

MINUTES OF THE 905th MEETING OF

THE BRODIE CLUB

held in the Faunal Lab. of the Borden Building, University
of Toronto

Sept. 19, 1995

CHAIRMAN: Jas. Bendell

SECRETARY: Norm Martin

CALL TO ORDER: 8.10 p.m.

ROLL CALL: 20 members and 4 guests present

GUESTS: Jock McAndrews, guest of Bodsworth
Hugh Currie, guest of Bruce Falls
Yvonne Bendell, guest of Bendell
Janet Cooper, guest of Savage

MINUTES of previous meeting were not available, but will
be sent with the next mailing.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: A slate of officers was exhibited (present
officers), and comments or changes invited.

Due to recent illness, Savage asked to be relieved
of the office of executive-secretary. Members
accepted his resignation, and expressed warm ap-
preciation for his many years of faithful duty.
Carrick agreed to assume the office for 1995-96.
Speakman agreed to continue as treasurer, in spite
of a recent serious car accident.

The full slate for 1995-96 is thus:

Executive-Secretary - Carrick

Treasurer - Speakman

FON Representative - Lumsden (Riley back-up)

Membership Committee - Carrick, Ann Falls, Riley,
Don Young

Programme Committee - Aird, Bodsworth, Bruce
Falls, Huff

Ann Falls reminded the meeting that all members
should act in membership recruitment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1. Carrick noted the minutes for Nov.
and Dec. 1994 are not in the minute book. Anyone
having copies should send them to him. Norma
Martin agreed to look into this.

2. Speakman announced the FON levy of \$75. for

this year. He also noted the club financial position is in the red, and suggested a collection of \$10. per member to pay the FON and reinstate the bank account. It was agreed to do this.

3. Currie announced the Toronto Ornithological Club will have a dinner and speaker Nov. 20, 1995. Dinner at 5.30 at the Park Avenue 2000 Restaurant, speaker Jon Dunn on North American Warblers, in the Cardinal Carter Academy, Willowdale, at 8 p.m. \$15. for non-members.
4. Jock McAndrews reported the Ontario Tree Atlas project is underway. Participants are invited. H.Q. is the Arboretum, Univ. of Guelph. Contact Aird or McAndrews.
5. Bendell announced the Conservation of Northern Forests Conference, Nov. 27-Dec. 1, in Hart House. Contact the Faculty of Forestry.
6. Bendell reported an International Grouse Congress held in August in Colorado.
7. Lumsden provided copies of FON's Around Ontario, a newsletter reporting on activities of Ontario naturalists groups.

SPEAKERS. Members and guests reported on their summer activities.

TASKER spoke about recent visits to Japan. These have been business trips, but he usually arranges to explore the areas' natural history, assisted by local naturalists.

The islands of Japan belong to a partially submerged landbridge, having connections with China. As the sea rose, these islands were isolated, and many species of biota became endemic. The southern islands are similar in character to our Carolinian, and the two southernmost, next to Taiwan, are subtropical.

The island of Okinawa was the site of one of the fiercest battles of the Pacific theatre in World War II. A quarter of a million Japanese were killed there, mostly by suicide, as American forces advanced. The northern part of the island is wild, with many species of poisonous

snakes which discourage Japanese tourists. Tasker found the Okinawa rail, Pryer's woodpecker, and other endemic species.

Pockets of relatively natural environment still exist on several islands, harbouring endemic flora and fauna.

Speakman asked about the attitude of the Japanese to nature. Tasker replied that a relatively small group is real activists for conservation. However Japanese tend to work most of the time, taking only short holidays. They visit entertainment parks rather than explore nature. Poisonous snakes are often beautiful, but deter hiking. Logging of old growth forests is destroying much habitat, including that of Pryer's woodpecker.

McANDREWS explained that he came from the United States to work in Ontario 28 years ago. He is a field ecologist at the ROM, and has a cottage near Codrington. Recently he has heard, for the first time, coyotes howling in mid-day. Carrick stated they recently seem to be howling more. Bendell noted recent studies suggest they may be hybridizing with timber wolves. Bryant stated coyotes are multiplying in our area.

LUMSDEN reported that wood ducks were breeding on his property this year. Regarding the trumpeter swan project, there were four nests in southern Ontario this year, two of them successful. There was also a brood in Kenora District, of swans initially from Minnesota. Inventory Sept. 1 indicates there are now over 80 trumpeters in southern Ontario.

CARRICK worked for Bill Lishman this past summer. The project is a Hollywood picture of Lishman's life story, a distorted version of reality. However Lishman is contributing some financial proceeds toward conservation.

AIRD. Kirtland's Warbler has increased 25% per year for the last four years, partly in response to habitat management by prescribed fire. Current census figure is 765. On Manitoulin Island Aird found a rare flower of Lakeside Daisy. The species there is spreading mainly vegetatively. A strange nocturnal noise at Hudson, P.Q., was tentatively identified by Bryant as probably a raccoon.

SAVAGE reported his students found bones from Fort York dated to the late 1700s, the time of the American wars. These bones included those of the black rat (Rattus rattus). This species in medieval times carried fleas infected with the bacillus for bubonic plague. There is no record of bubonic plague in Toronto at that time.

SPEAKMAN, recovering from a car accident, studied biotic succession in a lily pond in his garden. The pond initially had a plastic liner and some goldfish. Speakman added two species of lily, including water lettuce, to the water. Green frogs came in mid-July, and their loud calls were heard. Frog eggs were found at the end of July, followed by tadpoles. Capture of insect prey by adult frogs was studied. A garter snake appeared, and in mid-September young goldfish were seen. No algae appeared. Adaptations to the hiemal aspect are awaited with interest.

DON YOUNG recommended a book by Jonathan Weiner, 1995, The Beak of the Finch, on the life of Darwin. It won a Pulitzer Prize.

JENNIFER YOUNG and Don attended the American Birding Association conference in the United States. Very good. They also watched peregrine falcons in downtown Toronto recently. One bird struck a window but was treated by a veterinarian and survived. Currie explained that these ~~xxx~~ peregrines nested at 18 King St. E. in an indentation in the wall of a building, the first natural nesting in Ontario in 50 years. Two young fledged July 4. In the above incident, one young fell 10 stories after hitting a window. It was given cortisone and gradually recovered over a period of two days. On another occasion a young fell down a chimney, and was fished out. Their activities provided an interesting exhibition. Two other peregrines appeared occasionally. Bodsworth added that a pair also nested successfully at Hamilton.

ANN FALLS reported a large groundhog in her garden. A large hole was discovered under a cedar hedge, but when she turned a hose down the hole a skunk came out.

NORMA MARTIN reported on various trips around southern Ontario by herself and Norm studying biotic communities in several forest types. In Backus Woods upland and bottomland forests are more distinct than in Rondeau Park, where the configuration of dunes and depressions has tended to produce a mixed forest of upland and bottomland species.

Morrison's Bed and Breakfast outside the gate at Rondeau was an excellent place to stay while working in the park. Culling of deer in the park has divided the human community, and the Morrisons have received threats for housing MNR personnel.

In Algonquin Park, forest succession is happening as predicted 40 years ago by Norm. Stan Vasiliauskas has recently found (Ph.D. thesis) hemlock regeneration had been inhibited by deer. Hemlock regeneration is now prolific on Norm's old hemlock plots and elsewhere.

Andrew Smith is doing bird census studies on Norm's plots to compare population figures with those of 40 years ago.

The Martins attended a forest ecology seminar at the visitors' centre, Alg. Pk., One paper reported that killing of humans by black bears has usually been by old, large bears, which killed humans for food. However the phenomenon is rare. Bendell noted that these aggressive old bears are usually males.

BRYANT REPORTED FINDING Peripatus in Costa Rica. In Venezuela a large variety of birds, butterflies, and herps were seen. Herps were particularly noted as road kills, including a very large green frog, and a curious caecilian or legless amphibian of the tropics.

BRUCE FALLS reported on continuing studies on Odonata this summer at Long Point. His interest in this group was initially stimulated by the late E. M. Walker, who recorded 19 species at Long Point. Falls in 1950 found 15 species of dragon flies there. Recently Falls and found 54 species.

There is still no field guide specializing in this

group, and Walker's work remains definitive for systematics in Ontario. He described 49 species. The current Ontario list is 157 species. In Elgin County other workers found 59 species. Unlike Elgin, Long Point has little running water.

Four species are migrants, arriving at Long Point from the southern United States in spring. They breed on the Point, and some of these emergents, such as the green darner, fly south in the fall.

Falls found a couple of rarities - a Libellula, and an Eschna.

He described how specimens are preserved, and passed around some samples.

BODSWORTH mentioned the TOC spring warbler count, which has been taken for 25 years. He will speak on it at more length another time.

CURRIE reported a black-tailed godwit, a new Ontario record, seen by him and others recently at a sewage lagoon. Two visiting ornithologists from Europe confirmed the identification. It normally nests in Iceland.

Bodsworth noted it is also found occasionally on North American seacoasts.

BENDELL, who now lives beside a marsh in Lanark County, reported on the order of initiation of song by frogs in spring:

1. spring peeper
2. chorus frog
3. leopard frog
4. green and mink frogs
5. tree-toad

He suspects temperature, among possible other factors, controls initiation of singing.

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FALLS asked whether the Club can continue to meet in the present location. Savage will enquire.

ADJOURNMENT declared by the Chairman at 10.15 p.m.