

C.S.

INDUSTRIES

(Tussac)

1923

No. 570/23

C. S. O.

SUBJECT.

192 3

9th August

Previous Paper.

TUSSAC ISLANDS (Port William)

Damage to Tussac Grass by Sea Lions.

199/22, 116/21, 663/19

MINUTES.

Letter from Tussac Butlers of 9th August 1923 — Encl ①

J.E.

What is evidently asked for is permission to exterminate the seal. The hunters visited the island in accordance with the temporary permission recently given by Your Excellency - that permission has now expired. None of them are licensed to cut tussac.

2. Apart from that, the report seems to have been made with the best intentions. It is useful as showing that the scarring of seal from one island may result in damage to another. Might the Govt Naturalists be asked what steps he would advise to be taken for the preservation of the tussac? J.E.

Subsequent Paper.

Di/Sec
10 Aug 1923

D.I. / Sec

Please acknowledge the letter and say that the matter is receiving early attention.

It seems to me that Mr. Hamilton should seriously consider the whole position and the advisability of enabling all land owners and others to kill ^{or drive off} sea lions on tussock islands without restriction. No one would kill a sea lion on his property willingly; when restricted permission is given the minimum number are killed.

In the mean time the Government ^{should} ~~has~~ in my present opinion take immediate measures to drive the seals off the tussock islands near and around the harbour; they ^{islands} ~~from~~ afford the chief food supply for Stanley.

11 Aug. '23
Letter to Mr. J. H. Williams 13 Aug. 1923

Government Naturalist

Recording Secy

M. H. 13

Dir Sec

13 Aug 1923

(1)

Hon. Col. Sec.

I wish to raise no objection to any steps which may be necessary to drive off sea lions from the two tussock islands in Port William or from Cockon or Kidney Islands.

2. With reference to His Excellency's suggestion that all landowners or lessees should have unrestricted permission to remove the seal from their islands, may I transmit my opinion in a day or two when I have considered the matter?

J. H. Hamilton.

Govt. Naturalist

14/8/23

J. H. Hamilton
Submitted
G. H. B.
Dir Sec
24 Aug 1923

~~Refer to various previous reports~~

~~Atttt signed~~

The Govt. Naturalist to be asked to devise early measures for driving the sea lions off the Govt. tussock islands. It is no business of the Licence to protect Govt. property.

~~Atttt~~ 27 Aug. 23

Govt Naturalist.

Referred.

W. H. B.

Di/Sec

27 Aug 1923

Hon. Col. Sec.

I would submit that it will be necessary to shoot the seal, or at any rate as many as possible on these islands.

2. In case the fluids from the decaying carcasses may injure the tussac it will be advisable to do as much killing as possible on the beach.

3. The thick hide of the sea-lion usually prevents scavenging birds from disposing rapidly of the carcass, which, if intact, takes many months to decay. In order therefore that the birds may clean up the carcasses quickly the dead seal should be partly skinned, i.e. the flesh exposed on one side, or if time does not permit of this the carcasses should be cut open.

4. As to the weapons to be used, I am informed that a sea-lion is easily killed with a .22 rifle: ammunition of this calibre may be obtained locally and is inexpensive.

May I be informed as to the Head under which the cost of ammunition will be defrayed. (? XIV, Stock

6. Incidental Expenses)

6. Incidental Expenses).

5. Will G. L. Penguin be available for his work please?

J. L. Hamilton.
Govt. Naturalist.

28/8/23

Note. I expect to submit the memorandum mentioned in par. 2. of my minute of the 14th Aug, tomorrow. J. L. Hamilton.

J. L.

Submitted.

Mr Hamilton to personally undertake this work or, if his time does not permit - Mr Bennett?

XIV Stock, 6 Incidental Expenses. would seem the proper vote against which cost of ammunition should be charged. G. L. H. 13

O. C. Sec

29 Aug 1923

I shall be glad if Mr. Hamilton will undertake the

carrying out of this work by
his department at as early a
date as he can make convenient.

The relations are also to be
driven off the Volunteer Rocks

The cost of ammunition to
be charged as suggested

~~ttttt~~ 30 August '23

Government Naturalist.

To note

CR 17

Di'c'f'ec

30 Aug 1923

Hon. Col. Sec.

Noted please.

J. Hamilton

Govt. Naturalist.

25/8/23.

My further observations herewith
please (vide note to minute of me 25/8/23)

J. Hamilton

Encl (3)

Harbour Master

Will you please arrange
to place the 'Penguin' at the
disposal of Mr Hamilton on the
first convenient day

CR 17

Di'c'f'ec

30 Aug 1923

The Hon. Secy. Secretary.

I have communicated with the
Govt. Naturalist.

2. G. L. Penguin has been placed
at his disposal as convenient to him.

Colin Eidsvold.
Humboldt Bay
21. Aug 43.

Y.E.

Mr. Hamilton's report (Encl 3)
submitted.

It was not Your Excellency's intention,
I think to suggest any amendment to
the Seal Fishery Ordinance so as to
dispense with the necessity of a licence
or permit. I take it Your Excellency
had in view the issue of permits
unrestricted in so far as the necessity
for annual renewal was concerned.
and applicable only to certain
specified areas. In other words, that
the persons applying might be
granted general permits to protect
their tussac reserves from destruction
by seal sea lions.

2. If the permits limited interference
with the seal sea lions to the localities
(expressly named) from which fodder
was usually obtained, it is difficult
to see what harm would be done. The
number of such places is as pointed
out comparatively small. The

~~the~~ isolated haunts of the animal would be left undisturbed. This in itself would seem to be sufficient safeguard against extermination.

3. An adequate supply of tussac easily obtainable from the settlements is an important consideration from the farm manager's point of view and in some cases considerable pains are taken to protect the growth. I put forward ~~for~~^{as} a suggestion, that it would be in the interests of owners if such islands and localities which are not used as sources of fodder for domestic animals not for grazing (and which I presume are remote) were with the consent of the owners made Seal Reserves.

4. It is not unlikely that a great deal of killing is done at present without permission of any kind and, as in the case instanced by Mr Hamilton, that a great deal of unnecessary killing takes place in spite of the conditions of the usual permit issued. It would

There are too many in the post to make out a list.

I do not think so unless you have further information.

be most useful in considering future applications for permits of the particular case referred to were put on record. It should not, I think be allowed to pass unnoted. The penalty under the Ordinance is £100.

G.H.B.
Dir. Sec.
31 Aug 1923

I agree
with justification.

I take a more utilitarian view than the Government Naturalist. Nor do I think that any driving off ^{or killing them} of kessac islands will result in making any serious or appreciable inroads in the numbers of animals of this species, the sole apparent present value of which is for scientific study which the Naturalists Department has no means to make.

2. I am not at present aware of ~~these~~ accessible kessac islands which are not of value for stock purposes and so utilized but the G. N. says there are a great many.

3. As the G. N. is presumably referring to the camp population in paragraph 4 and the difficulty of persuading the people even to shoot ^{for purpose} ~~them~~ is so great I do not share his apprehensions.

4. Then ask the G. N. to report any cases which have come to his notice of surreptitious seal shooting.

This is the only place within my knowledge where farmers would allow their pasture & fodder to be damaged with such faint protest.

5. I cannot conceive of any farmer preferring to pound up and kill off rather than to drive away if the latter were effectual. There is every objection to killing on the spot. A dead sea lion is if possible more objectionable than a live one. When driven away they go to another terrace is land if they do not return.

6. It is because I attach so much weight to the views of the Government Naturalist in a matter of this kind that I have given at length the view taken by the lay observer. I shall therefore be glad if he will consider the economic aspect further.

ttttt 2 Sept. '23
Government Naturalist.

To you
GRB
Di'csee
3 Sept 1923

Hon. Col. Sec

With reference to the economic aspect of this question I have the honour to make the following statement of the position.

On ground which is used for grazing or as a source of fodder for domestic animals the presence of sea lions is deleterious, and therefore the seal should be removed.

2. I consider that the most efficient and easiest method of effecting this is the killing of the seal.

It therefore follows that permits which do not allow unrestricted killing may in part neutralize the expected benefits to be derived from them.

Such permits as are issued should therefore be without restriction as to the method by which seal may be removed from areas specified.

3. I would submit, however, that if a general permit is issued it should be for not more than 12 months and only for such places as are in use as grazing areas or as sources of fodder for domestic animals.

4. The pupping season is about the end of the year. I would suggest that our management should provide the period from the middle of December to the end of February, during which the seal should be removed from

The sort of thing that
could only happen in
the neighbourhood of
Shelly about once a
year.

5. With reference to H.E's minute
of the 2nd September, para. 4, I
try to state that a lion was ^{found}
dead at Watt Cove with a bullet ^{wound} in
its head and I found a lion
Leopard which had been killed
with a shot-gun near Hooker's
Point in the winter of 1922.

J. H. Harrison

Govt. Naturalist

6/9/23

Report by Govt. Naturalist of 14 Sept 1923 - Encl (4)

J. E.

Submitted

W. H. B.

Di. Sec.

8 Sept 1923

I am obliged for the very
disagreeable work which has been
carried out by the Government
Naturalist effectively. It would
be as well for me further killing to
take place.

I will let the question of general
unrestricted permits stand as for
the time.

10 Sept. 23

Government Naturalist.

Sample

G.R. 13

DiC/Sec

10 Sept 1923

Hon. Col. Sec.

Noted please.

2. May I express my
appreciation of H. G.'s last minute.

J. B. Hamilton
Govt. Naturalist

11/9/23

1012

Sturdy August 9th 1923

Sir

We the undersigned beg to put before His Excellency. That owing to the destruction done by the Seal Lions on the Islands in Port William. It is almost impossible to obtain Tussac of these Islands. We the undersigned all went on shore on August 7th to obtain Tussac on the lower island in Port William and came away without any as the Tussac on this Island is completely flattened down with Seals. And we also wish to state that owing to the damage done by the Seals it is impossible to cut the Tussac which is set forth for us to do in the government notice of March 1st 1922 under the condition of Rule (2) if there is not some immediate steps taken to do away with the Seals on both of the Islands in Port William all the Tussac will be destroyed as it is no use for fodder for animals after the Seals as been over it.

Trusting that His Excellency will give our application favourable consideration.

We remain your obedient servants

John Henry Williams

John Davis

Tom Miller

Robert Hutchinson

William J. Hutchinson

L. A. Seagwick

W. H. Seagwick

J. D. McCallum

The Hon Colonial Secretary

Sturdy

570/23.

15th August,

23.

Sir,

I am directed by the Acting Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant reporting the destruction by Sea-lions to the tussac islands in Port William, and to inform you that the matter will receive early attention.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. R. L. Brown,

for Colonial Secretary.

Mr. J. H. Williams, Jnr.,

Stanley.

570/23.

3

To The Honourable

Colonial Secretary.

With reference to the latter part of my minute of the 26th. August, I would beg to submit that, on both scientific and humanitarian grounds no change be made in the present system of restricted permits for the removal of Sea Lions from tussac islands.

2. The local species (*Otaria jubata*) is confined to the coasts of southern South America and the Falkland Islands ^{the} ~~which~~ ^{latter} are therefore the only British possession where this form occurs. Further, it is the only large mammal which is at all common in the colony and little is known of its structure and life history.

3. Except at a comparatively small number of places the animal is quite harmless, its principal haunts being tussac islands, of which there are a great many not used as sources of fodder for domestic animals nor for grazing.

I think not.
4. There is unfortunately an idea prevalent that killing anything with firearms is sport, and I would suggest that there is a serious risk of a general permit being translated as licence to shoot on sight, with the result that a considerable amount of unnecessary slaughter would take place.

There is a certain amount of surreptitious seal shooting carried on at present, and any increase is undesirable

5. In one case where a permit for a particular island was granted I regret to state that the description of the proceedings presented more the picture of a round up and killing off than of any attempt to spare the animals.

J. E. Hamilton

(J. E. Hamilton.)

Government Naturalist.

30/8/23.


M.P. 570/23.

1211

To The Honourable Colonial
Secretary.

4th. September, 1923.

With reference to the destruction of Sea Lions on the Tussac Islands in Port William, I have the honour to state that I proceeded to the islands on the 3rd. of September, leaving Stanley at 1 20 p.m. and returning at 5 30.

2. During the period a landing was effected on the eastern island and a fair number of seal found. A drive was made over the whole ground and about 60 seal killed, but a number at least as great escaped into the water.

3. The tussac on this island has been considerably damaged, many of the bogs being flattened and the lateral growth is less luxuriant than it should be.

4. A number of persons were cutting tussac on the western island, it was considered that their presence would have scared away any seal from that island and that a landing would therefore be useless, moreover the eastern island has sustained a great deal more damage. I have been informed that after the killing began on the eastern island some of the seal came over to the western, a contingency which should be provided for on another occasion.

5. With careful aim the 22" Long Rifle cartridges
supplied

supplied by the Falkland Islands Company proved effective.

It is necessary to place the bullet in the middle line of the back of the head, or a little above the ear in a side shot; with large males no other shot should be attempted, but with the smaller seal one in the middle line from the front and entering the base of the skull between the jaws is effective.

6. Weather permitting I hope to visit the islands again in a few days.

7. It may be of interest to record the presence of four small Elephant seal on the eastern island.

J. E. Hamilton

(J. E. Hamilton.)

Government Naturalist.

4th. September 1923.