



The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Linda Jeays, Anne Hanes Natural History Award 2006

This award is given in recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley. Linda Jeays, an enthusiastic birder and longtime member of OFNC, began to study butterflies as a Millennium project. Her first identification was a Black Swallowtail flushed while watching waterfowl at Richmond Lagoons. She jotted down a description, later referred to a field guide, and suddenly had a new natural history interest.

Linda is a former English teacher with an inclination towards note-taking. In her first summer studying Lepidoptera she began detailed documentation on every butterfly she encountered except where numbers made this impractical. She also keeps data on topics such as flight season, habitat, nectaring plants, road-kill and garden species.

At the end of the 2001 season, Linda learned that her sightings of Eastern Tailed Blue and Common Buckeye were very rare in the Ottawa area. Encouraged by Ross Layberry to write up her observations for Trail & Landscape and to check the locations again the following year, her detailed notes soon became valuable. In 2002, Linda again saw Buckeye briefly, but her real work began when she netted Eastern Tailed Blue within 10 feet of a previous year's site. In the very few records available, no one else had reported the butterfly in a repeat location.

What if Eastern Tailed Blue had overwintered? Linda began spending many hours each week netting, measuring and individually marking the Blues. Each year she recorded her findings in T&L, accumulating proof of overwintering. She has now established the presence of this species at one site near Richmond for six consecutive years. The culmination of Linda's work came in the summer of 2006 when she spent over 250 hours in the field documenting the population explosion and widespread dispersal of Eastern Tailed Blue. She herself tallied 30 locations and 160 individuals. Another 25 sites and 170 Blues were reported by independent contributors to the Annual Eastern Tailed Blue Roundup that Linda conducts.

Linda Jeays has written feature articles, essays, humour, book reviews and autobiographical material for newspapers such as the Ottawa Citizen and the National Post. She has many magazine credits and has worked on assignment for the Canada Safety Council. Linda wrote her first short item for T&L in 1975. In 1977 she called then-editor Anne Hanes about submitting a piece of free verse. Anne said that unfortunately T&L did not use poetry, but she would still like to read the poem. "Metamorphosis" was printed in January 1978, the first of Linda's 35 poems in the club magazine.

Anne Hanes would surely have been pleased that her early encouragement of the creative expression of Linda's nature observations has developed into meticulous factual

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documentation of Eastern Tailed Blue and a worthwhile contribution to the knowledge and understanding of this butterfly in the Ottawa Valley.

For her outstanding contribution to our further knowledge of the Eastern Tailed Blue in the Ottawa Region, we are very pleased to present Linda Jeays with the Anne Hanes Natural History Award for 2006.

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