

BRODIE CLUB MEETING

The 909th meeting of the Brodie Club was held in the Faunal Lab., Borden Building at 8.00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 1996.

Chairman: Dave Hussell, Secretary: Hugh Currie

Attendance

There were 14 members present and 3 guests.

Guests: George Fairfield, guest of David Hussell; Karen Kisiel, guest of Howard Savage; Yvonne Bendell guest of Jim Bendell.

Minutes

Re the minutes of the December meeting; moved Jock McAndrews, seconded Fred Bodsworth, that the minutes be adopted. Carried.

It was suggested that dates be given for birds and animals reported in the observations e.g. the chipmunk at Queen's Park.

Announcements

Jock McAndrews drew attention to a recent obituary reporting the death of Jack Farrar, formerly a professor of tree physiology and author of "Trees in Canada."

Harry Lumsden reported that public hearings have begun for Bill 26. There is a real possibility of conservation areas being lost. Moved Fred Bodsworth, seconded Ann Falls that Harry Lumsden write a letter expressing the Brodie Club's concerns.

Norm Martin recommended attending the FON annual meeting. It will be held in Sault Ste. Marie for the first time in May 1996.

The Speaker

The speaker, Bruce Falls, was then introduced by David Hussell.

Bruce began with some general information about the Galapagos. The islands are up to 120 km long and are only one to ten million years old. He was there in April 1995 when temperatures were moderate and nesting season had begun. Most of the fauna are related to South American species that can fly or swim though the plants used birds as a vector.

There are 137 species of birds on the islands of which Bruce saw 58 including 21 endemics. He saw 11 of the 13 Darwin's finches.

As discussed in Jonathan Weiner's Pulitzer Prize winning

*"The Beak of the Finch", the beak size and shape varies according to the competition on the island and even with the weather.

Galapagos tours are well regulated. Of the 50 sites available, Bruce's LPBO tour visited 20. There were 15 people on the tour led by Michael Bradstreet and by a local naturalist.

Then Bruce showed his 56 minute video which was of outstanding quality. They went first to Santa Cruz and Bartolome. Here Bruce taped Galapagos Penguins, Small and Medium Ground-Finches, Cactus-Finches, a strange-looking Yellow Warbler, Black-necked Stilt, Brown Pelican, Vermilion Flycatcher, Short-eared Owl, Warbler Finch, Brown Noddy, Galapagos Heron plus lava lizard, a sphinx moth and sea lions.

Next they went to Genovesa (Tower) Island followed by Fernandina (in the fog) and Isabela in the afternoon. Bruce showed footage of 2 colour phases of the Red-footed Booby, Swallow-tailed Gull, Great Frigatebird, Masked Booby, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Galapagos Dove, Large Ground-Finch, Hawksbill Turtle, Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch and Large Cactus-Finch, Franklin's Gull (rare here), Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel, Red-billed Tropicbird and Lava Gull.

At Fernandina, new species were Flightless Cormorant, marine iguana, Striated Heron, sally lightfoot crabs, and Galapagos Hawk, American Oystercatcher, Wandering Tattler, and fur seals were seen at Santiago Island.

Next it was South Plaza and Santa Fe Island where the group saw Dominican Gull, land iguana, green turtle, Galapagos Mockingbird and White-cheeked Pintail.

On Floreana they found the Medium Tree-Finch (showing a contrasting black head) and ghost crabs. Here there is an informal international mail box. Other birds included Western Sandpiper and Greater Flamingo.

On Hood Island (Espanola) they taped the Hood Mockingbird with its longer, more curved bill, Blue-footed Boobies in courtship, a small constrictor and Waved Albatross.

Bruce had marvelous shots of male Magnificent and Great Frigatebirds displaying their sacs as well as the famous tortoises.

The question period centered around Darwin's visits. He was not initially impressed by the finches and only realized that they were new and interesting species after conferring with John Gould.

George Bryant asked about the fishermen's battle over the

harvesting of sea cucumbers during which a few tortoises were killed.

In reply to another question, we learned that the total cost was \$4,500 ex Toronto and that the tour lasted 13 days of which 10 were in the Galapagos.

The speaker was thanked by George Bryant and was warmly applauded for an outstanding presentation.

Notes and Observations

Jim Bendell commented on the difference in bird species between his Mississauga feeders and the feeders at his new home near Ottawa. In Ottawa he has had Raven and Barred Owl, which would be surprising near Toronto. He commented on the lack of Red-tails in areas of deep snow.

Harry Lumsden had 11, then 16 Pine Grosbeaks in his Aurora backyard.

Ann Falls reported Snow Buntings coming to their feeder near Apsley.

Hugh Currie commented on the magnificent and easily seen Brown Gyrfalcon at the foot of Bathurst Street.

Bill Carrick commented on the new book "Father Goose" by Bill Lishman. While it contains some inaccuracies, it is a pleasant read. A \$20,000,000 movie based on the book will be released at Easter (title not yet known).

George Bryant reviewed a book called "Toronto the Wild" by Wayne Grady who lives in Kingston. While primarily a writer and not a naturalist, Mr. Grady has done a good job of ferreting out interesting aspects of our wildlife.

Chairman Hussell declared the meeting adjourned at 10:14 pm.

The 910th meeting of the Brodie Club will be held in the Faunal Lab., Borden Building, U. of T. at 8:00 PM Tuesday Feb. 20, 1996.

SPEAKER will be Martin Obbard

SUBJECT: 'Bears of Ontario'

The letter to Premier Harris, authorized at the 909th meeting is copied on the back of this sheet.

THE BRODIE CLUB
307 Laird Drive,
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 3X7

The Honourable Michael D. Harris
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Harris:

The Brodie Club is an eclectic group of professionals and well-informed amateurs involved in numerous university and biological activities at senior levels. It was founded in 1921, taking its name from Ontario's first Provincial Naturalist. It meets monthly to hear and discuss with invited speakers, papers on their scientific work.

At the Club's 909th meeting, concern was expressed about some aspects of Bill 26 which could impair Ontario enactments of recent decades to protect and enhance the natural environment and the quality of life of this Province.

Unfortunately, there are limited opportunities to make representations regarding those sections of the Bill which will adversely affect environmental decisions.

Among these is the granting of sweeping authority over environmental matters to municipalities, most of which lack both the expertise and the will to use such powers prudently.

Abolition of Conservation Authorities as stewards holding in trust thousands of hectares of environmentally important lands, many which were acquired in part or in whole with private funds in expectation of perpetual protection, would be tragic.

Can you assure us that amendments to Bill 26 will restore complete protection for class 1, 2 and 3 wetlands and continue to protect the integrity of river and creek beds?

We support your government's objectives of reducing the province's debt and of wiping out its deficit but, in our considered opinion, many of the measures proposed in Bill 26, so far as the natural environment and quality of life are concerned, will be detrimental to these objectives.

Your review of these and related concerns is earnestly solicited.

Yours respectfully,

William Carrick
Secretary

JAN, 22, 1996