

Something to Ponder for the New Millennium

In 1998 a new study was initiated in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. The study in progress is called "All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory" or "ATBI". No such study has ever occurred in the United States. With just two years of studies done the results are impressive.

Here are two examples:

Twenty biologists from around the country, **IN ONE 24 HOUR PERIOD OF TIME**, collected 706 species of moths and butterflies in the park. 300 of these have never been documented in the Smokies. **AT LEAST 26 ARE NEW TO SCIENCE!!!!** Due to data collected, in the 24 hour period, scientists raised their moth and butterfly species estimates to potentially occur in the park from 2000 to 3500!



Another long term study in progress is focusing on the parks spider population. Only 40% of the collected specimens have been identified so far, and the total tally has reached 474 species. **38 OF THESE ARE NEW TO SCIENCE!!!**

Research will continue for the next 12-15 years with scientists estimates at over 100,000 species of plants and animals to be identified.

If this kind of data is being found in a national park that has been **WELL STUDIED** since the 1800's, what other 'treasure troves' could exist that have been overlooked or have yet to be found nation wide? With the upcoming 'true' beginning of the next millennium, starting in January, this is something to ponder for the new millennium.

This info was taken from the official newspaper of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park called "Smokies Guide". The guide is produced by the Great Smokey Mountains Natural History Association and Great Smokey Mountains National Park four times a year. For more info on the study, or the guide, contact: Great Smokey Mountains Natural History Association, 115 Park Headquarters Road, Gatlinburg, Tn. 37738, (865) 436-7318 or Friends of the GSMNP, 130 W. Bruce Street, Sevierville, Tn. 37862 (865) 453-2428

By Don Robinson

editors note: If this can occur in a well documented national park like the Great Smokey Mountains - just imagine all the species in Florida that have been overlooked!