



The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Ross Layberry, Anne Hanes Natural History Award 2007

The Anne Hanes Natural History Award recognizes excellence in natural history research by an amateur. This year the award goes to butterfly enthusiast and expert, Ross Layberry.

Ross shared the first Anne Hanes Natural History Award in 1982 with J. Donald Lafontaine and Peter Hall for writing the "Butterflies of the Ottawa District." (*T&L* 16 No.1). Sixteen years later this triumvirate wrote the seminal book *Butterflies of Canada*, published by University of Toronto Press.

This year we are recognizing Ross for his recent article in *Trail & Landscape* (vol. 41, no 1), "Butterflies of the Ottawa District: 103 species...and counting." As this article testifies, Ross has continued over the years to be a keen field observer, meticulous collector of data, discriminating collector of specimens, and even a careful rearer of immatures.

This has enabled him to fill in many gaps in our knowledge of the butterflies and, more importantly, to make that information available to all through his lucid writing. In the article, Ross explains why four species should no longer be included in the Ottawa butterfly fauna, and why several others should be added. Most fascinating and impressive were the descriptions of his successful (and less successful) attempts at rearing the larvae of certain taxonomically problematic species such as the Summer Azure and Cherry Gall Azure in order to better understand the species limits. This kind of careful, often frustrating work goes far beyond the ordinary "capture and list" activity of most butterfly collectors.

In addition to preparing well written articles, Ross has made a very special contribution to our knowledge of local butterflies by his meticulous work in creating and maintaining a database of thousands of records of butterflies that is now available through the Canadian Biodiversity Information Facility under the auspices of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Ottawa. This database is readily accessible to researchers and amateurs online.

Ross has been collecting butterflies since he was a child in England. He simply continued that interest as an amateur when he came here as a young man. He has become a foremost expert in Canadian as well as local butterflies. We are pleased to present him with the Anne Hanes Natural History Award for 2007.

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