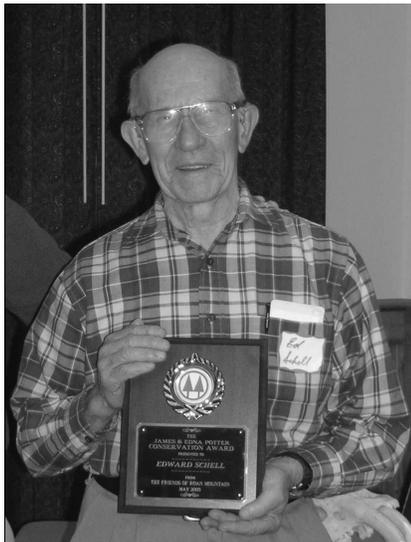


Volume 9, No. 3

Fall 2005

## ED SCHELL RECEIVES JAMES AND EDNA POTTER CONSERVATION AWARD



Ed Schell, recipient of James & Edna  
Potter Conservation Award

Ed, who lives in Johnson City with his wife Barbara, served as the director of the Fall Rallies from 1977 to 1987. He continues to amaze and delight those who accompany him on wildflower hikes on the Roan and in the Doe River Gorge at the spring and fall Naturalists' Rallies. His encyclopedic knowledge of the natural world and the sparkle in his eyes habitually attract a long line of hikers at our meeting field in the park.

The Friday evening program of the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Roan Mountain Naturalists' Rally hosted a special event. Ed Schell, award-winning photographer, conservationist and one of the most popular and knowledgeable hike-leaders at our rallies, was awarded the James and Edna Potter Conservation award. This award is given to individuals who have served, in an outstanding way, Roan Mountain and the mission of Friends of Roan Mountain "to foster greater awareness and understanding of the natural, historical, and cultural significance of Roan Mountain". In addition, a donation of \$1,500 was given to the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy by the Friends of Roan Mountain in honor of Ed. Judy Murray, Stewardship Director of SAHC, was on hand to receive the donation.



Gary Barrigar presents \$1500 check to SAHC' s Judy Murray  
in honor of Ed

**Ed Schell will present a new program, "Wildflowers of the Southern Appalachians", at this year's Fall Rally on Friday evening, 7:30 p.m. at the Roan Mountain State Park Convention Center.**

# The Birds of Roan Mountain

--Dr. Fred Alsop



For more than 150 years naturalists have been drawn to the open grassy balds, rhododendron gardens, and spruce-fir forests of the towering crests of the Roan Mountain mastiff. They have also explored its lower slopes luxuriant with trees, shrubs, and wildflowers and have returned to this mountain numerous times and in all seasons. Generations of birders have been among these natural history explorers, both amateur and professional, in the company of fiends, students and colleagues. I have been in the latter group birding and studying the birds of Roan Mountain for more than 30 years. Several of my students have done Master of Science degree research projects on the Roan including studies of breeding Spruce-fir birds, Alder Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, and Northern Saw-Whet Owls. I have taken many natural history notes and many

photographs of birds there, some of which have been published

More than 185 species of birds have been recorded on Roan Mountain between the valleys at an elevation of around 2,500 feet (the general elevation of the town of Roan Mountain) and the mountain's highest point at 6,285 feet by members of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. The Lee R. & Lois Herndon Chapter of the TOS has been keeping such ornithological records since it was established in 1943. The chapter was founded by such modern pioneer birders of The Roan as Dr. Lee R. Herndon and Fred W. Behrend and continues to be active meeting monthly on the campus of Milligan College.

The Roan has had its share of unusual bird sightings; sightings of species that are rare because the birds seen were far from their expected ranges or because they are only casual visitors to these southern mountains. Such species as Sprague's Pipit, Pine Grosbeak, and Rough-legged Hawk are species recorded far from their normal ranges. Others such as Sora, Whimbrel, Ring-billed Gull, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, and Protonotary Warbler are species seen only rarely on the mountain during their migration as they passed over its barrier flanks on their way to somewhere else. A few like the Hermit Thrush, Northern Saw-Whet Owl, Alder Flycatcher, and perhaps the Mourning Warbler, are becoming established as breeding birds on the mountain as they have expanded their ranges southward.

I have been drawn to the birds of the mountain, especially those of the higher elevations, for many years now. I have studied with my students the life history of several of these species to try to learn what they need in order to survive and the impact we have had on them as we alter the environments crucial for their existence. For me there are few experiences sweeter in life than standing in the moonlight on a spring night in the spruce-fir forest listening to the monotonous *toot-toot-toot.....toot* of a little Saw-Whet Owl defending his territory and advertising for a mate. The mountain and the conifers are outlined in black against the night sky, the smell of the evergreens is heavy in the light air, and the little owl keeps calling on and on. If I imitate his whistled *toot* he may often respond by increasing his tempo. If I am very lucky he may fly closer on silent wings and sing to me from nearby, perhaps from only a few feet away. What can be closer to our beginnings than this?

Dr. Fred J. Alsop III, Professor of Biology at East Tennessee State University, is the featured speaker on Saturday evening, Sept. 11, at the Fall Rally. Dr. Alsop is an avid field biologist and naturalist, lecturer, teacher, international tour leader and wildlife photographer. He has authored more than 100 articles and numerous books, including *Birds of the Smokies* and *Smithsonian Handbook: Birds of North America*.



# Faces and Places of the Naturalists' Rallies: Spring & Fall



Ed Schell & Edna Potter - Friends of Roan



Checking the kick seine for aquatic critters of the Doe



Larry Bristol, Paleontology Coordinator for the Gray Fossil Site



Female Eastern Tiger Swallowtail at the Dave Miller Homestead pond



Don't forget to send in your reservation for the rally dinners, lunches and hikes. The deadline for meal reservations is Wednesday, Sept. 7! You can find a reservation form at our website.

<http://www.etsu.edu/biology/roan-mtn/>



# Butterfly Count Results For 2005

Hey folks,

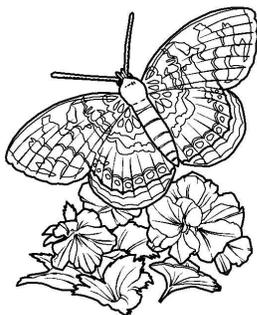
The 13th annual Roan Mtn. TN / NC Butterfly Count was held Saturday, July 16, 2005, from 10 am to 7 pm. The sites visited included Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area, Twin Springs, the old Cloudland Hotel site at the top of the mountain, the wetland area between picnic shelters #1 and #2 in Roan Mtn. State Park, miscellaneous points in Roan Mtn. Village, and the Ripshin Lake area. Participants included Rob Biller, Dianne Draper, Don Holt, Frank Mathews, Tom McNeil, Alan Trentley. April Mattes, Gil Derouen, Kim Stroud, and Denise Mathews were also present. The morning was cloudy, giving way in the afternoon to intermittent drizzle and light rain.

Because of the weather, the number of butterflies was way below normal, but the group persevered with good humor, ending the day with a total count of 147 individual adult butterflies of 17 species. One additional species, the Appalachian Azure, was observed in its larval form at Twin Springs on flower spikes of Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*).

The usual attempt at finding large numbers of Aphrodite Fritillaries in the Rhododendron Gardens on top of the mountain was abandoned by consensus at the first nearby bolt of lightning! We did, however, observe one hardy Aphrodite Fritillary by the parking lot just before we dove into our cars. Of course, it was not raining at the bottom of the mountain. This is not an unusual weather pattern for the Roan area.

My thanks to all the fine folks who helped make our thirteenth annual count so enjoyable regardless of the weather. I look forward to our fourteenth count, which will as always be scheduled for the third Saturday in July, making the date of the count for next year SAT 15 JULY 2006. Please join us.

Pipevine Swallowtail - 6  
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail - 5  
Cabbage White - 10  
Clouded Sulphur - 1  
Orange Sulphur - 9  
Eastern Tailed-Blue - 59  
Summer Azure - 3  
Great Spangled Fritillary - 8  
Aphrodite Fritillary - 1  
Pearl Crescent - 15



Speyeria spp. - 3 (undetermined  
Great Spangled or Aphrodite Fritillary)  
Eastern Comma - 1  
Red Admiral - 1  
Common Wood-Nymph - 5  
Monarch - 1  
Silver-spotted Skipper - 17  
Common Sootywing - 1  
Little Glassywing - 1

submitted by Don Holt, Johnson City, TN, compiler



*Editor*  
*Nancy Barrigar*  
*708 Allen Avenue*  
*Elizabethton, TN 37643*  
*(423) 543-7576*  
*barrigargn@earthlink.net*