

THE 934th MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB  
MINUTES

The 934th meeting of the Brodie Club was held on Nov. 17, 1998 in the Ramsay Wright Building of the University of Toronto.

Chairman: Bruce Falls  
Recording Secretary: Michael Boyer  
Attendance: 20 members and three guests  
Vicky Draper, guest of David Fowle  
Sidney Daniels, guest of George Bryant  
Sandra Eadie, guest of Oliver Bertin

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment on a motion by William Carrick, seconded by Hugh Currie.

BUSINESS:

Mary Boswell and Claire and Bernard Muller were welcomed as new members.

Motion: To change the Brodie Club Constitution, Article 4 section 3 from:

The period from the first Tuesday of January to the third Tuesday of December inclusive shall be a Club year.

to:

The period from September 1st to August 31st of the following year shall be a Club year.

The motion was carried unanimously by those present. Since the motion requires the approval of 75 per cent of the active members, this will be sought by telephone.

Motion: To accept the new slate of officers for the 1998-99 season as follows:

ELECTED:

Secretary: Oliver Bertin  
Treasurer: William Carrick  
FON Representative: Harry Lumsden  
Membership Committee: Ann Falls, George Bryant, Jennifer Young  
Program Committee: Paul Aird, Jock McAndrews, Bruce Falls, Hugh Currie, Fred Bodsworth, John Riley, Jim Rising.  
Environment Committee: David Fowle, Keith Reynolds, Don Huff.

Passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Lumsden: Reported the provincial government's Lands for Life report failed disastrously to meet any of the goals of the Partnership for Public Lands, of which the Federation of Ontario Naturalists is a member.

Brodie Club  
page 2

The report recommended only 1.6 per cent of the planning area be put aside as additional protected area, down from the 12 per cent targeted by the Partnership. The recommended protected area includes 72 new provincial parks and 199 conservation reserves, but almost all are small and scattered. The recommended areas would also permit mining, expand commercial and recreational activities, endorse temporary parks, create confusing land-use designations and fail to complete wilderness park targets.

Lumsden suggested a letter-writing campaign to the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources.

Carrick: Membership lists for the Club are available. A copy of the financial statement corrected to our new fiscal year is available for perusal.

McAndrews notified members of a research colloquium on postglacial climates on Nov. 21, 1998 in the ROM auditorium.

Falls notified members of an upcoming meeting at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, on Nov. 29, sponsored by Bird Studies, Canada. The guest speaker will be Dave Nettleship talking on Sea Birds.

SPEAKER:

Currie introduced Bob Curry, teacher, writer, herpetologist, ornithologist and lepidopterist, who spoke on:

A Seasonal Chronology of Butterflies in the Hamilton Region

Curry introduced us to many of the beautiful Lepidopterans, both butterflies and moths, through a series of excellent slides taken by himself, John A. McDonald and James Bayly, with additional comments on their life history, field identification, flight season and habits.

The earliest butterflies to appear are the Mourning Cloak, Eastern Comma and Red Admiral. The first two overwinter as adults; the Red Admiral only in mild winters.

The Eastern Pine Elfin can be found in early May in conifer plantations or on white pine, where the larvae feed. Adults spend most of the day there unless feeding on flowers. There are six or seven species of Elfin in Canada but only one in the region.

The West Virginia White is rare in the Hamilton area. It was on the endangered list for a while but has since been removed. It inhabits maple woods, the larvae feeding only on toothwort. Apparently, females are fooled by white garlic mustard and larvae

are unable to survive on it.

Another early butterfly is the Eastern Tailed Blue with several generations a year. It can be found in many habitats disturbed or otherwise. Larvae are generalists, feeding on a wide variety of herbs.

Monarchs: A few tattered individuals often appear in late May. This year the species seems to have been relatively uncommon.

The Black Swallowtail appears in late May. Males and females are distinguishable by wing patterns, the female apparently mimicking the Pipevine Swallowtail. Numbers fluctuate widely.

Arctic Skipper is boreal, not Arctic. It appears from late May to July 5 in wet grassy areas where larvae feed. It resembles a tiny Fritillary. Another Skipper, the Mottled Duskywing is very rare, feeding on New Jersey Tea. The habitat includes limestone alvars and Beverly Swamp. Roadside Skipper is another very rare butterfly in the Hamilton region.

The number of Giant Swallowtails fluctuate. It is found in the Hamilton area for a few years and then disappears. The host is prickly ash. Beverly Swamp is a common habitat from late May to early July.

The European Skipper is abundant from early June through July. The Least Skipper is common from mid-June to early July, with a second brood from August to September. It is found on wetland grasses.

The Hobomok Skipper is a common yellow-orange skipper of woodland edges and trails, and on grasses. It is found from mid-May to July.

Summer Azure is a pale blue butterfly, flying from mid-June to early September. It is common in open woodlands on plants and flowering shrubs. The Spring Azure is common elsewhere. The Cherry Hill Azure is earlier. The larvae feed on gall mites of choke cherry. The Dusky Azure and Appalachian Azure occur only around Lake Erie.

Little Wood Satyr is common in late June in woods and shrubby areas. The larvae are found on grasses in open fields.

Northern Pearly Eye is a medium-sized, purple-brown butterfly, common from mid-June to August. The larvae live in woodland grasses; adults in dense woods. It often roosts on tree trunks.

Spice Bush Swallowtail is a large black butterfly with blue iridescent spots on the hind wing of the female and a green-blue wash on the male. It is local and rare, with one generation in June and another in July-August. Larvae feed on trees of the Carolinian forest.

Silver-bordered Fritillary is a medium-sized butterfly, orange and black above. There are two broods a year, found from May to September in wet meadows. Larvae are found on violets. It can be confused with the Meadow Fritillary.

Silvery Checkerspot is a small to medium-sized butterfly, orange and dark-brown, found from mid-June to mid-July along river banks and streams. It appears to be exterminated locally.

Gorgone Checkerspot was found for the first time this century, in 1996 on compositae. It is very rare.

Baltimore Checkerspot is a beautiful butterfly with orange borders and white spots on a dark-brown background. It flies from mid-June to early August, where the host plant, turtlehead, grows.

White Admiral is not as common as its subspecies, the Red-spotted Purple. It flies from mid-June to August. The larvae are found on poplars and willows.

The Viceroy is known widely as a presumed mimic of the Monarch. Larvae feed on poplars. Flights coincide with the arrival of the Monarchs from late May to September.

Tawny-edged Skipper is found in open areas from early June to mid-July.

Northern Broken-Dash is a dull, purplish-brown Skipper, found from late June to early August.

Silver-spotted Skipper is the largest Skipper. It is a strong flier and quite pugnacious in its territory, from early June to late July. Larvae are found on several hosts including black locust.

American Copper is a small butterfly with orange forewings. Larvae feed on sorrels or docks as do many of the Coppers, in two broods, from mid-July to September.

Bronze Copper: Males are coppery brown. It flies in open wet spaces, from mid-July to September.

Dorcas Copper is a small, brown species of wet areas, found from late June to late August. Larvae feed on shrubby cinquefoil.

Hairstreaks are a small dark-brown species with wavy or broken lines on the underwings, hence the name. They are late June and July fliers. Five are common in the Hamilton areas: Acadian, Coral, Banded, Striped and Edwards.

Great Spangled Fritillary: One of the largest Fritillaries and most common. Males are beautiful, bright-orange; females are yellow-brown. They are active in July and August. Like all Greater Fritillaries, the larvae feed on violets.

Aphrodite Fritillary has a large black dot at the base of the forewing, a feature that distinguishes it from the Great Spangled. It is most common in July.

Common Sootywing is a sooty-black species which frequents open spaces. Larvae feed on lamb's quarters with two generations a year. It found throughout the summer, but is rare.

Leonard's Skipper is a striking butterfly, bright reddish-orange above. Adults fly in August and September.

Common Buckeye: All four wings have a striking eyespot. A rare stray from the south but can be established seasonally. Larvae feed on toadflax, gerardia and snaps. It has been found in Burlington and High Park.

Ocala Skipper is a rare, dark-brown Skipper of the south-east United States. First recorded in Hamilton by Curry. It is also found in Point Pelee in the fall.

Long-tailed Skipper has been found only twice in Canada, in Point Pelee and Windsor.

Curry also presented a few pictures of silk and sphinx moths. Silk moths are relatively rare and might be the victim of light pollution, Shown were the Polyphemus, Promethea, Luna, Imperial, Io, and Rosy Maple. The Sphinx moths included Elm, Wild Cherry, Poplar, Blinded, Twin-spotted, and Small-eyed Sphinx.

#### QUESTIONS:

Larvae have a wide range of specificities to food sources. Some species prefer a single plant, a specific genus or family, while others prefer a wider selection. Curry cited Henry's Elfin, that seems to be adapting to buckthorn from blueberry.

The photographs were taken using flash sidelighting and

telephoto or macro-lenses.

Curry recommends 'The Butterflies of Canada' by Layberry, Hall and Lafontaine.

Bodsworth commented on butterflies that he collected in his youth in Port Burwell. The Pipevine Swallowtail, the Variegated Fritillary, and the Regal Fritillary are still found, but are sporadic. The Common Buckeye was also more common in the past, but is sporadic now. Approximately 10 to 15 have been spotted this year. They sometimes lay eggs, but do not overwinter well.

This was the hottest summer on record. It had some impact on butterflies, but species that commonly have second broods were rarely found.

Bryant thanked the speaker, commenting on the fact that Curry accomplishes all he does while still teaching.

#### OBSERVATIONS:

McAndrews commented on the discovery of a second meander episode for the Humber River, 90 meters deep in the marsh area. He also described a beaver excavation in the mud of the marsh bank. The mud was piled up, with a winter food cache beside it. The beaver has been digging a channel between the river and a pond, feeding on water-lily rhizomes.

Young commented on a red fox which took a squirrel from her backyard and dragged it back to the ravine. The fox urinated on the squirrel's tail, a common behavioral trait according to others. Two hermit thrushes were also seen.

Daniels showed a tropical gourd from which he took seeds and grew them in his backyard. The gourd took over his and his neighbour's garden, climbing up the fence and houses to about 18 feet. Some of the gourds were up to 14 lbs in weight. He offered seed to those brave enough to try them. The gourds are not edible, but are good as bird houses and containers.

Bryant commented on his observations of geese migrating against the face of the moon. This apparently was part of an old technique for counting geese, extrapolating from the moon's area. This technique has been replaced by radar.

Lumsden said the number of trumpeter swans has exceeded expectations. He has 16 pairs, producing a total of 41 cygnets, with 92 surviving in total.

Boswell noted that beavers have taken all the trees off

Brodie Club  
page 7

Muggs Island in Toronto Bay.

Ron Scovell and Currie reported on an unusual Franklin Gull invasion caused by south-west winds. 200 were found at Point Pelee, but others were found right up Lake Erie, five in Toronto and two at Niagara. Most should have been in South America by now.

Reynolds was following up a sighting of a purple sandpiper, a bird he has never before seen.

Muller commented on the rather frenetic activity of several squirrels that she has seen breaking off twigs and building a communal nest in the branches with fallen leaves.

Curry observed mature and immature gulls splash-diving on fish brought to the surface by southerly winds bringing the sub-surface waters up.

Currie requested further information on a previous comment by Ken Abraham, citing reports of whooping cranes in Ontario.

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 pm.

THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Zoological Laboratories at the University of Toronto.

SPEAKER:

Bruce Falls: The Brodie Club goes to South Africa.

This will be our Christmas meeting so all manner of fluid and edible refreshments are welcome.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!