

1. Introduction

- The Schreiber Wood Project (SWP) is a field school that has been running on the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) campus for 12 years.
- Archaeological excavations have occurred at two archaeological sites on campus associated with the Schreiber family: AjGw-534 and AjGw-535.
- The Schreiber's lived on the property between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Both archaeological sites have produced faunal assemblages dominated by modern domestic animals. Among these are two collections of small wild species. Classes found in these assemblages include mammal (65.21%), bird (0.86%), fish (0.86%), and amphibian (8.69%) (Table 1).

2. Zooarchaeological Analysis

- The small animal assemblages were found in the foundation of a barn (AjGw-534), and in a unit surrounding a structural footing on a small out-building (AjGw-535).
- Taphonomic analysis was undertaken identifying likely predator punctures and pits on four specimens (Figures 1-2).
- My research has identified that domestic cats (*Felis catus*) were responsible for the two assemblages of small fauna that were discovered.
- Domestic cat remains have been found on both AjGw-534 and AjGw-545 (Figure 3).
- Charlotte Schreiber who lived on the property and is a renowned painter, is known to have used domestic cats as subject matter for her paintings.

Table 1: Small faunal assemblages at AjGw-534 and AjGw-535.

| Taxon | Common name | AjGw-534 | AjGw-535 | Total |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Actinopterygii | Fish | | 56 | 56 |
| Centrarchidae | Sunfish | | 8 | 8 |
| Actinopterygii | Ray-finned fishes | | 48 | 48 |
| Amphibia | Amphibians | 20 | | 20 |
| Anura | Frogs | 14 | | 14 |
| Ranidae | True frogs | 1 | | 1 |
| <i>A. americanus</i> | American toad | 5 | | 5 |
| Aves | Birds | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Aves | Birds | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Mammalia | Mammals | 34 | 116 | 150 |
| Leporidae | Rabbits and hares | 3 | 92 | 95 |
| <i>Lepus sp.</i> | Hares and jackrabbits | | 1 | 1 |
| <i>S. floridanus</i> | Eastern cottontail | | 1 | 1 |
| Cricetidae | New world mice | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| <i>Microtus sp.</i> | Meadow voles | 14 | | 14 |
| Sociidae | Shrews | 3 | | 3 |
| Talpidae | Moles | 1 | | 1 |
| Small mammal | Mouse-rabbit size | 6 | 21 | 27 |
| Mammalia | Mammals | 1 | | 1 |
| Indeterminate | | 2 | | 2 |
| Total | | 57 | 173 | 230 |



Figure 1: Leporid right ilium with likely predator damage.

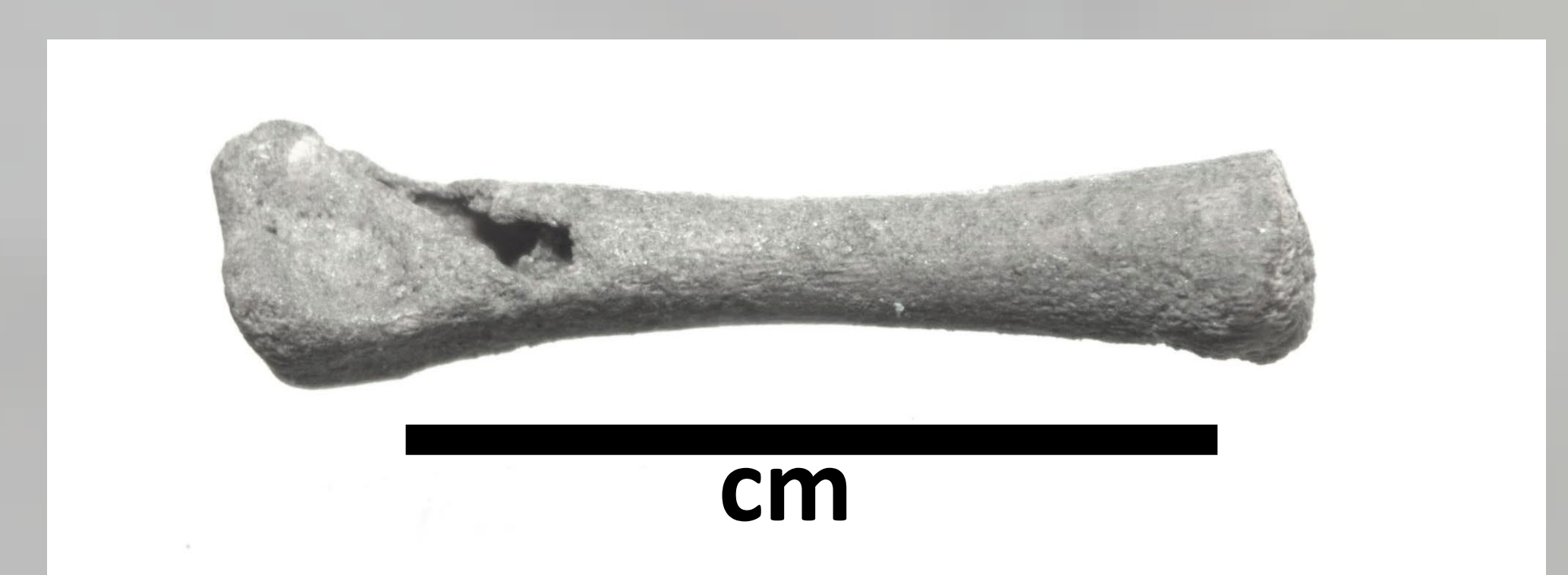


Figure 2: Small mammal metapodial with likely predator damage.



Figure 3: *Felis catus* remains identified from SWP.

3. Animal Technologies and the role of Cats

- Animal technologies are defined as animals that were valued for practical tasks they performed, rather than simply being kept as pets (Mukharji, 2017).
- Other examples of animal technologies are horses being used to plow fields, and dogs bred for hunting or retrieving game (Mukharji, 2017).
- Animal technologies have been under-studied; for example, the use of domestic cats has been overlooked in regards to pest control and as agents of public health (Mukharji, 2017).
- In the early 20th century, reports from Buchanan (1908) were published discussing the use of domestic cats as the primary solution to control the plague by hunting rats.
- "Cats were often underfed on the assumption that they would catch their own food... The idea that cats had simply a use value rather than a place in the family's affections led to their continuing ill treatment." (Kean, 1998, p. 163).
- Unfortunately, the use of cats in pest control has an unintended impact on other fauna because they do not only target pests (Mella-Méndez et al., 2022). This explains the small animal assemblages recovered from the SWP sites.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

- Given the historical context described in section 3, it is possible the Schreibers had cats on their homestead in the late 1800s into the early 1900s as animal technologies on their farm, rather than as pets.
- The Schreiber cats may have been used for pest control, based on reports published around that time (Buchanan, 1908).
- I theorize that the Schreibers may have been using domestic cats as an animal technology to stifle the spread of diseases (e.g., plague, murine typhus) in addition to pest control.
- A potential limitation includes the use of 3mm screen during excavations, through which small faunal remains, the focus of this research, may have been lost. Consequently, some very small species may not be represented, and skeletal representation may be skewed.

Figure 1 and 2 were taken using a Nikon SMZ745T microscope at 0.67 magnification with a zoom ratio of 7.5. Figure 3 was taken with Nikon D3300 DSLR

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