

**MINUTES OF THE 884TH MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB  
MARCH 16,1993**

**Chairman: Frank de Matteis**

**Secretary: Bruce Falls**

There were 20 members present and seven guests: Maudie Reynolds guest of Keith Reynolds, Yvonne Bendell guest of Bendell, Jennifer Young guest of Young, Stephen McQuaid guest of Carrick, Adrian and Jeffrey Bertin guests of Bertin, and Mary Tasker guest of Tasker.

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

Dave Fowle read a statement describing the life and work of Dr. Jack Satterly who had been a member of the Brodie Club and who died on March 1, 1993. Dr. Satterly had been with the Ontario Geological Survey until he retired in 1971. He was an associate of the Department of Mineralogy at the Royal Ontario Museum and had catalogued the collection. He received a Centennial Medal in 1967 and a laboratory named in his honour was opened at the museum in 1977. Dr. Satterly had also been a keen ornithologist.

The full text was placed in the minute book, The club observed a minute of silence in memory of Dr. Satterly.

There was no club business.

**Speaker:** The speaker of the evening was member Jim Bendell whose title was Grouse, Hares and Elephants.

Dr. Bendell described some of the results of his recent research and that of his students on populations of varying hare, spruce and ruffed grouse at his study area in the southern boreal forest near Gogama, Ontario. He showed slides of his cabin, the species studied and several forest habitats. Lowland sites consisted of a sand plain derived from an old lake bottom and were characterised as the heartland of jack pine. Uplands were covered with mixed forest of fir, spruce, pine, aspen and birch. The forests of the area are managed and the grouse are hunted. Several study plots had been established representing forests of different age and composition. Grouse were censused using dogs, and quadrat counts of hare droppings were also carried out. These methods were supplemented by checks of hunters bags in the fall to get sex and age data on grouse and also by counts of hare tracks in winter.

The speaker illustrated different stages in the development of jack pine stands

following logging and burning. Young pine grew quickly on the burns. At first there were no grouse or hares. As the trees and shrubs developed cover, hare increased rapidly, followed by spruce grouse. Medium aged pine stands were described as spruce grouse and hare "heaven", since both species were very abundant. However, as the stands aged both species gradually declined with numbers remaining low but stable in pine stands 40-50 years old. Mixed forests did not show such dramatic changes. Ruffed grouse were mainly in these forests. Hare were at levels similar to those in aging pine stands. Data from hunters indicated that ruffed grouse fluctuated more than spruce grouse but there was no evidence of cycles in either grouse or hare. Over the years there was no association between the numbers of the two grouse species or between spruce grouse and hare. Ruffed grouse and hare populations seemed to go in opposite directions. The speaker could find little evidence to support population control by predation or overall food shortages. However, changes in cover and abundance of specific food items might explain changes in numbers as the forest aged. Cool weather last summer had not affected grouse productivity.

At this point there was a change of scene to southern India where the Bendells had visited the Perigar tiger reserve in the state of Kerala. Their host, Professor Zacharias, had earlier visited the Gogama study area and had invited our speaker to give some lectures on wildlife biology to his students at Calacutt University. Besides tigers, the reserve contained elephants and other large mammals which Professor Zacharias was studying. The speaker's slides illustrated the savanna-like reserve and its elephants. Vegetation was limited by availability of water and Dr. Bendell suggested irrigation to improve the food supply. Problems of interaction of elephants with people were discussed; these included both poaching and damage by elephants that left the reserve. Deep trenches were used to protect important installations. No tigers had been seen but tracks and droppings were much in evidence - there were 40-50 tigers in the 800-square kilometer reserve. Many of the problems concerned how to study wildlife with limited resources and the speaker had made a number of suggestions.

The Bendells found the local culture very interesting. The diet was mainly vegetarian. People were poor by Canadian standards but all seemed to be employed in a variety of ways. Through anecdotes and slides the speaker gave us a glimpse of many aspects of life in south India. The way of life seemed sustainable over the short term but he saw no evidence of efforts to

control population growth.

**Questions** concerned the edibility of spruce grouse (the speaker thought they were palatable), the impact of tigers and elephants, and the apparent absence of a hare population cycle at Gogama. The speaker was impressed by the rich avifauna of India, including spectacular concentrations of waterfowl. However the habitat was greatly altered.

Applause indicated the club's appreciation for a most interesting presentation.

**Members Notes and Observations:**

Fowle showed an English stamp illustrating a swan.

Young often observed two red foxes behind his house. He also displayed a book about Joseph Banks the botanist.

Bendell had seen overwintering grackles at Gogama and still had Carolina wrens and a thrasher in his garden in Mississauga. The level of Lake Ontario was higher than in recent years.

Reynolds described a proposal to extract sand from an inactive deposit in Lake Ontario 2 - 4 km off Scarborough on an old shoreline now inundated. Reports indicated that the operation would not affect present shoreline processes. This source could replace extraction from sites north and west of the city.

Boissoneau described an encounter involving a goshawk, a starling and a cat. The starling came off best.

Savage showed Tovell's recent book on the Geology of the Niagara Escarpment. There was some speculation concerning 'Ontario Island', an area of high elevation in southwestern Ontario where archaeological sites were lacking.

Speakman had returned from a three-week holiday in New Zealand. He had seen kiwi in Stewart Island under a night light. He mentioned a number of conservation problems in New Zealand.

Aird reported that Larry Walkinshaw, who had studied cranes and Kirtland's warbler had died in January.

Reading had turned over his notes on a curlew sighting in the Northwest Territories to Bodsworth.

Lumsden reported two pileated woodpeckers at his place in Aurora. A fox had created problems for his waterfowl.

The meeting adjourned at 10.40 pm.