

THE 928TH MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

The 928th Meeting of the Brodie Club was held in room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Building Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 8:00 PM.

Chairman: Bruce Falls
Recording Secretary: Oliver Bertin

ATTENDANCE: 12 members , 4 guests (many absent owing to inclement weather)

Alexandra Eadie — guest of Bertin
Mary Tasker — guest of Ron Tasker
Peter Whelan — guest of Falls
Linda Pim — guest of Aird

MINUTES of the 927th meeting, January 20, 1998 were accepted: Ann Falls, seconded by Fred Bodsworth

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Bill Carrick is involved in a movie of Gray Owl, starring Pierce Brosnan, the latest Secret Agent 007. They want to shoot month-old beavers this spring so Carrick is searching for pregnant beavers in the southern hemisphere. The previous star, Kevin Kline, cancelled when he developed Lyme Disease, presumably picked up from a local tick. Falls has investigated a return of the Brodie Club to the Faunal Lab, but the old meeting room is no longer available. The Club will probably remain in Ramsay Wright Rm. 432 for the foreseeable future.

Jim Bendell was scheduled to speak on tree damage from the Great Ice Storm of eastern Ontario, but he was iced in and could not attend. He will speak at the March meeting on that subject and on his trip down the Attawapiskat River. In his absence, Peter Whelan, bird columnist of The Globe & Mail, offered his observations on the impact of the storm on the local bird population.

SPEAKERS: Peter Whelan on the ice storm, followed by Bill Carrick.

WHELAN has used his network of 'spies' to keep him up-to-date on the damage to trees and birds in Eastern Ontario and Quebec during the ice storm in early January. There was 90 mm of ice, causing devastation to trees over a wide area. Data are still inconclusive but Whelan believes that birds may not have suffered as much as earlier feared because they had already left the area.

Many "winter" birds seem to have migrated south in greater numbers this year, leading to the highest migration in 25 years, while Bohemian waxwings and other species departed on day two of the storm because they couldn't break through the ice to feed.

Whelan found that urban deciduous trees suffered more than others because they were exposed to the full force of the storm. Conifers appeared to have survived best, especially those in dense forests where they supported each other. About 35 per cent of trees appear to have lost major limbs, with considerable damage to deciduous canopies. The long-term impact is hard to assess. Few dead birds have been found; many birds have returned to their home feeders in slightly reduced numbers.

Whelan expects an explosion in insects and woodpeckers given the abundance of decaying wood in coming months, and a bloom in forest-floor plants and wildlife. Canopy birds may suffer from loss of habitat. Whelan is curious as to the fate of chickadees, grey partridges, grouse and woodpeckers that are unlikely to fly far away, yet were unable to reach their food.

QUESTIONS:

There was a lively question period from members enquiring about specific species or offering enlightenment. Paul Aird presented a detailed report of a train ride he took from Toronto to Ottawa last week (copy attached). He found that more than 80 per cent of trees suffered damage with little difference between forest, urban and open areas. "It was the most severe damage I've ever seen."

The worst-hit species appeared to be red and scots pine, Manitoba and silver maple, and tamarack, elm, poplar and willow. The least-affected were spruce and fir, sugar maples and beech.

Sugar maple farms suffered severe economic damage and so did tree farms, where entire rows toppled over.

Several members questioned whether long-term damage would result. They noted that the ice-storm was profoundly different from a forest fire, root structures were not damaged, many trees would sprout new branches and forest-floor plants would benefit.

CARRICK presented a 30-minute potpourri of his film career, running from ducks in Kortright Park to flying with imprinted geese over Lake Scugog. His big break came when a National Film Board producer offered him 12 rolls of surplus film to shoot with the promise to buy them back if they were any good. They became "Birds of Canada No. 6," a 10-minute nature film.

He was involved with some of the great moments in the history of nature films, including Walt Disney's early use of set-up shots — "otherwise you'd just see the rear-end running away." Disney's famous shot of lemmings falling over a cliff was actually shot on the prairies using about 100 lemmings that Disney had bought from native kids.

Carrick told of his success imprinting a wide variety of birds. They soon learned to follow bicycles, motorboats and eventually slow-moving aircraft on their annual migration. That technique has been applied to sandhill cranes and Canada geese. It will be extended to whooping cranes and trumpeter swans.

He was introduced by Falls and thanked by Ken Abraham.

NOTES & OBSERVATIONS:

BODSWORTH: has found a beaver in residence in Ashbridge's Bay in Toronto, while Ann Falls knows of a beaver house on the Leslie St. spit.

ABRAHAM: has seen a white-phase gyrfalcon near Peterborough and lots of red-tailed hawks on the route from Barrie to Peterborough.

NORMA MARTIN: saw a wild turkey in downtown Belleville, while Falls reported that his son had seen five on Hwy 401 nearby.

McANDREWS: reported an opossum near Variety Village in western Scarborough.

WHELAN: noted 15 common redpolls at his feeder in downtown Toronto, and an outbreak of salmonella in evening grosbeaks and goldfinches in New Brunswick and 11 U.S. states.

EADIE: found a king eider off the St. Lawrence cement plant dock in Port Credit.

CARRICK: has only one pileated woodpecker in his garden, down from the usual two.

FALLS: is busy trying to differentiate between black and white spruce at his property near Apsley and displayed twigs of both species.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:05 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The 929th meeting of the Brodie Club will be held in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Building, U. of T. at St. George and Harbord Sts. on Tuesday, March 17, 1998 at 8:00 pm.

SPEAKER: *Jim Bendell*

SUBJECT: *The Ice Storm of 1998 in Eastern Ontario*
and
A Trip Down the Attawapiskat River

Following a lengthy illness, Margaret Bodsworth passed away on Feb. 17th. Margaret attended many Brodie Club meetings and field trips as Fred's guest.

The Club extends its sympathy and condolences to Fred and his family.

A Memorial Service will be held at Balmy Beach Club on the Lake, at the foot of Beech Avenue, Toronto on Sunday April 5th. Social gathering will commence 10:30 AM and ceremony at 11:00 AM.



SURVIVAL FOLLOWING SEVERE ICING IN EASTERN ONTARIO

	<u>CONIFEROUS</u>		<u>NON-CONIFEROUS</u>		
	<u>PINES</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>MAPLES</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	
<u>HIGH</u>					<u>HIGH</u>
10		SPRUCE FIR			10
9					9
8	JACK?	HEMLOCK	SUGAR	BEECH	8
7	WHITE	CEDAR			7
6	RED				6
5					5
4	SCOTS		RED	ASHES	4
3		TAMARACK	SILVER	BIRCH	3
2	THINNED ¹		THAWED ²	ELM POPLAR	2
1			MANITOBA	WILLOW	1
<u>LOW</u>					<u>LOW</u>

Paul Aird, Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto
February 15, 1998

¹ Open-grown trees or thinned plantations exhibited very poor survival.

² In one area, the soil was unfrozen and the large trees tipped over.