

THE BRODIE CLUB



Established 1921

Website: <http://thebrodieclub.eeb.utoronto.ca>

THE 1,121st MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

The 1,121st meeting of the Brodie Club was held on Tuesday, 17 September, 2019 in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Laboratories of the University of Toronto.

Chair: George Bryant

Secretary: Katie Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 19:40 pm and was attended by 36; 29 members and 7 guests.

Roll Call:

Present: Abraham, Bacher, Beadle, Bell, Bertin, Bryant, Coady, Crins, Currie, Curry, Daniels, DeMarco, Dengler, Eadie, A. Falls, B. Falls, Hutchinson, Iron, Juhola, Kortright, Martyn, Obbard, Pittaway, Reading, Seymour, Slessor, Stones, Thomas, Tomlinson

Guests: Ron Jenkins (guest of Bertin), Mary Bacher (Bacher), Rachel Gotesman (Kortright), Ron Dengler and Jim Eckenwalder (Dengler), Rob Falls (B. Falls), Booja (guest of the Club)

Regrets: E. Addison, R. Addison, Dunn, Harris, Hussell, King, Kotanen, Lindsay, Peter, Rapley, Riley, Rising

Minutes: Approved with no correction

Committee Reports:

Membership: Ross Harris will be welcomed officially at the October meeting as he was out of the country for this meeting.

Program: October speaker will be Mary Gartshore, on restoration of prairie habitat in southern Ontario

Announcements:

Committees will be reviewed at October meeting. New volunteers needed as follows:

- Field Trip: 1
- Membership: 2, ideally
- Program: at least 1. (Waiting to hear further responses from current members)
- Recording Secretary: 2 (each to record a few meetings a year)

The following committees / roles do not need new members as the current members have agreed to stand another year (Thank you!): Archives, AV, Refreshments, Website, Corresponding Secretary, Editing Secretary, FON Rep, Treasurer

Ron Pittaway's Winter Finch Forecast has been compiled and will be sent out to the Club over the next week.

Aarne Juhola is recuperating from a stroke and should be home in the next two weeks. We wish him a speedy recovery.

SPEAKERS: Member's Night speakers introduced themselves

Bob Curry: Field trip to Northern Ontario

Brodie members George Bryant and Bob Curry accompanied by Kyle Holloway (Toronto), Bill Lamond (Brantford) and Ed Poropat (Haliburton) trekked to Northern Ontario July 15 – 20, primarily in search of northern dragonflies. We visited three main sites: Moosonee, Detour Lake Bog (NE of Cochrane) and Berlinghoff Road, Nellie Lake, Cochrane.

At Moosonee most of the northern Mosaic darners were seen but non-Odonates were the highlights. *Neottia (Listera) borealis* and *Galearis (Amerorchis) rotundifolia* were outstanding among the plants. Best butterfly was Western Tailed Blue. We noted the highly coloured forms of northern herps such as Eastern Garter Snake, "Hudson Bay" Toad, Spring Peeper and Wood Frog. For Bryant and Curry the major highlight was a Ferruginous Hawk that soared overhead but that, unfortunately, the others missed.

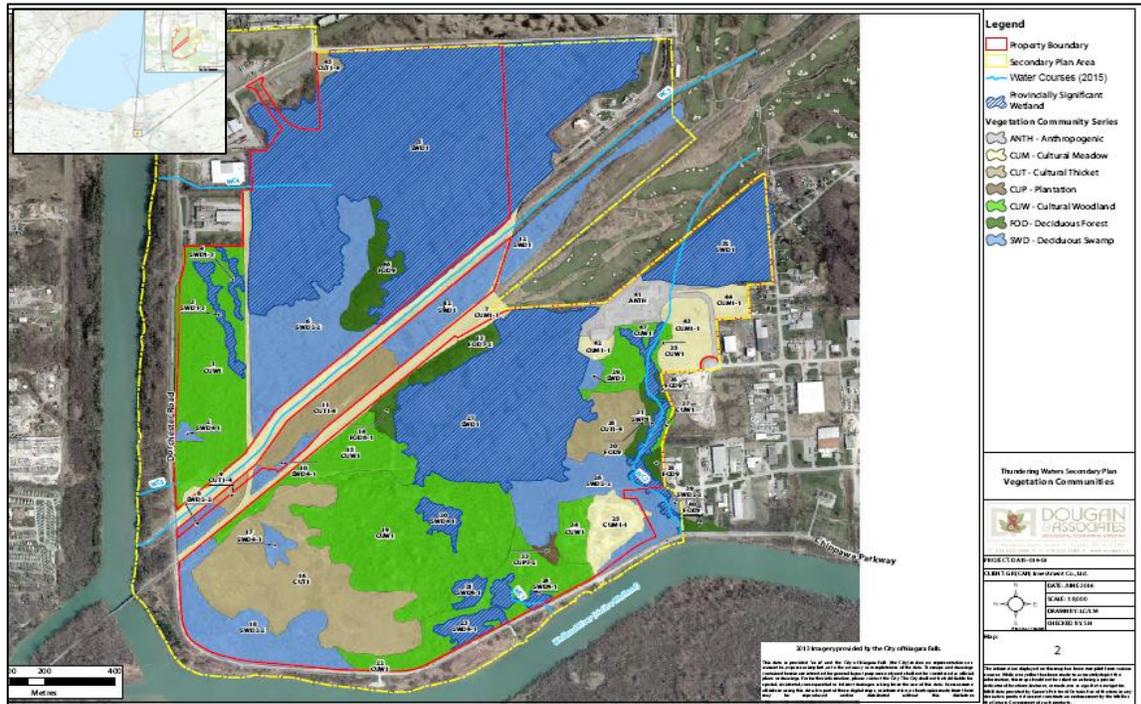
At Detour Lake highlights were Quebec and Whitehouse's emeralds and Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*). At Nellie Lake, a stand of Sneezewort (*Achillia ptarmica*) a European adventive was new for Bryant. Possibly the best plant was Horned Seablite (*Suaeda calceoliformis*) growing in a saline ditch at a gas station on Hwy 11 on the northside of North Bay.



Curry photos: Clockwise from above: *Neottia (Listera) borealis*, Whitehouse's Emerald (male), Spruce Grouse (female), Western Tailed Blue Butterfly, Solitary Sandpiper

John Bacher: Thundering Waters Forest

For the past 11 years much of my life has become focused on the protection of a 500 acre area which has become known as the Thundering Waters Forest. Most of it is a vernal pool, or slough dominated wetland, which in 2010 became designated as provincially protected the Niagara Falls Slough Forest Wetland Complex (NFSFWC). Its diverse mix of habitats also includes open Hawthorn savannahs.



Location of NFSFWC (inset), and vegetation communities (Thundering Waters Secondary Plan, Characterization and Environmental Impact Study, Dougan & Associates Ecological Consulting and Design 2016).

The NFSFWC provides breeding habitat for numerous amphibians: the Wood Frog, Spring Peeper, Western Chorus Frog, Gray Tree Frog, Green Frog and Leopard Frog, Eastern Newt and the Blue Spotted Salamander. There may be polypoids of Jefferson salamanders as only a small part of the NFSFWC area has been trapped for genetic tests. Two ponds provide habitat for the Midland Painted Turtle, Snapping Turtle and Bullfrogs. Both ponds are related to a former stream, Warren Creek, which was severed by the Ontario Adam Beck power canal after the First World War. At one point the former creek goes underground and feeds a wetland close to where it used to flow into the Welland River, making a feature which resembles a sink hole. Plans for a development called Riverfront propose to deforest this feature and to replant with rare species such as the Great Plains Lady Tress.

My work to prevent alteration of the Thundering Waters Forest has been supported by biologists in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR). Their biggest concern is the value of the old growth forest of oaks, sugar maples and hickories for three species of migrating bats. For three years the property owner (GR Canada) dragged its heels with MNR over the protocols to be used to conduct acoustic studies to determine if endangered cave roosting bats use the forest for roosting in June and July. The aged forest has trees with hollows which also benefit a Threatened species, the Chimney Swift. Eventually the presence of three such bat species were confirmed, the Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis and the Eastern Small-Footed Myotis.

Lands adjacent to these wetlands include a hawthorn-dominated savannah which provides breeding habitat for declining early successional bird species, including Brown Thrasher, Black Billed Cuckoo and the Field Sparrow. I have been a active birder from childhood in Niagara and this site is the only place I have every seen the Black Billed Cuckoo. This declining species is a predator of an invasive species, the Gypsy Moth. This type of habitat and the species reliant upon it are quite vulnerable to urban aprawl in Ontario. Bill Rapley, fellow Brodie Club member, has explained to me how these declining bird species vanished during his lifetime disappeared entirely from the Stoney Creek area where he did intense bird watching during his teens, and from the Rouge Valley, where he worked for many decades in the Toronto zoo. The tall hawthorn savannah area also contains a population of Dense Blazing Star, discovered by my friend, Daniel Nardone. He discovered it because of his familiarity with the species from spending much of his adult life in Windsor, Ontario. A species at risk orchid, the Great Plains-Lady Tress was recently discovered here. The hawthorn savanna also has a population of the regionally rare Butterfly Milkweed.

There are some 14 Species At Risk which to date have been identified as being in the Thundering Waters Forest as a whole. The absence of agriculture here since the Second World War is beneficial to the Threatened Barn Swallow, which is negatively impacted by agricultural pesticides. The extensive area of forest interior habitat, one of the largest blocks in Niagara, benefits the Wood Thrush and Eastern Wood Pewee, as well as regionally rare species such as the Wood Duck and the Scarlet Tanager.

The future of the Thundering Waters Forest is currently awaiting a decision of the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal. Win or lose, this decision will be subject to appeals which will go on for at least a year.

Katie Thomas: Notes from a “tiny” urban backyard

My downtown Toronto backyard, located at the corner of Bathurst and Bloor, measures only 15 x 15 foot (5 x 5 metres). I have lived here for the past 20 years with our son James and my husband Dave, and upon seeing my neighbours upgrade, renovate, build decks, tear up and landscape design their backyards I began to feel I was missing out. That was not to be, however, so I decided to tally up all the wildlife species we have seen over the past 20 years and be happy with that. It proved to be a good idea, as after 20 years of looking we’ve seen some pretty cool and unexpected stuff.

The backyard is surrounded on two sides by a laneway, with a rather high fence around it and two streetlamps pouring light into it at night. Plants include Spice Bush, Alternate-leaved Dogwood, Virginia Creeper, Norway Maple, Butterfly (Buddleia sp.) Bush, Wild Grape, Black-eyed Susan, Goldenrod, aster, sunflower, and some trees either in yard or nearby: apple, oak, birch, spruce, cedar, hackberry.



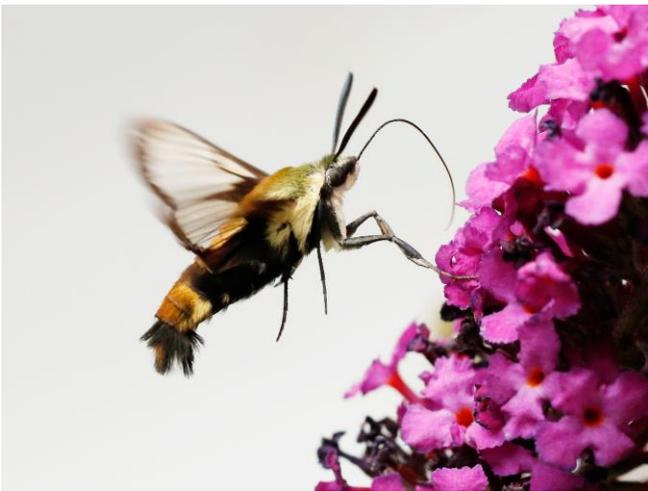


We have bird feeders in winter, and often operate a moth trap, with UV light, white sheet, and pheromones (sex hormones that act as attractants for male moths).

Over 20 years we have recorded hundreds of species: 804 moths, 150+ birds, 20+ butterflies, 15+ dragonflies, 30+ flies, bees & wasps (and counting), and 9 mammals.

Among the moths, we have observed some patterns:

- *Dock Rustic* – disappeared, where it used to be regular in small numbers
- We only see the *Clematis Borer Moth* when we put out pheromones
- *Lesser Yellow Underwing* – only in the past 10 years has it become common
- *Large Yellow Underwing* – used to be commonest, now tailed off
- The *Snowberry Clearwing* is attracted to the *Buddleia* bush. Within hours of bringing the plant into the yard one of these came to the flowers.
- *Dwarf Tawny Wave* was the second record for Canada
- One particularly beautiful moth we get is the *Bedstraw Hawkmoth*
- Micro moths far outnumber the macros
- We get high diversity, but low density
- The *Box-tree Moth* is increasing rapidly. A pest in Europe, it is decimating *Box Wood*. In 2018 we had the second record for Canada and in 2019 we have had over 60 individuals with a high of 9 in one night.



Snowberry Clearwing



Bedstraw Hawkmoth

Our only rule for recording birds is that it has to be seen or heard from the yard! As one would expect, we see most species as spring and fall migrants. Good records include a *Green Heron*, 2 *Short-eared Owl*, 2 *Black-billed Cuckoo* and a *White-eyed Vireo*. Last year in mid-September an amazing 17 *Bald Eagles* flew west over the yard in a dramatic 30-minute period! We are a bit stricter about what counts as a yard bird and we've had a few painful near misses that include 4 species of owl (*Long-eared*, *Barred*, *Eastern Screech*, *Great Horned*) a *Sandhill Crane* and a *Wild Turkey*!

Butterflies are less plentiful than moths, but we've amassed a reasonable list. In fact we managed to get our laneway named "Mourning Cloak Lane" based on the fact that the namesake butterfly is often seen in the laneway, offering one of the first signs of spring. Some of our better sightings include *Giant* and *Spicebush Swallowtails* and *Red-spotted Purple*. And of course we do on occasion see large numbers of migrating *Monarchs* sailing high overhead in the autumn.

Dragonflies are generally scarce likely because the nearest body of water (Wychwood Pond) is about a kilometer away. Large numbers of *Green Darners* are sometimes noticed following cold fronts in the fall. Often there are a few other species mixed in, such as: *Twelve-spotted Skimmer*, *Blue Dasher*, and *Black Saddlebags*. Less common species include *Swamp* and *Shadow Darner*, *Carolina Saddlebags*, *Wandering Glider*, and *Spot-winged Glider*. We once had a *Sedge Sprite* (right), which was found in the moth trap – a most unusual record!



We only started this summer to record flies, wasps and bees, and to date have 30. Our best sighting has been the fantastically named *Wavy Mucksucker* (left).

Finally, we have a motley list of mammals: Grey Squirrel, Red Squirrel, Raccoon, Striped Skunk, rat, mouse, Opossum, Big Brown Bat, Small Brown Bat – and last but not least, a cow! (She was a runaway from a nearby abattoir, since burned down).

Bill Crins: Great Rivers of the Amazon: the Madeira – Tapajos Interfluvium

From August 2 – 17, 2019, I took the opportunity to travel to Brazil to participate in a birding tour conducted by Field Guides, Inc. of Austin, Texas. This trip was largely water-based, and focused on the region between the Madeira and Tapajos Rivers, south of the Amazon River. The first day was spent birding in Manaus. On the second day, we flew to the town of Borba on the Madeira River, and then spent a couple of days birding in the forests and campinas around Borba. Then, we took a river taxi to Nova Olinda do Norte, where we met the boat that we would spend the remainder of the trip traveling on.

The channels between the Madeira and Tapajos Rivers were the primary focus of the trip. This region has been studied intensively by one of our guides, Bret Whitney, who has described several new species of birds and elevated others to species status from this area. The Madeira and Tapajos Rivers are large rivers that serve as barriers to movement for many of the forest birds in the area, so this region is a hub of speciation for these birds. During the course of our trip, several of these relatively recently described birds were seen, as well as a few that will soon be elevated to species status from their current subspecific ranks.

Each day, we would take smaller boats to trailheads or to flooded forests and then either walk in the *terra firme* forests or traverse small channels and occasionally walk on some of the more solid soils of the flooded forests or *varzea*. On several occasions, we did night excursions into the forests, as well, in search of Rufous Potoo and various other nocturnal birds and mammals. In addition to seeing numerous bird species (over 400 species in total), including many species of antbirds (such

as the stunning Harlequin Antbird) and ovenbirds, we saw numerous other interesting organisms, including two species of sloth, several species of monkey, both Amazon (pink) River Dolphin and Tucuxi (Gray River Dolphin), Neotropical Pygmy Squirrel, several species of native rats, Fer-de-lance, Amazon Pygmy Gecko, a leafwing butterfly, Common Morpho, and numerous species of grasshoppers, katydids, moths, and arachnids, among much other interesting biota. Some of the numerous birds that were seen were included in the images in the presentation, including Black-necked Aracari, Spotted Puffbird, White-necked Puffbird, Green Oropendola, Crimson-bellied Parakeet, Slender-billed Xenops, Rondonia Woodcreeper, Plain Softtail, Point-tailed Palmcreeper, Red-and-white Spinetail, Black-faced Hawk, White Hawk, Golden Parakeet, and Hoatzin.

All in all, it was a fantastic trip in this highly biodiverse region.



Crins photos: Clockwise from top left: *Phoneutria nigriventer*, Red Peacock, *Leucanella*, Spotted Puffbird



OBSERVATIONS

Martyn reported that the young of Great horned Owl were heard outside her house. She was also looking for an ID of a slug caterpillar. It was suggested she try iNaturalist.

Daniels reported that he had visited Rosetta McLain Gardens on 17 September and had observed 11 species of butterfly including Giant Swallowtail, Painted Lady (lots), Orange Sulphur, Question Mark, Eastern Tailed Blue, Summer Azure and a Silver Spotted Skipper. He said it was nice to see such good numbers so late in September.

Crins participated in a bioblitz in Algonquin Provincial Park which had over 30 participants and over 820 species recorded -- an amazing tally.

Coady led a hike with the Citizens of Etobicoke Waterfront. This group has been trying very hard to get rid of Japanese Knotweed. Ironically, they observed 1000s of Monarch Butterflies on the Knotweed!

Eadie reported on a visit to Prince Edward County, where she also noted lots of Monarchs, as well as 500+ baby Leopard Frogs.

Thomlinson added that his wife also saw 350+ Leopard Frogs last week.

Curry saw a European Common Blue feeding on Bird's Foot Trefoil.

Seymour has seen the European Common Blue feeding on plants behind the Jewish Community Centre at Spadina and Bloor.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on 15 October. Gartshore will speak on prairie habitat restoration in southern Ontario. Mary is the recognized expert in, and experienced with, reclaiming Ontario farmlands for establishment of prairie ecosystems. Specific title TBA.

The meeting was adjourned at 21:10 pm.