

It would not materially improve matters to protect the females from the hunter before parturition takes place. They must be protected during the entire season if their young are not to perish with them. They live only upon fish, and must therefore go to the water for their food. The large fishing-banks on which the Pribylov seals must depend for subsistence are from thirty to sixty miles distant from the islands, and if the females are killed by the hunter there while feeding, the pup left on the island, which does not become able to take care of itself until after September, loses its protector and dies.

Enormous damage is done to the herds also by the manner in which the poachers hunt them in the open sea. It will be remembered that in the enactment regarding the Bering Sea seal fisheries Congress prohibited the use of firearms, and the Alaska Commercial Company, in its regulations for the conduct of affairs on the seal islands, even prohibited dogs from being kept on the islands. The seal is easily frightened, and for the proper development of the rookeries it is essential that he be exempt from any disturbance that can be avoided. Firearms are freely used by the poachers, however. Indeed, that is their chief instrument of slaughter, and the effect of attacking the herds in the water with flotillas of boats, while the air is filled with the sharp reports of guns, is injurious in the extreme. If, as was spoken of some time ago, the poachers should employ steamers in connection with sailing vessels in their work, the injury would be greatly aggravated.

The seals have been so much disturbed within the past two years, during which this controversy has lasted, that the government has been obliged to reduce the catch allowed under the contract for the present year from one hundred thousand to sixty thousand. The latest news from the islands strongly emphasizes the necessity for this step. The seals which have arrived at the grounds do not show the usual proportion of animals that, having regard to their age and quality, can be killed without detriment to the future of the herds. In these circumstances, the company has deemed it necessary to send special instructions to its agents on the islands to redouble the precautions against interference with animals whose capture would involve future loss. The method of killing employed on the islands is such as to render it perfectly practicable to carry

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