



Special Announcement

COVID Necessitates Changes to the Fall Naturalists Rally

In order to keep participants safe due to the increase in cases of COVID-19, the following changes to the rally have been made:

The Friday, September 10th and Saturday, September 11th evening programs will take place in the Roan Mountain State Park Amphitheater, instead of the Conference Center.

Friday Registration will take place at the Amphitheater beginning at 6:30 PM

No dinners will be available.

The 12:00 PM Nature Images Slide Show on Saturday will not take place.

All participants should keep a safe distance from others, and masks are required when social distancing is not possible. Field trips on Saturday and Sunday will still take place, but it may be necessary to limit group size. Saturday lunches will still be available.

The Membership Meeting scheduled for Saturday, September 11th will instead be a Zoom meeting at 4:00 PM Sunday, September 19. The link for that meeting is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85443578080>. If you would like to join by phone, call 1 929 205 6099 US (New York). The Meeting ID is 854 4357 8080.

If you have questions, contact friendsofroan@gmail.com.

Vanishing Birds and Live-Streaming Bald Eagles

— Dr. Fred J. Alsop III

On September 19, 2019 a study published in the journal *Science* revealed that since 1970, bird populations in the United States and Canada have declined by 29 percent, or almost 3 billion birds, signaling a widespread ecological crisis. The results show tremendous losses across diverse groups of birds and habitats — from iconic songsters such as meadowlarks to long-distance migrants such as swallows and backyard birds including sparrows.

The study notes that birds are indicators of environmental health, signaling that natural systems across the U.S. and Canada are now being so severely impacted by human activities that they no longer support the same robust wildlife populations.

This PowerPoint presentation will highlight this scientific study by multiple ornithologists and scientists who collaborated with Cornell University's laboratory at Sapsucker Woods to produce the study and will discuss the decline of our birds, the principal reasons for these avian losses, and some of the actions we can take to stem this tide of vanishing wildlife.

Not all groups of birds have been declining, and some including the raptors have even shown significant increases in numbers over this same period including our national emblem, the Bald Eagle. This species will be highlighted with a look at a local project that has brought the live-streaming of two nesting pairs of Bald Eagles into our living rooms and to eagle watchers around the globe for the past 6 years.



Eugene & Frances are located in Bluff City, TN

Boone & Shima are located in Johnson City TN



Dr. Fred Alsop is Faculty Emeritus at East Tennessee State University where he served as Chairman of Department of Biological Sciences. An accomplished ornithologist, author, photographer and tour leader, Dr. Alsop is Founder and Director of Biological Sciences/ETSU EagleCam project. His presentation for the Fall Rally will take place on Friday, Sept. 10, 7:30 PM, at the Park Amphitheater.

Singing Insects on Roan Mountain

— Cade Campbell

Anyone who has spent an evening sitting reverently around a campfire, rocking on the front porch, or simply driving down a curving, mountain highway through the nocturnal forests of Southern Appalachia, has become acquainted with our choral insects. Seldom seen, these insects leave complex and fascinating life history legacies everywhere from the highest, lush canopy at midnight, to the most desolate, windswept fields on a sunbaked afternoon. Each species has a unique niche and fulfills a special role, both musically and functionally, in our wonderfully biodiverse invertebrate orchestra.

As numerous as singing insects are vocally, it can be easy to take their reverberating songs for granted; to listen, and consider these omnipresent harbingers of the sweet, sticky summer evening and the zephyrs of the Dog Days as fixated, permanent aspects of the mountain habitats to which they comfortably cleave. But instead, the singing insects of our mountains are vulnerable to many changes, especially a shifting climate and habitat destruction. While most humans cherish their songs, many fewer know the identity of the songsters. Much like a favorite song on a shattered CD, or a radio station that no longer plays, these insect musicians have the potential to disappear.

Not only do our insects fill the night air with chirping, buzzing, and whispering “love ballads,” but they also have vital ecological roles. A wide variety of indigenous animals, including warblers, treefrogs, bats, trout, and even larger invertebrates rely on singing insects as prey, while other singing insects fulfill the role of predator themselves to communities of even smaller arthropods like aphids, caterpillars, and even some garden pests. Without singing insects, mountain ecosystems would cease to exist as we know and love them. And unlike a broken CD, we can’t buy a species back from extinction at the dollar store.

This fall, the findings from a 2020 survey of Roan Mountain singing insect biodiversity will be revealed at the Friends of Roan Mountain Naturalists Rally. On Saturday, September 11th, 7:30 p.m., we will be hosting both an interpretive walk and presentation at the Roan Mountain State Park Amphitheater to share the wonders of these often-overlooked insects. Using spectrogram analysis, macro photography, and other tools, join us to dive into the world of katydids, crickets, and grasshoppers to understand more about the unique species which call Roan Mountain home, delve into their bizarre biology, and learn to use their songs and signs to foster a greater sense of natural awareness on a personal level.



A well-camouflaged Curve-tailed Bush Katydid (*Scudderia curvicauda*) Would you be able to recognize his song?

Cade Campbell is a Roan Scholar undergrad at ETSU, studying biology, and has worked during the summers at the Blue Ridge Discovery Center as a naturalist/educator intern. He is an Eagle Scout and a recipient of a Coleopterists Society Youth Incentive Award grant. Friends of Roan Mountain awarded a grant to Cade in 2020 to support his survey of singing insects on the Roan.

Twin Springs Renovation is Complete!

— Gary Barrigar, President F.O.R.M.

The Friends of Roan Mountain adopted the Twin Springs Recreation Area in the Fall of 2017, partnering with the U.S. Forest Service to improve and maintain the site. Much work by volunteers has occurred since then, removing litter and debris, mowing and trimming, and replacing the roof on the shelter. (Randy McKinna continues to mow and trim on a regular basis.)

This year, using a grant of \$3000 from the Carter County Park and Recreation Board, the Friends of Roan added a new concrete pad and painted the picnic shelter. With volunteer contractor, Charles LaPorte, planning and directing the work, volunteers Larry McDaniel, Saylor Fox, Randall Rogers, Ken Turner, Joseph Ritgers, Richard Broadwell, Will Miller and Gary Barrigar put in 85 person-hours completing the concrete pad project. Volunteers, Gary Barrigar, Nancy Barrigar, Larry McDaniel, Janet Brown, Guy Mauldin, Richard Broadwell, Jim Gorny, Ken Turner, Randall Rogers, Riane Thompson, Leonard Thompson, Chris Campbell, Chloe Campbell and Will Miller repainted the shelter using eight gallons of paint (69 person-hours).





On July 25th, 23 members and volunteers gathered for a celebration picnic using the renovated Twin Springs shelter. The group greatly enjoyed socializing on a summer afternoon in the comfortable climate of the mountain setting. The Friend of Roan Mountain is pleased that we can contribute to the community by making Twin Spring available for the public now and for future generations.



Xtreme Roan Adventures a Success Due to the Great Volunteer Leaders

It was my great privilege and pleasure to be a part of getting kids in the creek, in the woods, and in the fields at the 2021 Xtreme Roan Adventures on July 30 & 31.

Friday evening the kids were all anxious to “be a spider” for the *Close Encounters of the Eight-Legged Kind* stage show. TJ and Guthrie Jones surprised and entertained a great crowd for an hour about spiders.

Great weather let the kids stay up past 10 p.m. with Ranger Phil Hylan. He had a field full of lightening bug imitators. Happy kids used their flashlights to simulate different species of lightening bug flashes. They looked for matching species with answering identical flashes. In the dark.

The kids were swarming all over the seven Adventures on Saturday morning. Have you ever seen a creek full of kids working on getting a sample of water quality critters? There were lots of excited kids with their first crayfish. Gary Barrigar’s Wet & Wild Adventure had whole families working together to identify the water macroinvertebrates they found.

U.S. Foresters Marcia Carter and crew had a great time showing the big fish in the Doe River. They also helped Joe McGuiness and the Animal Signs Adventure. The kids learned to identify all kinds of special habitats.

The weather was great all through the Adventures. There were twenty Adventurers on the Sky Islands Adventure with Joshua Lyon, the S.A.H.C. Roan Naturalist, on Round Bald.

Many more volunteer leaders gave their time and expertise to make the Xtreme Roan Adventures very memorable experience for all the families. It would not have happened without them:

Connie Deegan, Mick Whitelaw, Janet Brown, Nancy Barrigar, Michele Sparks, Adrianna Nelson, Bart Carter, Jeremy Stout, Tracy and Chloe Campbell, Sheri Rhudy, Jamey Donaldson, Larry McDaniel, Blain Schubert, Denise Shadduck, Bob Estep.

It was a great surprise to have past XRA director, Nora Clark and daughter Mahalia, pitch in and join us.

THANK YOU ALL. ~Ken





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Annual Membership Meeting

Friends of Roan Mountain will hold its annual membership meeting as a Zoom meeting at 4:00 PM Sunday, September 19. The link for that meeting is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85443578080>. If you would like to join by phone, call 1 929 205 6099 US (New York). The Meeting ID is 854 4357 8080.

At the meeting you will receive information regarding the activities, projects and finances of the organization. The election of board members will be held.

The following have been nominated for this year's election: Gary Barrigar, Pam Baldwin, Richard Broadwell, Ken Turner, and Anne Whittemore. Nominations from the floor may be made at the meeting.

The annual meeting provides an opportunity for the membership to give their input concerning the policies and activities of FORM. Any member wishing to submit an item for the agenda of the annual meeting may do so by contacting Gary Barrigar, friendsofroan@gmail.com.

ROAN BUTTERFLY COUNT

— Don Holt

Thanks to everyone for your help and support with the Roan Mountain butterfly count. I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did. I have included the NABA count summary below. The total number of individual butterflies was a little low, but our species number was close to average. I think the butterfly abundance is naturally lower in early midsummer in our region, being between broods for many species, and they seem to be a bit late this year starting their usual summer recovery. When Dr. Jerry Nagel initiated this count in 1993, he chose the third Saturday in July as its regular date because he had observed that "spectacular" emergences of Aphrodite Fritillaries were most likely near that time. It has been hit or miss over the years, with only a few actual count-days yielding hundreds of them. Also, we have discovered another species that has occasional "spectacular" emergences here is the Pipeline Swallowtail. Having missed both spectacles this year, we can more keenly anticipate next year's outcome. The scheduled count date next year is July 16, 2022.



I have a side note for you on the orange hawkweed on the far end of the Rhododendron Garden loop. I remember that station from at least as far back as my college days in the early eighties when John Warden told us it was called King-devil (a name used for a few other species in the genus as well). It is also known as Devil's Paintbrush or Orange Hawkweed. Its scientific name is *Hieracium aurantiacum*. It is native to Europe, having been introduced as an ornamental, probably at several times and places, and is found naturalized in scattered locales across the country, usually in high elevation or northern meadows. The species is not listed in any of my wildflower books for Tennessee, but is reported in several books for North Carolina.

Roan Mountain, TN. Yr. 29, 36.1067°, -82.1105°, center at Carvers Gap, Carter Co., TN, and Mitchell Co., NC, at the crossing of TN Hwy. 143 / NC Hwy. 261 over TN/NC state line. See 1993 report for habitats. **17 July 2021;** 1000-1800 hrs; sun AM 11-25%, PM 11-25%; 70-79°F; wind 0-5 mi/hr. 7 observers in 1 party. **Total party-hours 6; total party-miles on foot 2. Observers:** D. Draper, D. Gardner, Don Holt (3742 Cherokee Road, Jonesborough, TN, 37659; dnldhlt@aol.com), V. Maddux, J. McGuinness, K. Rea, K. Stroud.

Pipeline Swallowtail 11, Black Sw. 2, E. Tiger Sw. 9, Cabbage White 25, Clouded Sulphur 13, Orange Su. 10, Cloudless Su. 1, E. Tailed-Blue 17, 'Summer' Spring Azure 12, Gr. Spangled Fritillary 1, Aphrodite Fr. 23, Meadow Fr. 6, Pearl Crescent 17, Question Mark 3, Am. Lady 1, Red Admiral 1, Viceroy 3, Silver-spotted Skipper 4, Peck's Sk. 1, Sachem 1. **Unidentified:** dark Swallowtails 4, albino Colias sp. 1. **Total** 20 species, 166 individuals.

ROAN MOUNTAIN STATE PARK HAPPENINGS

An Upgrade for Snakes!: In 2021, the Roan Mountain State Park Visitor Center Snake exhibit has had a bit of an upgrade! We now feature 3 large, secure habitats for our snakes that mimic their natural environments here in Northeast TN. The new theme for our display is "The many jobs of our Appalachian Snakes." Each habitat will have an associated interpretive panel and a 6x2' interpretive art piece will top off the display by featuring a mural of native Appalachian snakes benefiting humans by doing their "jobs."



Monarch Waystation Updates: The first Monarchs have been spotted visiting the Miller Farmstead this year as of the 3rd weekend in July by park staff and visitors. Their activity follows the fall migration and visitors can expect to see these beautiful butterflies visiting our acres of milkweed until mid-October. Roan Mountain State Park is also excited to announce our Miller Farmstead Monarch Waystation fields and surrounding forest stands have been designated as a National Wildlife Federation certified Wildlife Habitat. This certification requires the given area of 42 acres must be proven to provide food, water, shelter, cover, and brood habitat for several given species including Wild Turkey, Ruffed Grouse, White-tailed Deer, several species of pollinators, as well as many species of migratory and year-round resident songbirds.

Working for the Owls: Roan Mountain State Park is currently accepting volunteers to assist with our Bird of Prey aviary program. Volunteers will assist the park with weekly care and maintenance of our park owls and their habitats. Volunteer experience involves cleaning cages, helping park staff with repairs, assisting with occasional owl health inspections, and learning how to interpret these amazing animals to the public. Interested individuals can sign up on our park website for scheduled volunteer days or contact Ranger Philip Hylen at Philip.Hylen@tn.gov for more information.

Count the Kits

— Just jamey

A mesmerizing experience in early July led to the submitting this article. I have long been enamored by faint skunk smell though I realize others are not drawn to it in a similar manner. I like it so much I roll down my window when passing skunk roadkill. However, I take care not to harass skunks as they go about their daily lives and these pictures and videos are the closest I have ever approached them. You will notice the pictures are grainy indicating I kept my distance.

This summer's animal highlight was watching a skunk family having an afternoon's picnic outing in the greater Roan Mountain area. The mother and her kits stayed closely together while never separating by more than 1 foot. I counted at least three kits but there may be a fourth hiding by her side. The father came by several minutes later and returned the following day as well. You can view the videos at my YouTube page.

The striped skunk is found across much of North America from northern Mexico to southern Canada. Much like the common raccoon, it is a wide-ranging medium-sized stout-bodied animal which has adapted to human encroachment on its habitat. It is also the second most common rabies carrier after the raccoon. Birds of prey are the main predators of skunks.

I have yet to see an eastern spotted skunk, the other skunk native to Tennessee. While less common than the striped skunk it is not listed rare in the state.

References

- TWRA. "Eastern Spotted Skunk, *Spilogale putorius*". Accessed 24 July 2021. <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/twra/wildlife/mammals/medium/eastern-spotted-skunk.html>
- TWRA. "Striped Skunk, *Mephitis mephitis*". Accessed 24 July 2021. <https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/mammals/medium/striped-skunk.html>
- Wikipedia. "Striped Skunk". Accessed 24 July 2021. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Striped_skunk

Skunk mother w/ kits video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2XGhB2BPx8>



Skunk father video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUt-kRkmC8I>





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Deadline for Fall Rally Lunch Orders – Payment for rally lunches must be received by Tuesday, September 7. The reservation form can be found in the brochure or on our website. Mail your check and reservation form to Nancy Barrigar, 708 Allen Avenue, Elizabethton, TN 37643.

You can now register online. Follow the link on our website's homepage.



Door Prizes -- We gladly accept items donated for door prizes. These will be given away on Friday and Saturday prior to the evening programs. Ideas: nature-related books, photos or art, outdoor gear, plants, homemade goodies . . .



Get the latest updates on FORM events and listen to interviews with Rally presenters and leaders on Roan Mountain Radio with Ken Turner.

<http://www.roanmountainradio.com/>



	Spring Rally	Last Friday - Sunday in April	April 22 - 24, 2022
	Youth - XRA	Last Friday—Saturday in July	July 29-30, 2022
	Fall Rally	Friday - Sunday in September before Labor Day	Sept. 10—12, 2021
	Winter Rally	Saturday in February near Valentine's Day	Feb.12, 2022

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