

SECRETARIAT

(Formerly)

D / 1 / 61	D / 1 / 61

PRECIS OF RECENT HISTORY OF SEALING.

CONNECTED FILES.

NUMBER

15/30

0958/A

Reports submitted by Jk Hamilton, Govt. Naturalist
for Seal - Rehabilitation of

Precis of the history of sealing in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia in recent years

There are rather a large number of files dealing with this subject though boiled down they do not amount to very much. It is thought convenient now that the question of sealing in the Falklands and South Georgia is again receiving attention to start a fresh file and to summarise what has happened up till now.

Falklands. A licence was given to the South Atlantic Sealing Company for fifteen years from 1st April, 1950, For 2,000 elephant seal
9,000 sea lions
per season. (The number could be reviewed annually by the Governor and was subsequently altered to 1,000 elephants and 15,000 sea lions).

An application was made at the same time for a licence to take fur seal and it was eventually recommended to the Secretary of State by the Governor on 7th April, 1951 that 1,500 fur seals should be included in the licence but this was turned down, but it may be noted that a draft form of licence was drawn up.

Application was also made for lease of 100 acres at Albemarle for 21 years, And on the 28th February, 1951 it was realised that this lease had never been signed and it was then signed.

On 4th June, 1951, as stated above, the quota was altered to
Elephants 1,000
Lions 15,000

In November, 1951 the work of the company was suspended. On 13th September, 1952 the Secretary of State told us that the Company had decided to wind up the undertaking as there seemed no reasonable prospect of making it pay. Just at this time a draft new licence was proposed.

South Georgia. The sealing licence has been issued to Pesca and is now transferred to Albion Star and allows 6,000 elephant seals.

A question whether the fur seal industry can be started is under investigation.

Proposals for Joint Licences for the Falklands and South Georgia.

In November 1957 Mr. Pierce-Butler put in a proposal to establish a sealing and fishing company in the Falkland Islands and Dependencies the features were as follows -

1. Sealing industry to include Falkland Islands and South Georgia
2. Factory ship to operate with cargo carrying capacity of 6,000 tons.
3. Whole carcase is to be utilised.
4. To produce seal oil and mixed meat and bone meal.
5. Also to catch fish.

It was hoped that it would be possible to call for tenders to enable a decision to be made in respect of the 1959 season.

At this stage Salvesson also expressed an interest in sealing but the file has been burnt (referred to at 12). We placed the matter before the Secretary of State and he replied giving the following conclusions -

1. The licence for the Colony and South Georgia on a long term and open tender was approved.

2. In view of the lack of up to date logistical survey in the Colony the number of elephants to be taken should be restricted and the licensee should be obliged to carry a biologist on the factory ship as sealing inspector.
3. No elephant sealing in any Dependency other than South Georgia.
4. Foreign Office deprecate too strong a line being taken at that moment with Pesca in view of the International Negotiations pending (n.b. the international aspect of this question was always considered in view of the fact that Pesca was an Argentine company but now it does not arise since their rights have been taken over by the British Company Albion Star).

On the 22nd ^{August} ~~September~~ 1958 it was hoped that it would be possible to offer the licence for the 1960 season. On 15th January 1959 we were informed that it had not been possible to collect sufficient capital to float the scheme. (The file then deteriorated into the question of payment of the charges for chartering the Philomel which was incidentally referred to in the last Audit report.)

Sealing other Dependencies. For completeness it may be mentioned

that the South Atlantic Sealing Co were also given in 1950

a licence for the South Orkneys. They never used it & in the

RHDM/IM. had surrendered it. See also 3 above. Other Dependencies excluded

from previous permit licence at any rate as regards elephants

Summary of any investigations that have been made and any results of such investigations that have been achieved in regard to questions relevant to the subject of sealing in South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

The following appear to be the relevant questions.

1. The exploitation of elephant seals in South Georgia.
2. The proposed exploitation of fur seals in South Georgia.
3. Elephant seal in the Falkland Islands.
4. Sea lions in the Falkland Islands.
5. Proposed exploitation of fur seal in the Falkland Islands.
6. Whole carcase utilisation.

1. The Exploitation of Elephant Seals in South Georgia.

A licence is at present given for killing 6,000. The latest report we have on the subject is that of Mr. Bonner for season 1959. From this it appears that in that season the full quota was taken in two of the divisions but less than the full quota in the third. There is no suggestions that the quota should be altered.

2. The proposed exploitation of the fur seal in South Georgia.

The last report of Bonner is at 120 of D/2/57/II and page 9 suggests that a kill of 1, 650 yearlings would be justified 'if the herd remains at its present level or continues to increase'. He also says that there would seem to be no reason on biological grounds why a pilot scheme with provisional quota of say 200 animals should not be licenced to enable an interested firm to study fur sealing techniques or investigate the marketing of the skins.

The report is described as an interim report and investigations are of course proceeding.

3. Elephant seals in the Falkland Islands.

In 1950 a licence was given for 2,000 elephant seals. Mr. Laws wrote a report of 2/3/51 in which he says that though reliable figures are not at present available "probably less than 1,000 elephant seal pups are born in the Islands each year. The total number hauling out in the course of the year is probably not more than 14,000 of which the majority are from South Georgia". (This is expanded in an article by him in 'Oryx'. "At the Falkland Islands there are possibly about 1,000 pups born annually representing a breeding population of about 2,600 and a summer influx of about 11,000 animals believed to come from South Georgia). He therefore recommended the revision of the licence so that instead of allowing the taking of 2,000 bulls it should allow the taking of 1,000 only. This was approved. I do not think we have any data to justify reconsidering this quota.

4. Sea lions in the Falkland Islands

On 1st April 1950 the licence to South Atlantic Sealing Company included 9,000 sea lions. In the report just quoted Laws deals with this question. He says that a figure of about 380,000 had been given in 1937 by Hamilton but he thought there were more and recommended an increase to 14,000. It was increased to 15,000. We have no statistics to warrant an increase and further investigations into the subject, unless done in the course of investigations regarding other species, would probably not be worth while because of the low yield of oil.

D/2/57/II
106

120

0958/A
22

0958/A page 21

4

5. Fur seals in the Falklands.

0958/A 21

36
40

In the same report that has been referred to in connection with elephant seals and sea lions, Laws estimated the number of fur seals at 22,000 and suggested that not more than 1,800 could be taken annually (to be divided proportionately among the rookeries). Restrictions as regards size are suggested. His suggestion was taken up by Government and put to the Secretary of State who turned it down at any rate for 5 years from that date (14/5/51). His advisers (Drs. Mackintosh and Bertram) said that detailed study of the population should be started at once and that exploitation should start as soon as it could be demonstrated that the population was in process of rapid growth. They added that there was ample justification for considerable expenditure at that time during the years of population growth.

59
60
86

The Executive Council decision on 26/5/54 was that 'at the first convenient opportunity Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey biologist should be asked to carry out a preliminary survey, and the name of Mr. Stonehouse was mentioned.' This was assented to at a joint meeting of Executive and Legislative Council. Nothing materialised for some time but at 36 is an extract from a letter by Mr. F. O'Gorman. I quote a sentence -

'If in the future, exploitation of this herd is contemplated and a study is initiated (which would of course be vitally necessary, both economically and biologically) I hope that I will be given the opportunity to apply to carry it out'.

He also referred to a proposal to collect a number of embryos and H.E.'s Minute is at 89.

425/1/60

113

The latest on this subject is O'Gorman's letter in which he expressed a hope (vain as it turned out) that he would be able to forward his report by the next mail.

114

Finally Mr. Strange of the Mink Farm has shown himself interested and has made an unsuccessful attempt to land on Volunteer Rocks and would be keen to make further attempts.

6. Whole Carcase Utilisation.

It has apparently been agreed all along that whole carcase utilisation if it is to be practised will require a floating factory but the emphasis is different in Bonner's two reports.

On 12/11/57 he writes -

D/3/57
10

'It has been agreed that licencing of the elephant seal industry shall be dependant on utilisation of the entire carcase of all the seals killed and that the only way of dealing with the catch under these terms is to employ a mobile floating factory so that the transport of the carcase shall be kept to a minimum.

D/2/57/II
106

On 4/2/60 in the Report on the Sealing Industry at South Georgia Season 1959 he says -

Page 5

'There is no economic future in whole carcase utilisation from shore stations and the capital expenditure in equipping a floating factory would be great'.

6
Y.E.

Several questions regarding sealing have come up recently and for my own sake I have made two précis on the questions. One which one might call a historical précis and the other the biological one. I am sorry that I have taken so long over this matter and no doubt most of what I have put down is already known to Y.E. but it seems desirable to have the information which now is scattered over so many files put together.

There are really three outstanding questions which require action

1. 7 in D/3/60/B. We spoke to Mr. Clark and I explained to him that we could not give any answer for some time and I think he appreciated this fact but it is desirable that we should send him an answer now.
2. 135 in D/6/58. Y.E.'s minute is at 150. Although one of the files referred to on this subject has been lost the matter is mentioned in D/5/59 as mentioned in my précis. It does not seem to be correct that any firm offer has been made. 3. The question of fur sealing in South Georgia is also relevant to the question of Bonner's successor *P 808* since the question of who should succeed him depends partly on whether fur sealing is to be started. The following questions arise:

1. Are we going to proceed with the proposal to offer a joint licence for the Falklands and South Georgia? It may be observed that on paper there is no definite reason why this should have been dropped. The idea was that it should have been competitive and the fact that one of the competitors dropped out was not actually a reason why the whole proposal should have been dropped. I do not know however whether Salvesen would in fact have taken up such a licence.
2. Since however the matter has been in abeyance for so long it would seem rather pointless to bring it up at this stage without coming to a decision on the question of fur sealing. 3. Furthermore we must decide whether we are still going to stick to whole carcass utilisation. As regards fur sealing in the Falklands it certainly seems as though ~~in this location~~ *investigation* it ought to be pressed on with. But we are at present waiting for O'Gorman's report which was promised a few mails ago and has still not arrived. I am afraid I do not think that O'Gorman's report will answer all our questions but it may give us some hints as to what will be the next step.

*A in which
of sealing for a?*

The next question is as regards fur sealing in South Georgia. It appears that investigations have almost reached the stage at which fur sealing might start but we should presumably get the latest views of Bonner and the Administrative Officer on this subject. I think we should also get the views of Bonner and the Administrative Officer as to whether we should insist on whole carcass utilisation. As regards the question of increasing the quota for elephant seals in the Falklands and South Georgia and sea lions in the Falklands: We do not seem to have any data for increasing these but again we might ask South Georgia whether they consider the numbers need revision. As regards the numbers in the Falklands it will be observed that the proposal for a joint licence was that the number of elephants should be restricted and that the licensee should be obliged to carry a Biologist on the factory ship as Sealing Inspector. Presumably we would not have allowed more than the thousand allowed in the previous licence unless and until the inspector recommended an increase. What I should now suggest would be

1. Make further attempts by telegram to get O'Gorman's report.
2. Inform the Administrative Officer in reply to 145 in D/6/58 that there had been a proposal to call for tenders for a joint licence for the Falklands and South Georgia but that the matter has not been proceeded with since the party most interested gave up the project there

appears/...

6-

appears to be no reason why the proposal should not be proceeded with if anyone is anxious to tender for it.

We could I think give the Administrative Officer the terms of the previous proposal. We might then add that the question of whether fur seals also should be allowed in the licence might first be decided. We can refer to the portion of Bonner's report in which he suggested a pilot scheme and ask what the Administrative Officer's present advice would be on the subject. We could also refer to the two somewhat conflicting reports on whole carcass utilisation and ask whether Administrative Officer would recommend that it should be insisted on. We could also in reply to the question about Bonner's successor in 1908 refer to this letter and say we await his recommendation. As regards Albion Stars queries at 7 of D/3/60/E. We could reply that there is no likelihood of the quota in the Falklands being increased at present; there is a possibility of the exploitation of the fur seal being allowed in the future but there is at present insufficient data on this subject.

We are not at present in a position to increase the numbers allowed in the South Georgia licence but the matter will be further investigated.

We could then tell him that there was now in fact a proposal to call for tenders for a joint licence for sealing in South Georgia and the Falklands operating with a factory ship and using the whole carcass and ask if he would be interested should his proposal be brought up again.

~
4/3/61

RHDV/LH
3rd March, 1961.

Thank you for your interesting precis on sealing.

2 Before dealing in detail with the various points raised, I think we must give very careful consideration to policy. The present position is that Pesca, now Albion Star, have held the licence at South Georgia for very many years. Their employees know the beaches, and the many navigational hazards that are encountered in reaching them. Our sole justification in taking away the licence from Pesca and putting it out to tender, would be that we have decided that whole carcass utilization is essential, and that we also wish to issue a joint licence for South Georgia and the Falklands, but, as I pointed out in my minute at 151 in D/6/58, I fear that although one regards with distaste what appears to be so much wastage, it is by no means certain that the utilization of these carcasses will produce substantially more oil, and even should they do so, it may be that the oil will be of an inferior grade.

3 If we were to take the licence away from Pesca, Salv&sens, with their shipping resources, might the more easily be able to provide something in the nature of a floating factory, but I regard Salv&sens in South Georgia as a most uncertain quantity. Every year he threatens that he will not continue in the following one, and I cannot believe that if he were to abandon his whaling station, he would continue sealing. As far as Albion Star is concerned, it may be that in some years their sealing venture means the difference between a profit and a loss. Unlike Salv&sens, Albion Star is concerned solely with shore based whaling, and has not the resources of a pelagic fleet. Were they to lose the sealing licence, and if they were unfortunate enough to have a bad whaling season or two, it might well be that they would close down. I think we would be in error if, for the sake of whole carcass utilization and the very problematical question of sealing in the Falklands, about which we do not know nearly enough, we were to take the licence from Albion Star and offer it for open tender. I do not, therefore, agree that we should re-open this matter at this stage with the Administrative Officer.

4 On the subject of fur sealing, we need first to get the latest views of Bonner and the Administrative Officer, and then we shall have to consider how the exploitation of the fur seal should be undertaken. In this, I do not think we need consider the question of whole carcass utilization, for the fur seal is a small animal compared to the elephant seal, and its carcass would have very little value. I do not see that Government could undertake the killing of the fur seal and the curing and shipment of the skins, and this, therefore, would have to be the work of a commercial firm. Were we merely to extend Albion Star's licence to include fur seal, we might be open to criticism, and we may perhaps have to put the proposal out to tender. In this, we shall have to consider what Government expects to get out of it. At present the issuing of a licence might have but small effect in inducing one or other of the companies to continue operations in South Georgia, but in years to come, it could conceivably have a decisive effect. It is always in Government's interest to raise the maximum amount of revenue possible at South Georgia, but at present, I am doubtful whether Government could hope to get very much. I do not think we need be in any great hurry to encourage the exploitation of the fur seal, but a pilot

8

scheme, such as Bonner mentioned on page 9 of his 1959/1960 report, might be feasible. If this were to come off, the killing should certainly be done under the supervision of a biologist, and we might perhaps offer the right of killing 100 animals to Albion Star and another 100 to Salvesen. No firm would be able to tender for a large licence unless they could get some idea of techniques and markets. Very probably Salvesen might not take this offer up, but it would forestall criticism. It is an idea we might discuss with the Administrative Officer.

5 As far as fur sealing in the Falklands goes, I do not expect much from O'Gorman's report, if and when we receive it, and again I am doubtful if there really would be very much in it as far as Government is concerned. It might perhaps be of value in providing employment for anyone owning a small boat, but I am doubtful that any of them would have the necessary experience or skill. Fuchs thought that if it could be shown that the Uruguayan fur seal comes from the Falklands we might receive something from the Uruguayan Government. I think this is the forlornest of hopes.

6 I am minuting separately on D/3/60/B about Mr. Clark's letter.

TH
on.

16th March 1961

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From Colonial Secretary, Stanley.....

To Administrative Officer, South Georgia..

Despatched : 21st March, 19 61. Time : 1200

Received : 19 Time :

No. 54. Fur seal.

Grateful if I may have the latest views and considered opinion of Bonner and yourself on possibility of exploitation of fur seal. We could also discuss when you are here.

Colonial Secretary

Reply at 10.

Bu 84.61

G.T.C.

DRM/IH

DECODE.

No. 337.

TELEGRAM.

From Administrative Officer, South Georgia.

To Colonial Secretary, Stanley.

Despatched : 24th March, 1961. Time : 1830

Received : 25th March, 1961. Time : 1030

9

No. 70. Your telegram No. 54. Fur seal.

Letter follows by next mail suggesting pilot scheme taking 200 seals November 1961.

Administrative Officer

G.T.C. : FH
TYPED : LH

(Intld.) HLB

12

29.3.61

for information

29/3/61

BU 8.461

CONFIDENTIAL

123
13.



King Edward Point,
South Georgia.

Ref:632

22nd March 1961.

Sir,

9 in 5/1/61
Reference your telegram No.54 of 21st
March, Fur Seals.

1- I have discussed this with Bonner and he is in favour of operating a Pilot Scheme season 1961 for the period 1st to 14th November. Under this scheme he suggests that the company (or companies) operating should take a total of 200 yearlings. However, before confirming the figure of 200 he would like to discuss with and have Dr.Fraser's opinion and recommendations.

2 It is suggested that it might be advisable to divide the proposed quota of 200 between the Albion Star Co. and the South Georgia Co. This would give both companies the opportunity to experiment and assess commercial value of future exploitation. This would also remove any possible suggestion that any one company was being favoured.

3 In Bonner's opinion the present population should allow an annual quota of 1,650 seals, but, before confirming this he would like to have the information which he hopes the Pilot Scheme will produce.

4 28 in 8/308.
He requests permission to discuss this matter in detail with Dr.Fraser on his return to England.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "C. Allan", written over a horizontal line.

Administrative Officer,
South Georgia.

The Honourable
the Colonial Secretary,
Port Stanley.

Reply, ask 14.

#5
13A

EXTRACT FROM
RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE ON TUESDAY
11TH APRIL, 1961, BETWEEN HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, THE
HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY AND CAPTAIN COLEMAN, ADMIN-
ISTRATIVE OFFICER, SOUTH GEORGIA

(Original in D/22/59)

Sealing

The scheme for the killing of 200 seals as a pilot venture was discussed. It was understood that the maximum quota on a commercial scale could not exceed 1650 annually and it was thought that this was insufficient to attract commercial sealing. The colonies should therefore be allowed to develop and spread to new breeding grounds before further consideration could be given. A telegram could now be sent to Bonner advising him that there is no objection to his discussing with Frazer. The question could be considered further in London in July. It was agreed that the question of whole carcase utilisation should not be pressed and that the licence to kill 6000 elephant seal should not be increased.

see 28
in P/FOR

A replacement for Bonner would be necessary and it was thought that Baker might be interested but a biologist was desirable. An indent should now be prepared but if candidate was married it would not be possible for his wife to come out during the first six months of appointment.

Ref.

I think this
wd be better
in the file where
this is dealt with
2.2/2/61 2/1/61.

WAVERLEY HOUSE,
PORT STANLEY,
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

12th January 1961

Dear Mr. Handers,

These two publications have official reports on seals/sealing both around the resident Falkland Islands heads & those at South Georgia.

Mr. D. Clark has already read & says he will endeavour to send copies to you from the U.K.

After you have seen these enclosed please let me have them back - no hurry.

Yours Sincerely
See 5. Ed. Rowe

Dear Mr. Rowe,

Thank you very much for lending me these two books
Thank you very much for lending me these two books
which I have kept for a very long time, I am afraid,
which I have kept for a very long time, I am afraid,
which I have kept for a very long time, I am afraid.

I used the information in these books and what I
I used the information in these books and what I
could find in our files to make a memorandum on the
could find in our files to make a memorandum on the
whole position as regards sealing; its history
whole position as regards sealing; its history
and the information available
about numbers etc and I think anybody in future
about numbers etc and I think anybody in future
who desires information will be able to get it
who desires information will be able to get it
more easily than I have done myself.

John
Rosen

D/1/61.

15

26th April, 1961.

14 refers

Thank you very much for lending me these two books which I have kept for a very long time, I am afraid. I used the information in these books and what I could find in our files to make a memorandum on the whole position as regards scaling; its history and the information available about numbers etc., and I think anybody in future who desires information will be able to get it more easily than I have done myself.

E.G. Rowe, Esq.,
STANLEY.

RHDM/IM.

D/1/61

16

1st May,

61.

To: Officer-in-Charge,

From: The Colonial Secretary,

SOUTH GEORGIA.

Fur Seals

13.
28 in p/808. I am directed to refer to your Confidential letter of the 22nd March, 1961, reference 632 and to inform you for record purposes that Mr. Bonner was given permission by telegram on the 28th April to discuss exploitation of fur seal with Dr. Fraser.

(Sgd) D.R. Morrison.

for Colonial Secretary.

g. e.

17
wideham 5 of 8. The report here came &
now will not arrive before g. e. says.

S-E will be discussing few reads with A.O. &
Bauer. Is it worth asking the Island office
to try to get a copy of it so that it will be
available at the discussion?

g
8/6/61

no more information

HE printed on

another file

g
29/6/61

bu 15.8.61

bu 12.9.61

BU 28.9.61

po

29.9.61

The Colonial Secretary's Office,
Stanley, Falkland Islands.
16th February, 1962.

Received from the Secretariat one copy of the following
reports to be returned within one week.

Seal Report by R. M. Laws.

First Report on sealing investigations by J. E. Hamilton.

Second Report on sealing investigations by J. E. Hamilton.

Third Report on sealing investigations by J. E. Hamilton.

Fourth Report on sealing investigations by J. E. Hamilton.

[Handwritten signature]

*All reports returned
and refiled.*

DRM/TB

DRM
10.3.62

for
10.3.62
bu 23.2.62