
Eminent Ecologist Award Lawrence B. Slobodkin State University of New York at Stony Brook

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 recipient of the 2005 Eminent Ecologist Award is Professor Lawrence B. Slobodkin of the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Larry Slobodkin is one of the premier ecologists of our time. He has made lasting contributions to the theoretical and empirical development of ecology. Beyond this, however, many of us have been greatly influenced by the wonderfully original and insightful perspectives that flow from his unfettered mind.

Over the course of his career, Larry Slobodkin published seminal papers that influenced the direction of ecological research, and that attracted scientists across disciplinary fields. His early efforts to model populations of *Daphnia* were instrumental in developing mathematical theory in ecology, and provided the first experimental evidence for the connections between population and ecosystem study. But even though he had a strong role in developing these connections, he never hesitated to comment when he perceived that the theory was not being faithful to the real biology. Some of our best ecologists refer to Larry as both inspirational, and as marching to a different drummer. Larry recognizes fascinating questions, and brings such innovative ideas into routine observations that he forces ecologists to stand back and consider nature from a different angle. His efforts to influence ecologists to take orthogonal views of nature are among his most important contributions. An even broader audience has learned from his forays into the philosophy of ecology and the role of ecological science in public policy.

Another extremely important contribution of lasting impact has been the Department of Ecology and Evolution at SUNY Stony Brook, whose creation Larry spearheaded. Overnight, he created one of the most exciting departments in the world. The legions of ecologists trained at Stony Brook, the students they have mentored, and the many scientists who simply visited that department during the years when Larry was the de facto leader have done much to define and to advance our field. All agree that Larry Slobodkin was not always an easy person, but that he certainly was a great one.

