

858

THE BRODIE CLUB

'Minutes of the 858th Meeting

The 858th Meeting of the Brodie Club was held on Tuesday 17 April 1990 in the Faunal Lab, South Borden Bldg., U. of T., commencing at 8.07 p.m. Anne Falls was Chairperson, and Bendell was Secretary.

11 members were present and 1 guest, Margaret Bodsworth, guest of Fred Bodsworth. John and Keith Reynolds sent regrets. Dr. Martin McNichol and Mr. Cliver Bertin were welcomed as new members.

The Minutes of the 857th Meeting were read and adopted.

Announcements

Aird noted that an original double elephant folio of Audubon's Birds of America was on display at the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library Gallery from 24 February to 22 April 1990.

Norm Martin reported on numerous items relating to the F.O.N.: dues, photo-exhibition, insurance while at meetings, outings, catalogues, T-shirts, and the F.O.N. annual meeting at Thunder Bay in May 1990.

Bodsworth said there was a special meeting of the T.O.C. this Friday (20 April) featuring Lynne Hancock.

Savage began discussion of the time and place of the Brodie Club's annual picnic. Carrick kindly offered his farm for Saturday 9 June. Carrick mentioned some of the many attractions of his place, including abundant waterfowl, newly hatched swans, trunk sewers, methane gas and the Metro garbage dump. At least ten members agreed to the location, and a map to Carrick's will be included in the next notice of meeting.

Speaker of the Evening

Savage introduced the Speaker, Mr. John Bennett, of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Ontario. Mr. Bennett has a B. A. degree from the University of Western Ontario and since 1969 has worked in southern Ontario as a Conservation Officer, Fish and Wildlife Officer and soon as a Wildlife Supervisor. His title was "Wild Turkey Management in Ontario".

Except for private stock, the Wild Turkey was extirpated in Ontario in 1906. Since that time, there were 30 - 40 attempts at re-introduction but all failed because they were adult pen-reared birds. In the mid-80's, the F. O. N., the Ontario Anglers and Hunters and Ontario M. N. R. released a small flock of wild-caught birds near Napanee. The stock was obtained from Michigan in exchange for Moose and Otters. The present population is estimated at 4,000 to 5,000 birds! Birds are trapped in winter at bait stations by cannon netting and transplanted to other regions of southern Ontario.

The Speaker showed pictures of male and female turkeys and pointed out differences with sex and age in the wattle, snood, beard, spurs,

size and plumage. He displayed one of the rockets used to pull the net over turkeys at the bait. The rocket is filled with black powder and several are ignited simultaneously by an electric current. Captured birds are transported in cardboard boxes and tested for diseases that might infect domestic animals. The habitat requirements of turkeys seem comparable with those of White-tailed Deer South of the Shield. Turkeys like a patchwork of 50 % hardwood bush and 50 % old and cultivated fields. They use hardwood ridges, south-facing slopes, seeps and pond edges. Mast and the spring growth of shrubs, grasses and herbs are main foods.

There is a carefully regulated spring hunt for male turkeys. Hunters must take a course in turkey hunting. Hunters sit at the base of a tree in highly camouflaged clothing and attempt to lure a male within shotgun range by making the call of a female soliciting a male. Numerous devices for making the call are available. There is keen competition among hunters for the opportunity to shoot turkey although success rates are very low. The turkey in spring is a wiley bird.

Question Period

There were numerous questions as to current numbers and locations of flocks. Locations of flocks were Simcoe District, Albion, Norfolk County, Napanee, King, Aylmer, Uxbridge, Brock, Lindsay, Naple, Huronia, Cambridge and Niagara.

Pen-reared stock do not seem to be genetically different from those in the wild. Captivity reduces the ability to survive in the wild.

Albion is the place to see Wild Turkey, at 30th Side-road and Second Concession.

Generally, all flocks are increasing in numbers. Snow depth greater than 20 inches will probably stop northern distribution.

There is no noticeable response by predators in the ecosystem to the new populations of Wild Turkey.

The spring hunt is on the basis of tradition, and that there are surplus males in spring. The Ontario M. N. R. wants to make a safe and quiet hunt. Last fall, 2,000 hunters applied for permits at the Maple office.

The Speaker was thanked by Norma Martin for talking turkey.

Members' Notes and Observations

Carrick : Wood ducks, Canada Geese and Pileated Woodpeckers are nesting at his farm.

Boissoneau : The current spring migration is about the same time as over the past many years despite the cold April.

Young : A Flicker was feeding on beef fat.

McNicholl : Three Cormorants flew over his garden near the centre of the city, and 27 Dark-eyed Juncos were on the steps of the Whitney Block.

Bruce Falls : On Cherrywood Pond, ½ mile east of the village of Cherrywood in a field ^{near} 6 Glaucous, 3 Iceland and 1 Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Bodsworth : A Bald Eagle flew over his house.

The Meeting adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

J. F. Bendell.