

THE BRODIE CLUB

DATE OF NEXT MEETING : Tuesday 19 May 1987, 8.00 p.m.

PLACE OF NEXT MEETING : Faunal Lab, South Borden Building.

SPEAKER : Mr. Jim Lovisek, Toronto Nature Centre.

SUBJECT : Mermaids and Man-eaters.

MINUTES OF THE 831st MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

Held Tuesday 21 April 1987, in the Ichthyology Classroom, Royal Ontario Museum.

Speakman was Chairman, Savage acted as Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 8.10 p.m. The roll was called and guests noted. Present were 10 members and 6 guests (Ann Falls guest of Bruce Falls, Margaret Bodsworth guest of Fred Bodsworth, Jennifer Young guest of Donald Young, and Gayle Mason, Patrick Horne and Linda Watt guests of Savage, and Mary Smith guest of the Club. Aird, Bendell, Bertin, McKay-Kuja and Norma Martin sent regrets.

The minutes of the 830th meeting of the Brodie Club were read and minor amendments made. After a motion of adoption of the minutes as amended, by Bodsworth, the Chairman declared the minutes adopted.

Announcements

Martin reported that the F. O. N. was seeking a new Executive Director, and that the Sierra Club plans a convention in the fall of 1987.

Varga commented that the Niagara escarpment was being encroached upon, and that constant vigilance was needed against such encroachment.

Savage relayed from McKay-Kuja that the Monteverde Park project had received \$ 42,000 to date, enough to buy 42 hectares of park.

Speaker of the Evening

The Speaker of the Evening, Mary Smith, Assistant Curator of the Department of Ichthyology, of the R. O. M. was introduced by Savage as a R. O. M. staff member during the past six years since receiving her B. Sc. degree at the university of Guelph. Her subject was "Treasure from the Deep".

The Speaker, in discussing the Coelacanth, noted that of the approximately 100 specimens obtained to date, all but one <sup>were</sup> from the vicinity of the Comorro Archipelago, between East Africa and Mozambique and from depths of 100 - 200 metres. These islands are volcanic in origin and without surrounding coral reefs. Many of the Coelacanths have been caught by native fishermen using <sup>a</sup>metal-fibred fishing line and a hook. Each specimen has to them a value of \$ 1200 U. S. dollars, or two years' work at standard wages. The R.O.M. Coelacanth has donated last fall by Mr. Peter Stevens, a Toronto businessman.

This specimen like others was found on dissection to have thick, moveable, muscular fins, a three-lobed tail, thick protective scales up to three cms. in diameter, a small brain weighing only three grams, large otoliths made up of two different materials, a hollow notochord, a very primitive, tubular heart, reduced non-functional lungs, and a rectal, salt-excreting gland. The fish is a live-bearer, after a 13 months gestation.

The R. O. M. specimen, weighing between 80 - 90 lbs and believed to be between 8 - 10 years of age, was kept frozen to permit protein studies by electrophoresis by Dr. Bob

Murphy, its dissection recorded on video-tape, and then preserved in ethanol. Dr. John Casselman is planning to do ageing studies.

While Coelacanths have been known in fossil forms from 350 millions of years, they were believed to have been extinct since 65 millions years, until a live one was caught in 1935. While their ancestry has been linked with the lungfishes, salamander-like rhipidistrians and sharks, more recent views are that the coelacanths and crossopterygians are more closely related.

The Speaker was thanked by Ritchie, who expressed the enthusiastic thanks of the Club and accounted himself very privileged to see so esoteric a creature. Applause followed.

Members' Notes and Observations

Falls commented that the recent warm weather does not appear to have started any early bird migrations, having seen very few warblers and only one white-throated sparrow to date. Bodsworth noted that Peter Whelan's newspaper column had reported a tremendous migration of birds recently.

Young had seen two fox sparrows in the Ross Conservation Area on 3 April. Cherry had seen only one white-throated sparrow at Erindale to-day, and none at Cambridge recently.

Savage reported the finding of American eel bones at the Peden Site in Huronia, in use during the early 1600's, and believed that they had come from some river or stream draining into Lake Ontario.

Gayle Mason reported an American avocet last night at Sunnyside, and related it to the warm weather.

Carrick commented that his swans had begun to make nests, but had not laid eggs to date.

Speakman reported that the pileated woodpeckers near his cottage on Lake Simcoe had been surveying old nesting holes. The woodpeckers now leave the roosting holes about 6.15 a.m. and return about 7.50 p.m.

A Brodie Club field outing was favoured after discussion for Saturday 6 June'87, the location to be discussed at the next Brodie Club meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 10.20 p.m.

*Frank Savage*