
IN MEMORIAM: RICHARD ALAN FORSTER

1944-1997

The staff of *Bird Observer* magazine, the natural history community, and numerous friends, admirers, and family members throughout the country suffered a tragic loss with the recent, untimely death of Richard Alan Forster. On April 1, 1997, Dick sustained a fatal heart attack while clearing his driveway of snow during the major April Fool's Day storm.

A passionate birder since childhood, Dick Forster was unquestionably the leading authority on field identification, status, and distribution of Massachusetts birds. His vast knowledge, extensive field experience, and extraordinary memory served him well for the many tasks he so ably performed for over forty years.

Coauthor and contributor to five books, author of dozens of ornithological and entomological magazine and journal articles, regional editor for National Audubon's *American Birds* magazine, and Field Reports editor for *Bird Observer* were among his many contributions over the last quarter-century.

Following graduation from Boston University and a distinguished tour of duty in Vietnam (he was decorated with a Purple Heart and a citation for bravery), Dick joined the staff of Massachusetts Audubon Society as an ornithologist, international tour leader, and Assistant Director of Natural History Services from 1972-1986. Most recently, he was deeply involved in research on the dragonflies and damselflies of Massachusetts, a subject on which he had become a regional authority.

Dick possessed an uncanny ability to locate the inconspicuous and the obscure—and to enthusiastically relish the mundane as well as the exotic. He generously shared his absolute mastery of matters pertaining to field identification. Dick will be sadly missed by all who were privileged to share his wry humor, poignant candor, and extraordinary insight into the natural world. His footprints on the rich legacy of New England natural history are large, and his loss leaves a void that will never be filled.

W.R.P.