

2024 Goodhue-Elkins Award

Presented by Charlie Nims at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 14, 2024.

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.

As both a Trustee of NH Audubon and an avid NH birder, it is an honor and a pleasure to present the 2024 Goodhue-Elkins Award to Tony Vazzano. Tony clearly exemplifies the traits honored by this award.

For over 40 years, Tony, a Sandwich area resident, has made significant and prolonged birding contributions to the Lakes Region area as well as to our broader state. He has been a birder, a teacher, a leader and a huge data contributor to the New Hampshire birding community.

Looking at some of the specifics, a good place to start is with his contributions to *New Hampshire Bird Records*. He was the Summer Season Editor for ten years, reviewing and analyzing the bird reports and writing up the highlights of the season. His tenure spanned the advent of eBird as New Hampshire's database for bird sightings – a change that resulted in a huge increase in workload for season editors along with numerous growing pains. As a professional meteorologist, he provided weather summary data for 20+ years to all the Season Editors and also appeared on New Hampshire Public Radio's "Something Wild Show" to discuss the impact of weather on New Hampshire's birds.

Importantly, he reported enumerable bird sightings, keeping written records that pre-dated the establishment of eBird. Tony also wrote articles for *New Hampshire Bird Records* and served as a member of the NH Rare Birds Committee.

On a more regional level, Tony has been heavily involved with a variety of activities in the Lakes Region. For 18 years from 2002 through 2019, he was the Sandwich Christmas Bird Count compiler. To insure a seamless transition, he trained Ken Klapper to be his successor. For many years, starting in the 1990s, he was heavily involved with the NH Audubon Lakes Region Chapter including as a board member, arranging for speakers and leading field trips among other responsibilities. Locally, he helped initiate and take a leadership role along with Ned Beecher for the Tamworth Bird and Bloom-a-thon.

Tony has also led numerous bird walks in the Lakes Region area and has always been a big help to the local birding community.



Tony Vazzano accepting the 2024 Goodhue-Elkins Award, 9/14/2024. Photo by Zoe Dawson.

Here is where I would like to get personal, giving a couple examples of how he was so open to helping other birders. In 2009, shortly before moving to New Hampshire, I came to look for the Northern Hawk Owl that was being seen near Tony's home. While watching the owl, I met Tony for the first time. While we were chatting, he invited me and several others, into his home to look at his feeders which were loaded with Common Redpolls as well as an uncommon Hoary Redpoll—which I got to see! He and his wife, Susan Wiley, were so welcoming even to birding strangers. A second example occurred in 2023 when he found another uncommon New Hampshire bird, a Baird's Sandpiper, at the local gravel pit. He quickly let me know and stayed until I made the one hour drive from Bartlett, and then helped me get on the bird which was a first for me in Carroll County. Tony has been that way with the birding community, his help to me was what he also did for many others.

Tony peer reviewed and made important contributions to *The Birds of New Hampshire* written by Bob Fox and Allan Keith. He was listed as one of the 13 contribution "heroes" in the acknowledgements. He also was listed as a major resource by Beverly Ridgely in his book, *Birds of Squam Lake*, and he contributed to the 2023 published revision.

Finally, I want to thank all those who helped me prepare and submit Tony's nomination, especially Ned Beecher and Ken Klapper for their generous time.

Tony, congratulations on this well-deserved award for your contributions to the birding community and our knowledge of birds in New Hampshire!!

