

suffer from the weather and also many parasitic diseases, and greatly from depredations of crows and magpies. In Okanagan these get nearly all the first layings of Prairie chickens, while the herbage is still short.

THE FUR SEALS*

Although the natives of the Aleutian Islands have a tradition that fur-seals once bred there, no fur-seal remains or other facts have been discovered which warrant the belief that they ever came ashore anywhere else in the North Pacific except on the Commander and Pribiloff groups of islands or on a few small islands and reefs in Japanese waters, where they were undisturbed by man, for when discovered all the breeding places of the fur-seals were on islands which showed no evidence of ever having been visited by even aboriginal man.

Both the main groups of breeding islands, although many hundreds of miles apart, are washed by the waters of the warm Japanese Current, and that part of Bering Sea is for several months in the summer almost continually drenched with fog, many weeks sometimes passing without a glimpse of the sun. On these foggy beaches and along the bases of cliffs the fur-seals breed in literally countless thousands, as many as 4,000,000 having been estimated as being on the Pribiloff islands in a single season; indeed Lieut. Maynard, who visited the islands for the U.S. Government in 1872, estimated the total number in that year to be nearly 6,000,000. These figures are greatly overestimated as when actual counts of the seals were made in later years, the numbers were found to be much less than anyone would have believed from simply looking at them, although in 1897, after many years of destructive killing, there were still nearly a million seals on the islands of St. Paul and St. George. Whatever the greatest number may have been at any particular time, the records show that up to 1889 there had been actually shipped no less than 4,439,000 skins of young male fur-seals.

There can be no doubt that with the adequate protection that is now being given the fur-seals, both at sea and on land, they will ultimately increase to their former numbers. In 1914, nearly 300,000 seals were estimated as being on the islands, and the present rate of annual increase is over 15 per cent. This percentage will increase as conditions become more nearly normal.

Following a brief historical statement of the Bering Sea Fur Seal controversy, Mr. Macoun showed an instructive series of lantern

*From a lecture on The Fur-Seals, by Mr. James M. Macoun, C.M.G., before the O.F.N. Club, March 5, 1918.