

MINUTES OF THE 897TH MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB  
OCTOBER 18, 1994  
FAUNAL LABORATORY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

SUBJECT: Extended notes and observations by members.

ATTENDANCE: 11 members and 2 guests.

CHAIR: Harry Lumsden

SECRETARY: John Speakman

MINUTES: A motion to approve the minutes by Carrick, was seconded by Aird and approved. Favourable comments were made regarding last months minutes by Bendell.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Savage suggested a committee be formed to plan for the 900th meeting of the Club in January. The composition of this committee will be discussed at the next meeting and members are asked to consider possible speakers and sites.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS: HUFF circulated two lime stone slabs which he had acquired in southwestern New York State, which contained many fossils and a questionable footprint. He also commented on the abundant wildlife in this part of the State.

SPEAKMAN related observations of a large flock of Griffon vultures seen in the Jonte gorge of the Cevennes. The vultures had been extirpated from France and were re-introduced about 10 years ago, using a population of captured birds and the numbers have increased to more than 200. Comments were made with respect to the means vultures use to find food.

SAVAGE reported on the acquisition of a nine year old Muskox from the Metro Zoo, cause of death was uncertain, and a black bear hit by a car near Aurora. The carcass is being analysed for rabies. Savage explained the specimens were boiled and cleaned by manual dissection rather than using beetles which enables students to learn more about the bones.

FOWLE demonstrated the use of photography to record growth changes in plants at Elmvale and displayed a fine selection of pictures he has taken.

AIRD reported the Kirtland warbler had increased to over 600 birds, in part the result of a prescribed burn escaping in Michigan, followed by a regeneration of pine and jack pine. He also referred to a cowbird control program, which results in the capture of several thousand birds and has reduced the predation of the warblers from 60% to nearly zero. He commented on observations of seals on the east coast and Dall sheep and Beluga whales while visiting in Alaska. There are no good Muskox carvings in Alaska, apparently because natives have no direct contact with these animals.

RILEY showed a photograph of a unique, isolated island in the northern part of Lake Superior and also showed pictures of old growth pine near Burt Lake, east of the Lake Superior National Park. He has also been working on a plan for municipalities to preserve natural heritage sites.

LUMSDEN gave a detailed summary of the Trumpeter Swan project, some of the highlights being two wild breeding pairs at the Wye Marsh and a third near Kenora. Captive breeding stock consists of 29 two year old swans for release in 1995 and 36 for release in 1996. It is estimated there are 35 free flying swans in southern Ontario and in the past year one was killed due to a collision with power lines, one injured its wing and six have disappeared. Of the birds that have died since 1982, the cause was determined in 16 and 9 died from lead poisoning. Three flew into hydro lines, one was killed by coyote, one was killed on the highway, and one died from aspergillosis. As the birds spread into areas where hunting takes place, the risk of lead poisoning becomes a real threat to their survival as Carrick commented that a single 22 bullet could be lethal. Lumsden stated the birds he is looking after enjoy eating his dandelions.

BODSWORTH reported the occurrence of a third Puffin for Ontario near the Cornwall power dam and reported on an American Bird Association meeting in North Dakota.

BENDELL has visited both coasts and showed photographs of the Cape Breton highlands and the Olympic Forest Park in Oregon. He showed pictures of the HOH Valley where there is a high rainfall and noted plenty of dead timber in the forests. The use of rabbit droppings to monitor population changes was discussed, as was the significance of sunspots in determining periodic fluctuation in wildlife numbers. Heavy crops of mountain ash berries were noted.

READING reported the CWS search party was unsuccessful in finding evidence of Eskimo curlews in the area he visited a year ago. Whimbrel nests were found, as well as mountain bluebirds and white winged scoters. Difficulties in judging the size and shape of birds eggs from photographs were discussed. The location of the Kaminuriak cariboo herd has been monitored by radio collar data and this information is made public and used by the Inuit for hunting. A large flock of migrating ravens was noted.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.