ANTS: IDENTIFICATION, NATURAL HISTORY, AND ECOLOGY

2023 Eagle Hill Natural History Science Seminars on the coast of eastern Maine

Instructor: Aaron M. Ellison

When: July 16 – 22, 2023

Ants have been called the "little things that run the world." This seminar provides an entrée into the world of the ants: what they are, how to identify them (there are at least 130 species in New England alone!), where to find them, and their many roles in keeping ecosystems functioning smoothly. The seminar begins with an introduction to the world of ants, how to find and collect them, and how to identify them to genus and species. In New England, most ant species can be identified with a 20× hand lens; a microscope is required to identify species only within a few speciose genera (e.g., Formica, Lasius, Aphaenogaster, Myrmica). We'll spend at least half of the week in the field—observing ants, learning about how they live, doing some simple experiments to quantify foraging strategies and interspecific interactions, and augmenting our understanding of the diversity of ants in the state of Maine. The remaining time will be spent learning and honing ant-identification skills, analyzing field data, and discussing current topics in ant ecology and its intersection with human culture. And if there is interest, we can have ant-movie watch parties in the evenings!

GENERAL INFO **CALENDAR** **APPLY**

about the instructor

Aaron M. Ellison (aaron@ssforss.com) is the Senior Research Fellow in Ecology (Emeritus) at Harvard University's Harvard Forest, a Founding Principal of Sound Solutions for Sustainable Science, Boston, MA, and a photographer, sculptor, and writer. He studies the disintegration and reassembly of ecosystems following natural and anthropogenic disturbances, with a particular focus on the intersecting worlds of ants and carnivorous plants. He is the author of nine books, including A Field Guide to the Ants of New England, A Primer of Ecological Statistics, Vanishing Point, and Scaling in Ecology with a Model Ecosystem. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4151-6081.