AWARD OF SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND MERIT

This year, ESA is making a unique Award of Special Recognition to honor the Organization for Tropical Studies for its unique role in educating generations of students and others in tropical biology. OTS, a nonprofit consortium of over 50 universities and research institutions from the United States, Costa Rica, and Australia, has offered intensive field courses since 1963, introducing thousands of ecologists to tropical ecosystems, conservation biology, and ecological thinking. It offers short courses in English, Spanish, and Portuguese for policy makers, community and corporate leaders, park managers, and journalists to reach those who shape policy throughout Latin America and the United States. OTS has recently added a short course for secondary science teachers to enhance understanding of field-based science instruction and international environmental issues. OTS has played a critical role in creating a cadre of scientists, educators, and policy makers who work in the ecology of tropical regions of the world.

To acknowledge the breadth and excellence of OTS educational programs in tropical biology and management, the Corporate Award subcommittee recommended that it be granted an Award of Special Recognition. Through this Award, ESA expresses its appreciation for the unique and important role that the Organization for Tropical Studies has played in the education of tropical biologists, educators, and policy makers. In the absence of Laura Huenneke, Chair of the Corporate Award subcommittee, Alan Berkowitz, ESA Vice President for Education, presented the award to Gary Hartshorne, President and CEO of OTS.

Corporate Award Subcommittee: Laura Foster Huenneke (Chair), Gregory Aplet, Joan Ehrenfeld, Susan Galatowisch, Carolyn Hunsaker, Kate Lajtha, Kurt Teichert

HONORARY MEMBER AWARD

Norman Owen-Smith

Honorary membership in the Ecological Society of America is awarded to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the field of ecology and who live and work outside of the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

The 2000 Honorary Member is Dr. Norman Owen-Smith. Dr. Owen-Smith is currently Research Professor in African Ecology at the Department of Zoology, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. His B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees are in the physical sciences, but his strong fascination with African wildlife drew him to the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he completed his Ph.D in 1973, supervised by John T. Emlen.

His doctoral research on white rhinos in South Africa’s Umfolozi Game Reserve was a pioneering study in behavioral ecology; it earned him publication in Nature for the new perspectives that it gave on territoriality. Nevertheless, his special concern lay in the application of science to practical problems of conservation. Grappling with how to balance a burgeoning rhino population against diminishing plant resources within a fenced reserve, he proposed the idea of artificially maintained dispersal sinks, a management policy now being applied by the conservation authority. Similarities in the ecology of rhinos, elephants, and hippos formed the basis for his book *Megaherbivores: the Influence of Very Large Body Size on Ecology*. From this perspective, he recognized that habitat changes following megaherbivore extinctions through human overkill might, in turn, have precipitated extinctions of other large mammals during the late Pleistocene.

A postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pretoria’s Mammal Research Institute provided Dr. Owen-Smith with the opportunity to initiate a long-term study of kudus in Kruger National Park, where he assembled a picture album that allowed him to identify over 500 individuals. Over the next decade, this study revealed both the social structure and demography of a nonterritorial antelope species, as well as the driving influence of rainfall variability on population dynamics. Insights gained from this study led to his seminal paper “What should a clever ungulate eat?” (*American Naturalist*, 1982), pioneering the application of foraging theory to large mammalian herbivores. Dr. Owen-Smith used quantitative models and theory to formulate a new paradigm for herbivore-vegetation interactions. This paradigm uses the principles of behavioral ecology to study community population dynamics while accommodating the spatial and temporal variability that is a basic feature of African savanna environments. The ideas are laid out in his new book, *Adaptive Herbivore Ecology*, currently under review for publication.

Being an ecologist in a developing country carries special responsibilities. In the midst of his strong research program, Dr. Owen-Smith spends a great deal of time and energy supervising graduate students. Almost single-handedly, he runs a graduate program in conservation biology, actively pursues activities and research relating to resource conservation and rural development, and has played a pivotal role in training black students to be the future environmental and scientific leaders of the southern African continent. During the apartheid era Owen-Smith played, and still plays, a