

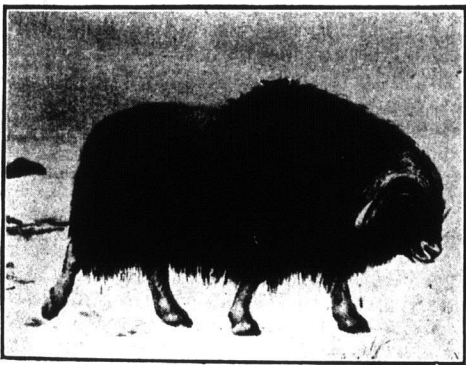
Big Game of the Far North

By Aubrey Fullerton

THE caribou and musk-oxen of the very far North are gradually decreasing, and a really serious situation may soon develop in the way of a big-game shortage. Mounted police patrolmen who have recently covered a part of the sub-Arctic country bring back news that the supply is coming dangerously near the point of extermination, and that steps will need to be taken before long to conserve the animal population that still remains.

Some time ago the well known Norwegian explorer, Dr. Leyden, after making a trip across the Barren Lands, recommended to the Dominion government that the sale of rifles to the Eskimos be discontinued because of this threatened shortage in the game supply. The primitive instincts of the child-like people of the North led them, he said, to use a rifle as a toy and to shoot everything in sight from the sheer novelty of it. They would suffer no real inconvenience if they were compelled to rely, as they had formerly done, upon their bows and arrows and the various trapping methods with which they had become very proficient. It would be a wise measure thought this experienced traveller in the North, to keep rifles away from them, in the interest of animal preservation.

The later report from the mounted police confirms that of Dr. Leyden, and gives new point to the argument made at various times during the past few years that the matter required attention. Both the caribou and the musk-oxen, which have been a chief food supply for the Eskimos from time immemorial, are said to be in danger, and men who have been in the far North claim that its big game will presently be a thing of the past unless measures are soon taken in the direction of a close season or the establishment of an animal sanctuary.



A Musk Ox of the Barren Land

The threatened extermination of sub-Arctic game is partly due to the fact that the Eskimos are good hunters. When the life of a whole family, or a whole community, is dependent upon the results of the chase, there must be no mistakes in hunting methods, and the Eskimos at such times, and in the most difficult situations, rarely do the wrong thing.

Bows and arrows were formerly their usual weapons, but since American and British whaling vessels have been going to Arctic waters the use of firearms, thus introduced in the North, has become general along certain parts of the coast, and the Eskimos have proved as skilful with guns as with their primitive bows. Large numbers of deer are also trapped in cleverly concealed pitfalls in the snow, so placed as to intercept the animals in their cross-country runs.

The musk-ox is distinctly a northern animal. It never goes farther south than halfway down the coast of Hudson Bay, nor farther west than the Mackenzie river; but throughout the Barren Lands, along the mainland Arctic coast, and on the islands beyond, it is king. Over that vast track it roams, usually in herds of twenty-five or thirty, and feeds upon grass, saxifrage plants, and dwarf willows. Even in winter it forages grass from under the snow. In the summer the herds move north, and before the ice breaks up they cross to some of the Arctic islands, where they find pasturage very much to their liking.

There is perhaps no animal better fitted to its conditions than this Northern ox. It is a thick-set animal, with a massive head and neck, and short legs; its horns are about twenty-five inches long and curve down, and it can boast

of only an inch or two of tail. An average male animal is of about the size of a small domestic ox. He looks clumsy, but though his body is heavy and his legs short he is fairly nimble, and gets over rough surfaces, and even up rocky slopes, with seeming ease. He wears a heavy, cold-proof coat of long, brownish-black hair, under which is a thick growth of wool.

The flesh of the musk-ox makes excellent beef. When in good condition it is sweet and tender and highly nourishing, but in the winter it carries a strong flavor of musk, which has given the animal its name. The musk flavor, however, is not at all objectionable to the Eskimos, who use the meat as a part of their food supply and the pelts for bedding and clothing.

Of smaller build than the musk-ox, but much larger in numbers, is the other denizen of the North, the caribou. It, too, grazes on the nearer of the Arctic islands and over the Barrens, but in addition to this area it covers the plains of the Peace River country, the Yukon valleys and the wooded lands of the Athabasca and Mackenzie territories.

There have heretofore been millions of these woodland and prairie caribou, differing somewhat in size and habits according to the country. Like the musk-

oxen, they break up into small bands for most of the year, except when on the move, when they mass into monster herds of several thousand. A caribou migration is one of the sights of the Northland.

If the musk-ox is of value to the Eskimos for both food and clothing, even more so the caribou, which supplies the Northern sewing room as well as the dining room with most of its raw material. The uses to which the skin of the deer may be put are almost unlimited, and the Eskimo seamstresses fashion wonderful things in the way of garments, blankets, tent-coverings, and footwear out of the only dry-goods stuff their restricted market affords them.

Other big game, such as walrus, seals and whales, make up the rest of the far North hunting list, but the caribou and musk-ox are the typical land animals, and the ones most in need of conservation. According to the reports at hand during the past year or two something in the way of restriction on over-hunting is really necessary if the animal population of the sub-Arctic is to be kept up; and it is certain that that is very desirable, for the good of the people who live there.

He was an ingenious and ingenious small boy. "Mamma," he said, "will you wash my face?"

"Why, John, can't you do that?" "Yes, mamma, I can, but I'll have to wet my hands, and they don't need it." —Pearson's Weekly.

His First Night Away

By Strickland W. Gillilan

The neighbor lad had teased, and so ha! he Till Mother sighed: "Well, if it has to be!" And Father said: "Sure! Let him run along, It's so near by there's nothing can go wrong."

So Mother rolled his gown into a lump Smaller than one her throat held; put his comb

In with it; and he left, with joy a-jump— First time he stayed all night away from home!

He choked a little when he said good-night To stranger-parents; and he saw a light Shining in his own house, two worlds away In the next block; then dreamed till dawning day

That he was homeless. At their breakfast-time

He could not eat, but made his home-sick flight

Without adieu—to him no social crime— When first he stayed away from home all night.

And Mother met him with her arms outspread,

And in her loving bosom hid his head A long, long time while neither of them stirred

Nor anybody said a single word. In her a pang old as maternity

Forewarned her of long partings that must come;

For him had ended all eternity— First time he's stayed all night away from home!

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