ESA Awards for 2003

EMINENT ECOLOGIST AWARD

Richard B. Root

The Eminent Ecologist Award is given in recognition of an outstanding body of ecological work or of sustained contributions of extraordinary merit. It is the highest honor bestowed by the Ecological Society of America. The winner of the 2003 Eminent Ecologist Award is Dr. Richard B. Root, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University. During his nearly 40-year tenure at Cornell, Dr. Root has contributed to the field of ecology in numerous ways. Few ecologists have so effectively spanned population and community ecology, and also managed to effectively blend research in fundamental areas of ecology and evolutionary biology into the application to agricultural systems. His colleagues view him as a “true scholar” with a gift for blending his love for natural history patterns into current and emerging issues in both theoretical and applied ecology.

Dick Root’s career began with a focus on niche partitioning in gnatcatchers, a study that formed the basis for his development of the “guild concept.” This paper (published in Ecological Monographs in 1967) is a “citation classic,” and the concept is a contribution that remains a cornerstone of how we view ecology today. His research expanded over the next decade to include insect communities, and through this he developed an interest in agricultural systems. Over his career, Dr. Root has published a wealth of influential papers that have merged his interests in theoretical and empirical studies of community ecology. Most notable among these was his work on the resource concentration hypothesis, the evolutionary aspects of defensive chemistry, and community assembly theory. His work in agricultural systems is particularly noteworthy, as he was among the first to demonstrate that these systems are important and interesting “ecological communities” in their own right, and can serve as analogs for the interactions and processes that occur in natural systems, such as successional old fields.

Dr. Root’s influence on the field of ecology has extended beyond his research to his role as an advisor, mentor, and teacher. To date he has had 37 Ph.D and 6 M.S. students, many of whom have had significant impacts on the field of ecology, including Paulette Bierzychudek, Naomi Cappuccino, Walter Carson, Steve Chaplin, W. J. Cromartie, Ted Evans, Peter Feinsinger, Fritzi Grevstad, Ann Herzig, Ruth Hufbauer, Tamaru Hunt, Peter Kareiva, Sharon Kinsman, Carol Loeffler, David Maddox, Peter McEvoy, Frank Messina, Gretchen Meyer, Matt Parker, Dan Peck, Merrill Peterson, Peter Price, Carol Pearson Ralph, Bev Rathke, Jan Salick, Sarah Sargent, Jorma Tahvanainen, Maria Uriarte, and Andrew G. Zink.
The Distinguished Service Citation recognizes long and distinguished service to the Ecological Society of America, to the larger scientific community, and to the larger purpose of ecology in the public welfare. The winner of the 2003 Distinguished Service Citation is Dr. Allen M. Solomon, Senior Global Ecologist in the Western Ecology Division of the U.S.E.P.A. Dr. Solomon has played many roles within the ESA, but he is being recognized in particular for his dedication, commitment, and nearly single-handed management of the *ESA Bulletin* over the past decade. He has served as Editor-in-Chief of the *ESA Bulletin* since 1992, and under his tutelage the *Bulletin* has moved from a documentation of Society business to a vibrant, and entertaining, journal with special features that are timely and informative. Al Solomon has committed a tremendous amount of personal energy and enthusiasm to the *Bulletin*, including recruiting articles and adding new features. Because the *Bulletin* has historically been the only publication that is received by all members of the ESA, it has played an important role in informing the membership of news and activities of the Society, as well as documenting the many changes the ESA has undergone over the past decade. It is especially noteworthy that ESA recognize Al Solomon for his service this year, as the *Bulletin* has just successfully transitioned from the “hard copy” print version to a fully electronic format.

Al Solomon has contributed to the ESA in many other ways, as well. He has served as a member and/or chair of numerous committees, including the Public Affairs and International Relations Committees, the ESA Awards Committee, and several committees related to ESA publications. He helped organize the Paleoecology Section and served several terms as Chair. Al is also active in the Association for Vegetation Science and the American Quarternary Association. Importantly for our profession, from 1999 to 2001 he served as Senior Policy Analyst for the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Executive Office of President Clinton.

For his service to the Society, to the scientific community, and to the purpose of ecology in the public welfare, ESA is pleased to award the Distinguished Service Citation to Dr. Allen Solomon.

**Eminent Ecologist Award Subcommittee:** Katherine L. Gross (Chair), Paul Dayton, Peter Groffman, Nelson Hairston, Jr., Robert Holt, and Beatrice VanHorne.