

THE BRODIE CLUB



ROYAL ONTARIO
MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY

THE 983rd MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

The 983rd meeting of The Brodie Club was held on March 16, 2004 in the Ramsay Wright Zoological Laboratories of the University of Toronto.

Chairman: George Bryant

Secretary: Oliver Bertin

There were 24 members and three guests.

Dominic Stones, guest of George Bryant

Kate Jackson, guest of Jim Rising

Kara Brodribb, guest of John Riley

A minute's silence was held for member Ann Fowle, who passed away on Feb. 28.

NEW BUSINESS:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published.

Ron Pittaway was welcomed as a member.

Several members did not receive their February minutes. Bertin has spare copies for anybody who wishes them.

Member Keith Reynolds is residing in Room GLSW 96 of the George Hees Wing of Sunnybrook Hospital on Bayview Ave., north of Eglinton. He is in good spirits, enjoys the minutes and would welcome visitors. He asked members to visit rather than telephone because he is hard of hearing.

Bruce Falls recently visited India with his wife Ann and Enid Machin. They met James Carrick, a corresponding member and son of late member Bill Carrick, who is currently First Secretary (Political Affairs) at the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi. Carrick will move to his new posting in Tehran in about six months. His e-mail address is james.carrick@dfait-maeci.gc.ca.

Bruce Falls said Trent University has published a book on bird remains found in archaeological sites. The book was written by Doug Sadler, based on the research of late member Howard Savage. Jean Iron has the contact information.

Club archivist Sandra Eadie has been sorting through the club archives. She has come across: minutes of meetings; club proceedings; lists of speakers; Jack Miner's pamphlets on hawks; a stack of letterhead paper; photographs of the 500th, 700th and 800th meetings; a video of the 900th meeting; copies of the club constitution; old membership cards; a club pennant; and a notice that two members were ousted, one for "deplorable behaviour."

Kevin Seymour said there are boxes of Brodie Club material in the Borden Building at UofT, including book plates and proceedings from 1939 to 1951. Eadie has picked them up from Pat Reed in anthropology, who has been sorting out Savage's materials. "I plan to bring a few sets for members who may like them. There are more than enough sets for everybody. The Brodie Club Library Book Plates are nice too, and I will bring them to the next meeting as well so everyone can have a few if they like," Eadie wrote.

The Royal Ontario Museum also has a large quantity of Brodie Club material. Eadie plans to sort through the material in a few weeks.

Glenn Coady said the Royal Ontario Museum may be moving its archives to a storage unit in Oakville. He suggested that members start a letter-writing campaign to persuade the ROM to keep the material in Toronto, where it is readily accessible.

Treasurer Aarne Juhola said the treasury is in good shape.

Jock McAndrews proposed that the May meeting be moved ahead one or two weeks to avoid a conflict with the Pt. Pelee bird migration in mid-May. The meeting would be moved to May 4 or May 11 from the currently scheduled May 18. After considerable discussion, the decision was deferred to the April meeting in order to confer with the scheduled speaker.

Bruce Falls said he has lined up several potential speakers for the rest of the season and the fall. Colin Jones will speak April 20 on Ontario dragonflies. Marianne Douglas will talk on Arctic limnology at the May meeting. The fall line-up includes John Casselman, a UofT graduate and fisheries biologist at the Glenora Research Station near Picton. Jim Bendell has suggested a speaker on wild turkeys. Seymour has proposed a speaker on the Burgess Shale. Dan Strickland will speak on Gray Jays. Ronald Brooks will speak on the conservation of reptiles.

Bryant said the Federation of Ontario Naturalists has changed its name to Ontario Nature. The association has acquired 66 acres of land near Newmarket through a bequest.

Ken Abraham said members may want to participate in the environmental assessment process for the Victor Diamond project. The DeBeers diamond company plans to build an open-pit mine next year in pristine, environmentally sensitive country near the Attawapiskat River in the Hudson Bay lowlands. Final Guidelines for the Conduct of a Comprehensive Study and Environmental Assessment were issued February 26. Contact Paul Schafer of CEAA (paul.schafer@ceaa.gc.ca) for a copy if desired. Comments should go to him. The 60-day comment period on the Comprehensive Study Environmental Assessment (CSEA) began Monday, March 15. The comprehensive study report documents are available at the following link: http://www.debeerscanada.com/files_2/victor_project/victor_ea-report-2004.html. Note that downloading will take a long time. It is 1,700 pages!

SPEAKER:

The scheduled speaker at the March meeting was Ronald Brooks, Professor of Zoology at the University of Guelph, who was due to speak on the conservation of reptiles. Unfortunately, Prof. Brooks was unable to attend the meeting due to a severe snow storm and howling winds in the Guelph area where he lives. He has agreed to

speak in the fall. Instead of a speaker, Jim Rising offered an excellent 50-minute video featuring the BBC's David Attenborough speaking on *The Life of Birds*.

OBSERVATIONS:

Bryant has just returned from Thailand where he observed thousands of butterflies and bats. The butterflies resembled North American Cabbage Whites which followed each other in a procession, spiralling up vertically. He saw thousands of bats fly out of a cave in a parade 10 feet wide that lasted for 10 minutes. He also saw huge monitor lizards and an eight-foot long reticulated python.

Abraham is collaborating with Justina Ray of the Wildlife Conservation Authority and an adjunct professor of wildlife ecology / research associate at UofT's Faculty of Forestry. Abraham's prime interest is the population cycles of caribou, but Ray is also working on the status of wolverines in northwestern Ontario. She has surveyed wolverines from Manitoba to the Winisk River and Fort Albany, and put radio-collars on three. Ray has concluded that there are far more wolverines than anybody ever imagined.

Hugh Currie spied a Barrow's Goldeneye in Hamilton harbour the day of the meeting. This species is usually found on the east and west coasts.

John Speakman recently visited Amherst Island, near Kingston. He saw lots of coyotes and Bald Eagles, but not one single owl. There was a thin crust of ice on the snow, which may have been a factor in the dearth of owls.

Falls and Machin saw a tiger on their recent visit to India.

Ron Scovell said he and his neighbours have persuaded the federal Food Inspection Agency to back off on threats to cut down the trees in his lot on the Humber River. Instead of cutting down the trees and then checking them for Asian Long-horned Beetles, they will now inspect the trees BEFORE cutting.

Abraham saw an early movement of Canada Geese while driving from Barrie to Peterborough recently.

Eadie said a friend saw a Rough-legged Hawk on Amherst Island.

McAndrews offered a poster that had been put together by his students. It showed the diet of the mastodons of 12,000 years ago, just after the Ice Age, and the role it may have had in the extinction of the species. The mastodon ate white spruce boughs, but those boughs bore little resemblance to the modern varieties. The seasons were very equable in that era, 12,000 years ago, as the ice cap was receding. The trees had limited tree rings, no resin ducts and limited defences against browsers. As the ice receded, the seasons became more distinct, as shown by the appearance of tree rings. The trees also developed resin ducts and presumably the foul-tasting resin that put off the mastodons. Under one theory, mastodons could no longer eat the white spruce and died out.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of The Brodie Club will be held at 7:30 pm on April 20 in Rm 432 at UofT's Ramsay Wright Zoological Laboratories. The next speaker will be Colin Jones of the Natural Heritage Information Centre in Peterborough, who will speak on Dragonflies in Ontario.

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