

## MINUTES OF THE 914th MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

The meeting was held in the Faunal Archeology Lab in the Borden Building, University of Toronto on September 17th, 1996.

**Chairman:** Jock McAndrews.

**Secretary:** Ann Falls

**Attendance:** Twenty-three members and 6 guests. Guests were Trudy Rising (Rising), Yvonne Bendell (Bendell), Mary Tasker (Tasker), Betty Speakman (Speakman), George Fairfield (Hussell), Vicky Draper (Fowle).

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved after minor corrections. Howard Savage had objected to the use of the term 'memorial' in association with his name.

### **Announcements:**

Carrick said funds were getting low and another \$10 assessment would be required. Elections should be held but no slate had been prepared. Carrick and Fowle will act as a nominating committee so that the election can be held at the next meeting.

Carrick suggested the establishment of an Environmental Committee.

Fairfield announced a show of Audubon prints at the Metro Reference Library.

### **Speaker:**

Bruce Falls introduce the speaker, member **Jim Rising**, - ornithologist, birder, and author of a newly published book on sparrows.

Jim and Trudy Rising travelled to Zimbabwe in southern Africa in August of this year so that Trudy could attend a book fair in Harare, and both could enjoy the sights and wildlife of this interesting country (formerly Southern Rhodesia). The talk was mainly a slide presentation. They found the country to be safe and stable, an easy place to travel, with lots of parks, reserves and thinly populated areas. People were friendly and outgoing. They visited several national parks including Zimbabwe Nat. Pk., Hwange NP, Chobe NP, and Zambesi NP. In the south-east of the country they went to Great Zimbabwe, the largest medieval sub-Saharan settlement - an impressive stone ruin built by the Shona people, and partly reconstructed. While staying in Harare Jim birded in the botanic garden and in a nearby park. At Lake Kariba they stayed on an island where there were many waterbirds - various herons, cormorants and fish eagles. Among the many species of mammals seen and photographed during the trip were greater kudu, bushbucks, impala, vervet monkeys, elephants, giraffes, black-backed jackals, lions, African wild dogs (endangered), zebra, puku, Cape buffalo, rock hyrax, white rhinoceros, wildebeest, baboons, wart hogs, sable antelope, springbuck, hippos, banded mongoose. An even greater variety of birds were seen, 282 species in all. One highlight for Jim was a close view of an African finfoot, which is notoriously hard to find. Victoria Falls was viewed from Zimbabwe, from Zambia and from the air. They travelled mainly by rented car - car rental is expensive but most other things are relatively cheap.

### **Q & A**

Route ? London to Harare by Air Zimbabwe.

Organized viewing? Safari lodges organize trips with guides.

White population? Declining. It has gone from 270,000 to 90,000. There has been no seizure of white-held lands, and whites still own about 95% of the land. To sell land they have to offer it to the state first.

Temperature? Comfortable - not too hot.

Bendell: Abundant wildlife but habitat looks dry.

Rising: Visit was in dry season, abundance was only in reserves and mainly near water. Best habitat is now in farms.

Any large mammals not seen? - cheetah, black rhino, oryx, roan antelope.

Some mammals seen at night and not photographed - leopard, African wild cat, bat-eared foxes, spring hares.

Fairfield: Surprised to see mongoose gregarious (they were seen in a large group of 50-60).

Rising - saw 4 species.

Trudy Rising: Canadian government is warning travellers that Zimbabwe is risky.

Bendell thanked the speaker for a splendid presentation of a memorable tour, with first rate photography.

**Members notes and observations:**

*Currie:* Strong east winds on Sep 13-14 brought jaegers to the west end of Lake Ontario. On the 15th black-capped petrels, sooty and bridled terns, and long tailed jaegers were seen at Lake Erie, apparently carried there by hurricane Fran. Today Sep 17th, the largest ever migration of Monarch butterflies (300,000) were seen at Point Pelee. Nine or 10 black-capped petrels have been found dead.

*Bodsworth:* Late on Saturday afternoon, Sep 15th, 200 common terns suddenly appeared on the breakwall at Port Burwell (Lake Erie) along with one Sabine's gull.

The big broadwing hawk migration has yet to come.

*McAndrews:* A white oak cut down in Queen's Park had 170 annual rings (200 cm diameter). Are there older trees in Toronto?

*Bendell:* There is a huge oak on Clarkson Rd N just below station.

*Lumsden:* At Maple a 210 yr old hemlock was cut down.

*Norm Martin:* In Peter's Woods there is a white oak over 400 years old.

*McAndrews:* On July 16th a doe was seen crossing Queen St near Glen Manor ravine by his wife, Sharon Hick. A buck was seen in September in Neville Park ravine. Two other sightings were made in Scarborough. Judy Eger, ROM curator (mammals) had not heard reports of deer in Toronto in recent years.

Credit Valley, Rouge Valley, and Pearson Airport are known to have deer.

*Rapley:* A cougar has been seen in the Rouge valley by zoo guards but it is not from the zoo. It has not been seen recently (as of the time of the meeting).

*Bendell:* Attended a recent grouse conference where a new species of sage grouse, Centrocercus minimus was described. It is about 1/2 the size of the typical C. urophasianus and differs in behaviour and appearance. It is found mostly in Colorado, but also in Utah and Wyoming.

*Huff:* Peter Quimby has reported that the floristic character of the undergrowth in the Owain Lake old growth forest, where protests against logging are currently occurring, was different from that in sites on the west side of Hwy 11 around Lake Temagami.

*Rapley:* Apologized for cancellation of proposed meeting at zoo due to strike, and is willing to arrange another. Announced the First World Conservation Congress to be held 13-23 Oct/96 in Montreal. Parks Canada is official host, 3000 expected to attend. Open to public. There is now an IUCN office in Montreal.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20.