

THE  
BRODIE  
CLUB



ROYAL ONTARIO  
MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY

THE 993rd MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

The 993rd meeting of the Brodie Club was held on April 19, 2005 in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Building of the University of Toronto.

Chairman: Jean Iron  
Secretary: Oliver Bertin  
Attendance: 29 members and 12 guests  
Stephen Rayner and Herschel Stroyman, guests of Ellen Larsen  
Ian Sturdee, guest of Mary Boswell  
Rosemary Addison, guest of Ed Addison  
Sim Brigden, Joyce Peterson and Henri Selles, guests of Claire Muller  
Julie Berger and John Tyacke, guests of Jean Iron  
Rob Carswell, guest of Bruce Falls  
Sharon Hick, guest of Kevin Seymour  
Charlotte Lennox, guest of corresponding member Charles Lennox

Minutes of the 992nd meeting were approved with one change. Glenn Coady saw a Barn Owl on the Leslie Street Spit in March, not a Barred Owl.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next meeting will be held on **May 10 at 7:30 pm, one week earlier than usual**, to accommodate birds migrating across Point Pelee. The speaker will be Peter Ewins of the World Wildlife Fund, who will speak on "The Effects of Climate Change on an Arctic System."

Corresponding member Charles Lennox was able to attend the meeting from his home in Englishtown, N.S.

George Bryant offered a variety of literature from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Canadian Nature Federation.

Members were asked to bring suggestions for the June field day to the May meeting. A poll was held and members preferred the weekend of June 11 or June 18, either Saturday or Sunday. Iron suggested a return to Carden Alvar, while Jim Bendell offered his home near Clayton in the Ottawa Valley, orchids, Ordovician shale, sugar maples, a small alvar and shrikes in Napanee, about midway to Clayton. Clayton is about a five-hour drive and members would need a tent or hotel accommodation.

Sandra Eadie requested volunteers to help plan the 1,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations next February. Jennifer Young and Bruce Falls offered their assistance. Eadie reminded members that she is trying to locate non-active and past members for the celebration.

SPEAKER:

Sara Shettleworth of the UofT psychology department asked do “Do animals think?”  
The write-up will be included in the next minutes (because the secretary was too busy to do them).

NOTES & OBSERVATIONS:

- Bendell referred to a moose that was tagged in the Adirondacks yet appeared in Algonquin Park. He described it as an amazing example of an animal getting around.
  - Bryant saw 12 Turkey Vultures circling over High Park, apparently getting ready to roost.
  - Addison said moose sometimes appear to dream. The nose starts to vibrate, then the eyes and then the ears. This behavior was described as Rapid Face Movement, or RFM.
  - Ken Abraham saw a Prothonotary Warbler near Elmvale in Simcoe county on April 16. He said the waterfowl migration appears to be early this year, apparently because the snowline and the lake ice receded faster than expected.
  - Eadie said a Turkey Vulture landed in front of her, apparently hoping that a cut on her finger would prove to be terminal.
  - Guest Stroyman said there had been an explosion of Cardinals on Palmerston Blvd in recent weeks. Several members said a neighbour may be attracting the birds with a feeder.
  - Paul Aird said he has seen grey squirrels apparently tapping sugar maple trees for their sap. Falls said he has seen red squirrels do the same thing.
  - Larsen said European Crows apparently hide their food where other birds can't see them.
  - Claire Muller said there are usually hundreds of Tundra Swans on the south side of Wolfe Island, near the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. She didn't see any swans this year, apparently because the ice is still solid.
  - Ron Pittaway has updated the bird guide to Carden Alvar, with routes, species, wild flowers and butterflies. It can be found on the Ontario Federation of Ornithologists' website, [www.ofo.ca](http://www.ofo.ca).
  - Iron said three of the Wisconsin Whooping Cranes flew up the east side of Lake Erie and ended up in the Bruce Peninsula.
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- The meeting adjourned at 9:42 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on **May 10, one week earlier than usual**, in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Zoological Laboratories at the University of Toronto. Peter Ewins of the World Wildlife Fund will speak on “The effects of climate change on an Arctic system.”

## DUCK HEAVEN

By Yorke Edwards  
Our Western Correspondent

When at UofT, Dr. Ian McT. Cowan from UBC excited me with an evening lecture about mammals seen in western parks. Later I met David Fowle, a student of Cowan, and told him that I wanted to go to UBC. Then Cowan called me to come west for the summer. So in May, I traveled to Ashcroft in B.C. On the train I often kneeled to see the passing show, first northern forests, then the flat prairie with 27 elk, a deer, two kinds of ground squirrels, and a porcupine. The many ponds of Spring had eight kinds of ducks with endless coots. Later, I was kneeling at dusk in wonder watching up at my first big mountain, and heard a voice nearby saying: "He must be praying." At 3 a.m, I dropped into Ashcroft and found its tiny hotel and, in the morning, I rose to see grassland to the horizon, Cowboy Country! (I grew up playing cowboys). Waiting through that day I found new birds and trees. Next day, Dr. Cowan arrived with four students, one of them Allan Brooks. I was dumb-founded. Often on Saturdays, I went to second-hand book stores on Yonge St. hunting for used National Geographics sometimes with their paintings of birds by Allan Brooks Sr. We were together all summer and close friends ever after.

Later, we were going west on a narrow road with holes down and rocks up to the village of Anahim, just a little store and a few houses. Soon after we were in ODuck Heaven. A few miles from town we had a small tent under fir trees and with a small stove, a good canoe with a motor, and a little tent. We faced a huge flat of Oduck land for miles between two lakes, Abuntlet and Anahim, their flat

grassy area between them and wet all Spring. Ducks were everywhere. Seeing them daily, the most numerous day showed us: 190 scaups, 99 baldpates, 90 buffleheads, 69 mallards, 5 surf scoters, 3 Barrow's golden-eyes, 3 shovellers, 2 American scoters, 3 Canada geese, and one each of white-winged scoter, American golden-eye, American merganser, trumpeter swan and white pelican. That big and flooded flatland was an amazing mallard nesting ground. In small parts of it, we found 13 mallard nests by dragging a long rope between us while walking to make them fly. Nests of other species were more difficult to find. The most interesting were three Barrow's golden-eye nests, all on a small islet in Abuntlet Lake. One nest had three eggs on the top end of a broken poplar, another was high in an alder with 6 eggs; and the third was 20 feet up a willow with 10 eggs, perhaps from two ducks. Other nests found in our hunts were: 4 pintail, 3 surf scoter, 3 baldpate, and one each of blue-winged teal, cinnamon teal, and Canada goose.

When leaving in late July we stopped beside the small store with a dozen locals. Among them was a tall and good looking First People Chief who was living somewhere nearby. For some reason he loudly called us "Good Christian boys." Why so? Later I found why. In many of our evenings screaming, Indian girls on horses went running by on the narrow road near our tent. Also, one evening we arrived at camp to find a large piece of moose meat hanging on the tent pole. I wondered why, but long after realized why. We chased only ducks. Our only problem had been the mosquitoes always crowded in our tent. Once we each squashed 100 on the canvas, then gave up.

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