voice for many

years. In 1994 he took over the job of Concord Christmas Bird Count compiler. He was also a founding member of the NH Rare Birds Committee.

Bob is a strong believer in good record-keeping and the *New Hampshire Bird Records* quarterly. While working for NH Audubon, he took over editorship, and then continued as the volunteer Summer Season Editor for 20 years. He has sent his reports to *New Hampshire Bird Records* over many years contributing to the database of bird sightings in the state to this day.

Although he leads trips nationally and internationally through his business, Merlin Enterprises, he has a keen interest in the birds of NH, particularly in understanding the role NH plays in the status and distribution of birds in the region. He has consistently shared his knowledge and spurred others on to contribute to our knowledge of NH's birds. Bob is constantly going beyond the data, seeking answers to the still unresolved questions about the birds of our state.

Eric Masterson wrote the following: "I cannot let Bob Quinn's deserved moment of recognition go without mention. In an age of celebrity, when all too many people are lured by the promise of a quick fix, Bob's dedication to his craft is commendable. Birders are drawn to the exotic and the rare amongst the common and drab. Bob has consistently kept his eye on the ball – the larger picture as it were. His great knowledge of, and interest in inland waterbirds, especially their migratory habits in NH, inspired me to look further into the fascinating phenomenon. His contributions to both birding and the birding community in NH make him a worthy recipient of this award."

New Hampshire Audubon is very pleased to honor Bob Quinn for his lifelong passion and commitment to the birds of New Hampshire with the 2010 Goodhue-Elkins Award.

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