

# SPRING IN THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS: BIRDS AND BOTANY IN THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS

APRIL 25 – MAY 2, 2009

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*Often called the crown jewel of the national park system, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has lovely scenery, abundant wildlife, the most diverse flora in North America north of Mexico, and a rich human history. Indeed, the Smokies are so important biologically that the entire region is recognized as an International Biosphere Reserve. Within its boundaries there are more than 1500 flowering plants and 200 species of breeding birds. The southern Appalachians also harbor the greatest diversity of salamanders anywhere on earth, as well as the largest tract of old growth forest east of the Mississippi. The park is an important breeding site for forest birds and it is the southernmost breeding site for many birds that are normally only found much further north.*

*Although the Smokies were strongly affected by previous glacial episodes, they were never covered by glaciers. Rather they became something of a refuge for northern species forced southward, and many of these species remain to this day, especially at higher elevations. The Smokies, thus, are something of a meeting ground of southern and northern species, and this, in part, contributes to the enormous plant and animal diversity found here. The Smokies and adjacent southern Appalachians provide the setting for this short trip which focuses on spring wildflowers and birds. We will begin on the western slopes of the park, in what is billed as the “peaceful side of the park” because of lower human population. Although we should identify in excess of 200 species of wildflowers, trees and shrubs, as well as a good number of breeding birds, we hope to make interpretive natural history an important theme of this trip, as we explore various elevations and forest types in and near the park.*

**April 25, Day 1: Arrival in Knoxville, Tennessee.** Participants may make plans to arrive in Knoxville at any time today but we would suggest an afternoon arrival. A room will be reserved in your name at the hotel. We will meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for a brief get-acquainted meeting followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn Airport, Knoxville

**April 26, Day 2: Getting Acquainted With Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Southern Appalachians.** It is a relatively short drive from the airport hotel to the park. We will start early this morning, perhaps going first to a favorite “migrant” site in Knoxville where we are sure to see many migrant warblers. We will spend the afternoon on a wildflower walk in the national park and, if time permits, also visit the park visitor’s center. In the evening we will visit nearby Chestnut Tops trail and one of the best spring wildflower walks in the park. The trail begins in rich bottomland hardwood forest and after a long gradual climb, emerges into a much drier pine-dominated forest along the ridge above. We are likely to see a long list of flowering plants along this trail. Wildflower walks are now almost a rite of spring in the Great Smoky Mountains, and our visit should coincide with good spring blooming. Of course, with elevations ranging from 875 to over 6600 feet, one

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has only to move upward in elevation to travel backward in time, so if we don't find good spring flowers at lower elevations, we will almost certainly do so at higher elevations. Indeed, by late April or early May, displays of early spring flowers will almost certainly be found mainly at higher elevations. These include Spring Beauties, Trout Lilies, Dutchman's Breeches, Squirrel Corn, Bloodroot, Bellwort, Dwarf Iris, Large-flowered Trillium, larkspurs, Pink and Flame azaleas, and a few others. At lower elevations many late spring bloomers will already be appearing. Similarly, the birds of high and low elevations within the Smokies differ markedly. We will visit one or perhaps two infrequently used trails leading into the park. Of course, it is quite likely that we will make several stops even before we reach these trails, which start at around 3000 feet in elevation.

A sampling of birds this morning could include Ruby-throated Hummingbird; Pileated Woodpecker; Carolina Chickadee; Gray Catbird; Blue-headed (Solitary) and Red-eyed vireo; Black-and-white, Black-throated Green, Worm-eating, Hooded and Kentucky warbler; Scarlet Tanager; Rufous-sided Towhee; Song Sparrow; and perhaps a Veery or Wood thrush. Among a long list of trees, shrubs and flowers are Jack-in-the-Pulpit, False Solomon's Seal, Great Solomon's Seal, Yellow Trillium, Sweetshrub, Dog-Hobble, Galax, Carolina Vetch, Early Buttercup, Yellow Pimpernel, Mayapple, Lyre-leafed Sage, Rue Anemone, Wild Strawberry, several species of violets, Flowering Dogwood, and perhaps flowering Yellow-wood.

NIGHT: Econo Lodge, Townsend

**April 27, Day 3: Cade's Cove and Rich Mountain Road.** A trip around the 11-mile loop road through Cade's Cove is like a glimpse into the history of pioneer settlement in the eastern U.S. This relatively flat valley of some 6000 acres, long used occasionally for hunting by the Cherokee Indians, was first open to pioneer settlement about 1819. Eventually some 125 families totaling over 600 people lived here, most of them on small farms. Many remained until the mid-1930s, when their lands were purchased as part of a resettlement program prior to establishing the present national park. The cove is justly famous for its beauty and its history, and now registers more than 2 million visits per year—more than are recorded by 44 of the nation's 54 national parks. By far the greatest visitation is between Memorial Day and Labor Day. In addition to the many historic buildings preserved in the park, there are often craft demonstrations at the visitor's center, and the valley is an excellent place to see a variety of wildlife including White-tailed Deer. Birds include Red-shouldered Hawk; Wild Turkey; Eastern Screech-Owl; Barred Owl; Downy and Pileated woodpecker; Yellow-shafted Flicker; Great Crested Flycatcher; Acadian Flycatcher; Wood Pewee; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; Carolina Chickadee; Carolina Wren; White-breasted Nuthatch; Yellow-throated and Red-eyed vireo; Northern Parula; Black-and-white, Yellow-throated, Pine and Hooded warbler; Ovenbird; Louisiana Waterthrush; Common Yellowthroat; Summer Tanager; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Indigo Bunting; and Chipping and Song sparrow.

After a picnic lunch, we will continue our exploration of the area with a drive on Rich Mountain Road, one of the five original routes into and out of the valley, and then return to our hotel. There is no original forest left in the cove, and national park personnel maintain the open fields through a combination of cutting hay, grazing cattle and horses, and controlled burning, as part of an effort to preserve the “look of the pioneer past” at Cade's Cove.

NIGHT: Econo Lodge, Townsend

**April 28, Day 4: The Great Smoky Mountains National Park.** Today we will visit two trails in the park, including one at mid-elevation (about 3000 ft), the other one lower. At this time of the year, weekdays are relatively quiet in the park, so we should have the areas pretty much to ourselves with little or no inconvenience from traffic. (Remember that this is the most-visited park in the U.S.) Both are excellent for wildflowers and birds. We will start at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail, a relatively short three-quarter-mile loop trail located at about 2700 feet elevation along the Newfound Gap Road. This cool, sheltered cove, at the upper end of Sugarlands Valley, was once home to about 75 families. Where the slopes were not too steep, they were cleared and farmed, and part of the area we will visit this morning was once cropland. The upper sections, however, were too steep or too rocky to cut and part of the nature trail passes through old-growth forest. Along the trail there are some trees of very impressive size, among them Hemlock, White Basswood, Yellow Birch, Tulip Tree, Sil-

verbell, American Beech, Red Maple and Sugar Maple. The nature trail is also a very good site for many small flowering plants. A few among the many that we are likely to see are Fringed Phacelia, Blue Cohosh, Brook Saxifrage, Bishop's Cap, Showy Orchis, Foamflower, and Stonecrop. At this time of year Winter Wren, Blue-headed (Solitary) and Red-eyed vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Ovenbird, and Scarlet Tanager are present. Where the trees are not too high, we should see some of these species. This trail is the most difficult of the trails we will walk. Although it is a bit steep in places, it is generally wide and well maintained and should present no problems.

Following lunch near Gatlinburg we will visit another site, one of the lowest in elevation in the park, north of Gatlinburg. This is usually an excellent trail for spring wildflowers.

NIGHT: Econo Lodge, Townsend

**April 29, Day 5: Clingman's Dome and the Blue Ridge Parkway.** Today we begin exploration of higher elevations in the southern Appalachians and continue tomorrow. We will drive up to Newfound Pass, entering, for the first time, the spruce-fir zone. As time permits we will stop to bird and botanize in this upper zone, as this will be the highest elevation we will reach. Beginning here, we may see good displays of early spring flowers such as Spring Beauties and Trout Lilies, as well as numerous flowering Serviceberry trees. Birds are often much in evidence: Common Raven; Black-capped Chickadee; Veery; Red-breasted Nuthatch; Brown Creeper; Blue-headed Vireo; and Black-throated Blue, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, and Canada warbler are all possible. We should also see Golden-crowned Kinglet, Dark-eyed Junco, and occasionally even Red Crossbills are seen flying over. Clingman's Dome is the highest elevation in the park but, sadly, the loss of most of the Fraser's Fir to a woolly adelgid infestation is everywhere evident with vast areas of dead trees now visible. From Clingman's Dome we will continue on through the park, enter the Blue Ridge Parkway at its southernmost end, and drive eastward through the Cherokee Indian Reservation and a short distance into the Pisgah National Forest before eventually turning off for the night in Waynesville. The parkway, a beautiful, winding mountain highway that runs from the Shenandoah Valley some 469 miles south to the Oconaluftee River at the edge of the Cherokee Indian Reservation, never ceases to delight with its soft valleys, tunnels, frequent overlooks and bluish, mist-like haze. We'll drive only the last thirty miles or so of the parkway but what a beautiful road it is with exquisite scenery throughout. Elevations range from 2000 to over 5000 feet here and we'll see an ever-changing panorama of forest and blooming flowers ranging from early to late spring. At high passes on the parkway Fraser fir, northern red spruce, yellow birch, pin cherry, mountain ash, Catawba rhododendron, red elder, fetterbush and hobblebush viburnum predominate; at lower elevations we'll find sourwood, red maple, black locust, pignut hickory, red oak, chestnut oak and silverbell. Throughout mid-elevations we are sure to see hundreds of trilliums, and many other wildflowers. Late this evening we'll leave the parkway and descend a short distance back to the outskirts of Waynesville and our hotel for the evening. We should have good views of the mountains, even from the hotel.

NIGHT: Best Western Smoky Mountains Inn, Waynesville

**April 30, Day 6: The Blue Ridge Parkway.** We will spend the morning birding and botanizing along the Blue Ridge Parkway as we work our way slowly back toward the park, stopping frequently. At this time of year there are likely to be fine displays of early spring flowers, especially of Large-flowered Trillium, Spring Beauty, Dutchman's Breeches, Trout Lily, Wood Anemone, and Dwarf Larkspur, at elevations above 5000 feet, as well as Pink Azaleas, and good displays of Great Chickweed and other trilliums at slightly lower elevations. We may have a picnic lunch today and plan to visit one or more unimproved roads on the lower east side of the park where there is almost no traffic.

NIGHT: Econo Lodge, Townsend

**May 1, Day 7: Birds and Wildflowers in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.** This will be our last day of exploration in the Smokies. Our activities may be determined to some extent by what we have accomplished earlier this week. We may take the opportunity to revisit an area that was especially good, or if we have

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been rained out on a day earlier in the week, we may revisit one or more areas. One area that we hope to visit is Schoolhouse Gap Trail near the city of Townsend where we have found a number of interesting flowers, among them Catsby's Trillium; Indian Cucumber; Bowman's Root; Pipssiwia; Pink Lady's Slipper Orchid; Yellow Lady's Slipper Orchid; and Fairy Wand (a lily) among many others. This is also a good trail for several species of breeding warblers as well as Scarlet Tanager. We have heard Ruffed Grouse drumming along this trail as well.

NIGHT: Econo Lodge, Townsend

**May 2, Day 8: Departure for Home.** Participants should make plans to return home today. As there is no shuttle from the hotel in Townsend (about 45 minutes to the airport), we will be taking all participants to the Knoxville airport, arriving there (or the Hampton Inn for those who have left their cars there) by about 8:15a.m., and you should make plans accordingly. There are numerous hotels with shuttle service and rental car agencies near the airport, as well as a Bed and Birding site (Wood Thrush Ridge) just a short distance southward, should anyone wish to remain in the area longer.

**Please note that the order in which some of the activities listed on the itinerary are undertaken may be reversed or changed depending upon weather, dates, scheduled park service activities within the park, or other factors. The itinerary, therefore, should be regarded only as a suggested order in which these activities occur.**

The following is a sample of the diversity of plants that have been noted flowering in late April in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park by Steve Hilty: Plantain-leaf Sedge; Frasier's Sedge; Jack-in-the Pulpit; Crested Dwarf Iris; Blue-eyed Grass; Trout Lily; Yellow Star Grass; False Solomon's Seal; Great Solomon's Seal; Yellow Trillium; Catsby's Trillium; Large-flowered Trillium; Southern Nodding Trillium; Painted Trillium; Sweet White Trillium; Vasey's Trillium; Large-flowered Bellwort; Sessile-leaf Bellwort; Yellow Mandarin; Spotted Mandarin; Speckled Wood Lily; Adam and Eve Orchid; Showy Orchis; Downy Rattlesnake Plantain Orchid; Yellow Lady's Slipper Orchid; Pink Lady's Slipper Orchid; Yellow Pimpernel; Wild Ginger; Little Brown Jugs; Daisy Fleabane; Robin's Plantain; Rattlesnake Hawkweed; Ox-eye Daisy; Yellow Ragwort; Blue Cohosh; Mayapple; Cross-Vine; Wild Comfrey; Cut-leafed Toothwort; Black Locust; Princess Tree; Sweetshrub; Witch-Hobble; Common Chickweed; Great Chickweed; Fire Pink; Flowering Dogwood; Tulip Tree; Yellow Buckeye; Wild Stonecrop; Galax; Mountain Laurel; Dog-Hobble; Flame Azalea; Pink Azalea; Yellowwood; Crown Vetch; Carolina Vetch; Dutchman's Breeches; Squirrel-Corn; Pennywort; Wild Geranium; Purple Phacelia; Fringed Phacelia; Miami Mist; Henbit; Self-Heal; Dead Nettle Mint; Lyre-leafed Sage; Fraser Magnolia; Umbrella Magnolia; Squaw-root; One-flowered Cancer-root; Oxalis sp.; Phlox sp.; Spring Beauty; White Baneberry (Doll's Eyes); Wood Anemone; Columbine; Dwarf Larkspur; Hooked Buttercup; Rue Wood Anemone; Serviceberry; Wild Strawberry; Common Cinquefoil; Dewberry; Thyme-leafed Bluets; Brook Saxifrage; Carey's Saxifrage; Bishop's Cap (Miterwort); Foamflower; Fairy Wand; Indian Paint-Brush; Wood Betany (Lousewort); Silverbell Tree; Beaked Corn Salad; and a dozen species of violets including Sweet White Violet, Canada Violet, Common Blue Violet, Bird's Foot Violet, Halbert-leaved Violet, and Yellow Woodland Violet.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least **four months** prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 7 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Steve Hilty

**Steve Hilty** is the senior author of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*, and the recently published *Birds of Venezuela*, both by Princeton University Press. Other credits include *Birds of Tropical America, A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*, which has just been republished by the University of Texas Press. He has also written a number of scientific papers on birds and plants, and is presently preparing the text and species accounts for the tanagers for a forthcoming volume of the acclaimed *Handbook of Birds of the World*,

published by Lynx Press in Barcelona. Steve holds a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Arizona and has worked at the Arid Lands Department at the University of Arizona, as a consultant to The Nature Conservancy, and as a stockbroker. He is currently a research associate at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. Since 1975, he has led tours throughout North and South America, and co-led trips to India, the Orient, and Australasian regions. With three decades of experience in South America and a wide range of natural history interests, he brings a unique breadth of expertise to his Neotropical tours. At night he often turns his binoculars towards the skies for stargazing. Steve lives in Kansas City with his wife, Beverly. They have two college age daughters.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$1935** per person in double occupancy from Knoxville. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 7, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leader(s). It does not include airfare from your home to/from Knoxville, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$325**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$300** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Cancellation Penalties and Refunds are based on the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less **\$150** per person is refundable. If cancellation is made between 120 and 90 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 90 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.***

If you cancel:

120 days or more before departure date  
Between 120 and 90 days before departure  
Fewer than 90 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$150.  
No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded.  
No refund available.

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE:** Application forms for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. We **strongly recommend** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

**BAGGAGE:** We suggest that you pack as efficiently as possible, both for your ease of travel, and bearing in mind that the passenger vans that we use typically have only a limited amount of space for luggage. In particular, please do not bring excessively large luggage. We suggest one medium-sized soft-sided bag and a carry-on. This trip is quite short and we believe that you will be happier with less luggage.

**CLIMATE:** Spring weather in the Smokies is variable and we will be visiting a variety of elevations (at least two days will be at fairly high elevation, above 5000 ft). Therefore, lower elevations may be rather warm (up to the low 80s) and upper elevations may be chilly, especially at night (perhaps as low as the 40s), so bring a warm jacket and gloves. Rainfall is high, about 55 inches annually in Gatlinburg, in excess of 80 inches a year on Clingman's Dome.

**CLOTHING:** Sturdy walking shoes or hiking boots (no sandals or Tevas), preferably water-resistant (or gore-tex) ones, are advised. Most trails that we will visit are good, although the walking surface is sometimes uneven and we may be in wet grass. Rubber boots are not necessary. The trip can be done quite comfortably with good tennis shoes as well, although they get wet easily and you should expect some rain. Field clothing and casual dress is sufficient for all activities and all meals. A short-sleeved cotton shirt would be all that is required for lower elevations. Please note that there are no laundry facilities available on this tour.

**EQUIPMENT:** Bring an umbrella and/or light weight poncho or raincoat, a good sunhat or cap, sunscreen, sunglasses, a water bottle, small day pack or belt pack, and a few plastic bags to protect books, cameras, film, and other items in case of rain. Other useful items are an alarm clock, ear plugs and snacks. Optional **but very useful** on this trip is a small hand lens (for close-up viewing of flowers) and an altimeter. All participants should have binoculars.

**HEALTH:** As roads are curvy, you may wish to bring an appropriate medication if you suffer from motion sickness. There are very few, if any, ticks or chiggers at this time of year; however, rare cases of Lyme Disease have been reported from the park. As protection you may wish to treat your clothing (pants and socks) with pyrethrum (available at most bait and tackle shops and from ABA Sales, etc.) and/or bring insect repellent to spray on your pants and socks if you wish. Bring all prescription medicines that you will need for the trip.

Participants on this trip will enjoy the region and be able to take full advantage of all activities if they are in reasonably good physical condition and able to walk a round-trip trail (good forest trail) of about 3 miles, including some up-hill walking. Although we will not hike steep strenuous trails, almost all trails in the Smokies, even the easy ones, will at times have some moderate to substantial gradients.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

**MISCELLANEOUS:** A note on alcoholic drinks. Townsend, Tennessee, located in Blount County, is a semi-dry county. You are permitted to bring your own alcohol to meals in restaurants (e.g. beer, wines, etc.), but only beer can be purchased in the county. We will be taking several of our evening meals in Townsend; therefore, those who would like alcoholic beverages, such as wine with meals, should bring at least some of it with them. There may not be sufficient time to make purchases in Knoxville upon arrival. Alcohol is available in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, however, and we should be passing through these towns at least once on the trip.

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com), or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

***Birds:***

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- Dun, Jon L. *National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America: Rev. & Updated*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Washington DC: National Geographic Society, 2006.
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***Plants:***

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- Brockman, Christian Frank. *Trees of North America: A Field Guide to the Major Native and Introduced Species North of Mexico*. (Golden Field Guide Series.) Golden Press, 2001 (Revised & updated edition).
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***Checklists published by the Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association, Gatlinburg, Tennessee***  
(Found on-line at [www.smokiesstore.org](http://www.smokiesstore.org): look for "Checklists" under "Nature Guides"):

- *A Checklist for the Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.*
- *A Checklist for the Vascular Plants of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*
- *A Checklist for the Mammals of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*
- *A Checklist for the Birds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park*
- *A Checklist for the Amphibians and Reptiles of Great Smoky Mountains National Park*
- *A Checklist for the Butterflies and Skippers of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.*

### ***Other References:***

Pacher, Sara and Constance E. Richards. *The Insiders' Guide to North Carolina's Mountains*. Insiders' Publishing, 2000 (5<sup>th</sup> ed.).

Rucker, John. *Seasonal guide to the Natural Year: North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee*. Golden: Fulcrum, 1996.

There are a large number of titles on pioneer and Indian history, crafts, folk stories and related subjects at the various visitor center outlets in and near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Or see [www.smokiesstore.org](http://www.smokiesstore.org)

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motor coach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on August 15, 2008 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.