

Wayne Petersen: 2005 recipient of the American Birding Association's Ludlow Griscom Award

Massachusetts ornithologist and a founder of *Bird Observer*, Wayne Petersen was honored as the recipient of the Ludlow Griscom Award at the Annual Conference of the American Birding Association, held this year near the end of July in Tucson, Arizona. This award was the first established by the ABA, and is given to "individuals who have dramatically advanced the state of ornithological knowledge for a particular region" through monitoring avian status and distribution, publications, or through "the force of their personality, teaching and inspiration"—a description which the editors of *Bird Observer* immodestly feel suits Wayne perfectly.



Wayne Petersen (R) receiving congratulations from John Riutta, representative of Leupold and Stevens, Inc., this year's sponsor of the Ludlow Griscom Award.

Jim Berry clearly delineated the connection between Petersen and Griscom in his survey of published bird records in New England (*Bird Observer*, December 2002). Here Jim pointed out that Griscom and Snyder's *The Birds of Massachusetts: An Annotated and Revised Check List* (1955) was "as complete a picture of the state's birdlife in midcentury as can be found," insisting on carefully documented reports. Equally rigorous, Petersen and Veit's *Birds of Massachusetts* (1993), remains "the bible of Massachusetts birders today."

It seems fitting that Wayne now joins the illustrious ranks of previous Griscom Award winners, a group which includes Roger Tory Peterson, Olin Sewall Pettingill, Chandler Robbins, Kenn Kaufman, Ted Parker, and Richard Pough. Local birders Jim Berry, Linda Ferrarresso, Linda Pivacek, Bob Stymeist, Martha Steele, Martha Vaughn, and Carolyn Marsh were there to applaud the event. Another Massachusetts resident, John Kricher, a Director of ABA, presented the award. His eloquent words are reprinted below:

Wayne is not a stranger to many if not most members of the American Birding Association. He has served both on the board of directors and as vice president of the ABA. His Institute of Field Ornithology courses are typically filled to capacity. He has been a frequent field trip leader and presented numerous workshops at ABA conventions and regional conferences.

Wayne grew up in the town of Wellesley, Massachusetts and he and his closest friends were birders from an early age. Even as Ludlow Griscom and his group of birding friends were finding rarities in Massachusetts, some of these same friends became mentors to young Wayne. Though Wayne never actually met Ludlow Griscom, it is quite possible, indeed likely, that some of the friends Griscom birded with told him of a young man with uncommon skills not unlike his own, a virtually unequaled facility for field identification of birds. Today Wayne is the worthy successor to Ludlow Griscom.

Wayne discovered birds at an early age and never looked back. He quickly became a leading authority on the distribution of birds in the Northeast. He has coauthored *The Birds of Massachusetts* and coedited *The Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas*. His numerous field-based contributions to Massachusetts ornithology abound in both of those volumes. Indeed it is unlikely that either of those volumes would exist, and if they did they would be far poorer in content, were it not for Wayne. In addition Wayne has contributed numerous articles to *Bird Observer*, a distinguished regional ornithological journal, and has served on the staff of *Bird Observer* from its inception. Beyond that he has been a constant contributor to *North American Birds* and is a New England Regional Editor for NAB. He currently chairs the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee and serves on the advisory committee of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

After an 18-year career as a life science middle school teacher, Wayne served for 15 years as field ornithologist for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. He recently was a community leader for the Swarovski Birding Community. His current position, which he began July 1 of this year, is Director of the Important Bird Areas program for the Mass Audubon.

Those who know Wayne understand well his uncommon skill as a teacher. This skill extends to popular writing. He has contributed accounts to *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, to *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*, and he is the author of *National Audubon Society's Pocket Guide to Songbirds and Familiar Backyard Birds (East)*. His most recent book is *Birds of New England*.

Wayne is a popular tour leader and has led birding tours to many regions on Earth, from Antarctica to Madagascar, for Mass Audubon, the American Birding Association, and Field Guides. Finally, and by no means least, Wayne has shared his life of birding with Betty Petersen, who directs ABA's Birder's Exchange Program. Long a fan of the Boston Red Sox — the World Champion Boston Red Sox — Wayne would be the first to say how important it is to be part of a good team. He and Betty are just such a team.

Congratulations, Wayne! *Bird Observer* is proud to claim its close connection to you. 🦋