

These would be easily accessible to all banders at Backus House.
At present sad to say our library is not being utilized. Send your
opinions to any member of the executive.

Report on outing to McKeever's Owl Hospital, Vineland, on Sat. Sept. 14/74.

by David Broughton

Those unfortunates who didn't attend this outing missed a rare opportunity to study closely over seventy owls of about fifteen species and learn a great deal about them. The McKeever's are unusual people and their 1 1/2 acre home is certainly an unusual place. Their work is caring for and breeding owls over the past seven years. It has produced a unique collection of owls and memories.

Our visit started with a tour of the outside cages. One contained a pair of European Eagle Owls and their young. These are the largest owls in the world. There were several cages of snowy owls, each with their own unique facial expression. One looked cross, another dim-witted, while a little male looked very smug. He had reason to be - there was nothing wrong with him! He was the only owl to return to the Toronto Airport after being live trapped, banded and released. After going through this routine several times he was finally given to the McKeever's for a life of luxury in a cage with two females.

Other cages contained great horned, barred, long and short eared, boreal, saw-whet, screech, barn and several exotic owls. There was a beautiful spectacled owl from South America that had been rescued from the Bowmanville zoo. He gets moved inside when the weather gets colder.

Next on the agenda was the interior of the house. Every nook and cranny seemed to have an owl cage in it. One housed a great horned owl complete with a cast on his broken leg. Another a marsh hawk with a protruding steel pin, used to mend a broken wing. In another a kestrel was learning to fly again, while yet another held 3 tiny pygmy owls. Then we saw the supper that was about to be served. Rats and mice were on the menu for the evening, while chicks and beef heart muscle were stored in a freezer for future use. The medical centre included a well-stocked medicine chest and even a light for examining x-rays. All owls receive an x-ray by the vet on arrival and departure to give additional information on their health.

The reasons behind the owl hospital are sound - to return injured owls healthy to the wild and to attempt to breed the rarer owls that cannot be released. These objectives require a lot of money and a good deal of co-operation from fellow naturalists. I am requesting that you consider making a small contribution to help the McKeever's defray their expenses which are over a \$1,000.00 a year. As well, if you come across any sick or injured owls, particularly the rarer northern species, endeavour to get in touch with the McKeever's at R.R.1 Vineland (416-562-5986).

Banding recoveries - Herring Gull - banded by Michael Gilbertson near Toronto
05/31/73 (too young to fly) - recovered dead by
David Broughton on Toronto Island 09/02/73
band no. 616-36936.

Birds retrapped by John Miles near Wingham with foreign bands.

124-42811 - American Goldfinch AHY male on May 4/74 (originally banded by
A.L. Middleton near Guelph on Feb. 14/73)

124-36818 - Palm Warbler on May 6/74 (originally banded by M.J. Woolcott
May 5/73 at Mitchells Bay)

1320-02679 - chestnut-sided warbler AHY on May 17/74 (originally banded at
Mapleheights, Ohio on May 18/73)

Thanks for sending your banding recoveries in. We would be pleased
to receive more for publication.

PLAN TO ATTEND OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS - It is a good opportunity to meet
your fellow banders.