

THE BRODIE CLUB

Date of the Next Meeting : Tuesday 17 February 1987.

Speaker : Mr. Jack Imhof, Ministry of Natural Resources.

Topic : Stream Rehabilitation: Theory and Application.

Minutes of the 828th Meeting of the Brodie Club

Held Tuesday 20 January 1987, at the Faunal Lab, Univ. of Toronto.

Boissoneau was Chairman, Savage acted as Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 8.08 p.m. The roll was called and guests noted. Present were 11 members and 5 guests (Helen Shea guest of Aird, Ann Falls guest of Bruce Falls, Margery and Robert, Jr. guests of Robert Ritchie Sr., and David Mason guest of Savage. Jones and Cherry sent regrets.

The minutes of the 827 th meeting were read, and adopted on a motion by Carrick, seconded by Falls.

Announcements

Bodsworth announced the death of Terry Shortt on 28 December 1986 at the age of 75, from a heart attack in Mount Sinai Hospital. Bodsworth reviewed Shortt's long and distinguished career as an artist and ornithologist, principally at the Royal Ontario Museum from the age of 20, until his retirement in 1976. His field trips to many parts of the world in search of birds and materials for the R. O. M. dioramas were legendary. His encouragement and advice to young and developing wildlife artists have been acknowledged many times by the same and now famous artists. His two books included "Not as the Crow Flies" and articles in The Beaver. Several members of the Brodie Club reminisced about Terry's art, humour and personality. Standing for one minute's silence was observed at the request of the Chairman.

Speaker of the Evening

The Speaker of the Evening, Mark Stabb, a graduate student in the Faculty of Forestry, was introduced by Aird as having received his Bachelor of Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo, before working with Treaty 9 Cree Indians north of Cochrane, at the Boyne River Natural Science School, and in the Yukon Territory. His subject was "The Ecology and Status of Flying Squirrels in Ontario".

The Speaker first described and illustrated the similarities and differences of the two species of flying squirrels in Ontario, the Northern Flying Squirrel Glaucomys sabrinus and the Southern Flying Squirrel Glaucomys volans, with particular reference to the Northern form. Their habit of gliding from tree to tree, their launching pad movements, perhaps for triangulation, and their periods of greatest activity before sunrise, before sunset and throughout the night were described. Their twittering calls, often heard just before landing from flight, may be a form of echolocation. Their breeding periods are in the spring and fall, the females being in oestrus for one day only. In the Backus Woods area, they are ready to glide at 12 weeks of age.

Their food includes nuts, berries, nestlings, mushrooms and fungi, including the hypogaeus fungi, associated with plant roots. They are preyed on by boreal and screech owls, weasels, black rat snakes, and cats when on the ground. Their nests are usually in tree cavities, sometimes taken over from downy woodpeckers, especially in tree stems. In the openings of these cavities, they may be observed after the tree trunk is rapped.

While they are likely to use 2 - 3 dead tree stems per hectare of forest, they can live in small areas of forest, e.g. 100 meters across, as in the vicinity of Toronto.

Many questions concerning flying squirrels were discussed. They do tame easily, although hard on wall drapes indoors. Their ancestry is believed in Asia, having come to North America via Beringia. They can co-exist with black squirrels.

The Speaker was thanked by Bendell, who had found the presentation very enjoyable. Bendell commented that some great things of the Brodie Club were to gather, look at trees, and listen to knowledgeable speakers.

Members' Notes and Observations

Speakman had made telescope observations of the male and female pileated woodpeckers near his cottage on Lake Simcoe, and of a hawk-owl in Beaverton recently.

Bodsworth had seen a pileated woodpecker at Christmas on Acton Island in Muskoka, and grey partridges (Perdix perdix) in the Beaverton and Cambridge areas.

Speakman's field springer had caught 2 ruffed grouse in one day, one month ago. Carrick remarked that ruffed grouse freeze when a dog is nearby. He also commented that some waterfowl species are very susceptible to lead poisoning from swallowing lead shot, 6 pellets of No. 6 shot being enough to kill a duck in 2 weeks. In the United States, lead shot in shotgun shells will probably be banned by 1990. There seems to be little similar interest in Canada recently.

Falls had seen a cormorant flying past at Humber Bay 3 days previously, and a barnacle goose at Port Credit.

Norma Martin commented on the cleverness of a gray squirrel at getting on anging bird feeders; the last previous instance was 12 years ago.

Bendell had had a white-throated sparrow and a purple finch at his feeder, and had seen and heard a fox on the Petro-Canada tank farm at Clarkson.

Meeting adjourned at 10.45 P.M.

Howard Savage,
Acting Secretary.