

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

DEP/WHA/1 # 22

No.

10/16

Date of Receipt.

Governor's Office.

From

SUBJECT.

~~Secretary of State for the Colonies~~
GOVERNOR.

WHALING SEASON SOUTH SHETLANDS 1915-16.

Preliminary report

also full report.

No.

Date

Telegram

18th March, 1916.

Colonial Secretary's
Record No.

347/16
435/16

Registered Number
of last Despatch.

347

MINUTES.

Telegram to Sec of State 18. 3. 16

Desp. to Sec of State n^o 43 of 20. 3. 16

Telegram to Sec of State 11th April 1916.

Desp. to Sec of State n^o 66 of 19. 4. 16

No. next Despatch.

328/16

(Cypher)

107/16

Governor to Secretary of State

Sent 18th March, 1916.

MANTOLOGY WHALING SEASON SOUTH SHETLANDS GERAPCATO
YIELD ABOUT WOHNING BARRELS OF OIL SILVERGRAY STEAMER
ORN LAGERBARK ADIANTOIDE WITH WINGSHAPED WHATABOUTS
SILVERGRAY SALVESENS NEKO LEFT SHETLANDS MANTELET WITH
WINEWHEY YOUNG

18th March Whaling Season South Shetlands very good
yield about 200,000 barrels of oil. Steamer Orn
leaves for England this afternoon with 24,300¢.
Salvesens Neko left Shetlands 8th March with 20,000

Young.

107/16

Extract from the Report of Mr. J.I. Wilson, Stipendiary
Magistrate on Whaling, South Shetlands, Season 1915-16.

X

X

X

There is little to remark about the utilization of the whale. As far as I have seen this is being done to the utmost capacity, and is an immense improvement on that of the old type of floating factory which has no press boilers.

X

X

X

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

No. 143

907/16

Government House, Stanley.

20th March, 1916.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith for your information a copy of a preliminary report by Mr. J. Innes Wilson, Stipendiary Magistrate, on the South Shetlands Whaling Season of 1915 - 16.

14th March.

2. On receipt of this report on the 18th March I telegraphed to you the departure of the S.S. "Orn" and the S.S. "Neko" with whale oil.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

Douglas Young

Governor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

The Colonial Secretary,

Whitehall, Falkland Islands.

Reception Island,

South Shetland Islands.

14th March, 1916.

Sir,

As one of the floating oil factories - S.S. "Orn" II" is just leaving here for Stanley, I am taking this opportunity to briefly report that the South Shetland whaling season has again been an exceedingly good one, and in all probability will constitute another record in South Sea Whaling.

The figures at this date are roughly as follows:-

	Oil
"Orn II"	24,300 barrels.
"Neko" about	20,000 "
"Hektoria" "	23,000 "
"Hvalen" "	15,300 "
"Banguela" "	20,000 "
"R. Amundson" "	20,000 "
"Solstreif" "	23,000 "
"Svend Foyn I" "	20,000 "
"Bombay" "	18,000 "
"Normanna" "	<u>13,000</u> "
	196,000 "

I think all the factories should be about loaded within another fortnight, and feel safe in saying that the total oil production should reach a little over 200,000 barrels.

The

The Hon.

The Colonial Secretary,

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

The floating factory "Neko" (Salvesen & Co of Leith) left Belgica Striat last Thursday - 8th inst - for New Island, West Falkland. (I granted permission to the Master of the Neko to return to New Island as he originally "entered" the Colony at that port). All the other vessels return direct to Stanley. As already remarked the "Orn II" leaves here to-day with 24,300 barrels of oil; a description of her catch will be forwarded under separate cover.

My report on the season will follow my arrival at Headquarters, which I hope will be within another fortnight.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(SGD) J. Innes Wilson

Stipendiary Magistrate.

107/16

Governor to Secretary of State.

Sent 11th April, 1916.

UNCEASING SHETLANDS WHALING SEASON TOTAL POSTURICA OIL
212336 BARRELS SHIPPED EDUCAPANT BETWEEN MANTOLOGY AND
AMORATO YOUNG.

With reference to my telegram 18th March Shetlands whaling
season total production of oil 212336 barrels shipped
between 18th March and 6th April

Young.

107/16

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

No. 66.

Government House, Stanley.

19th April, 1916.

Sir,

With reference to my despatches Nos. 43 and 60 of the 20th March, and 11th April, 1916, respectively, and to my telegram of the 11th April, reporting the total shipment of whale oil from the Dependency of South Shetlands and Grahams Land for the season 1915-16, I have the honour to submit herewith for your information a full and interesting report by Mr. J. Innes Wilson, Stipendiary Magistrate, on the very satisfactory results of the South Shetlands and Grahams Land whaling for the season 1915-16 - November 1915 to end of March 1916.

Enclosure No. I

2. In the concluding paragraph of his report, Mr Wilson refers to the possibility of establishing a mail service between Stanley and South Shetlands during the season of each year. I have been unable to trace any papers on the subject, but as there are no residents at South Shetlands, and the Whaling Fleet only remain in the waters of the Dependency for about four months in each year, there does not appear to me to be any urgent necessity for such a service.

3. I beg to annex 3 picture postcards of South Shetlands which may be of interest to you.

1. General view of Factory Bay.
2. Hektoria Whaling Station.
3. Three Penguins.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Douglas Young
Governor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Duplicate.

Stanley,

Falkland Islands,

7th. April, 1916.

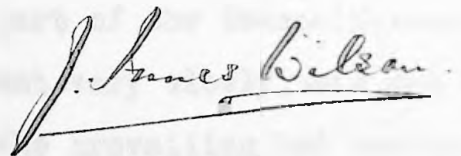
Sir,

I have the honour to forward herewith,
in triplicate, my Report on the South Shetland
Whaling Season 1915-16.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



Stipendiary Magistrate.

The Hon.,

The Colonial Secretary,

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Duplicate.

Report on the South Shetland Whaling Season 1915-16.

The 1915-16 Whaling Season at the South Shetlands and Graham's Land has again been a most satisfactory one. The oil and guano production has been greater than that of former seasons, and there was no perceptible decrease of whales.

2. The total production for the season under review amounted to 212,336 barrels of oil and 18,952 bags of guano, the whole being valued approximately at £791,830. (i.e. estimating the oil at £22 a ton and the guano at 14/- a bag).

3. With the exception of the "Bombay" and "Normanna", all the floating factories arrived at Deception Island, South Shetlands, between the 17th. November and 4th. December. The "Bombay" and "Normanna" arrived on the 15th. and 26th. December respectively.

4. In the early part of the Season (November and December) the "catch" went very slowly, this was mainly accounted for by the prevailing bad weather - fog and wind - and the tremendous quantities of pack ice which filled the channels and surrounding seas. Indeed it was not until the beginning of January that Deception Harbour (Port Foster) was wholly free of ice. These ice conditions were reported to be unusual for that time of the year. At the end of December the "catch" and oil production

stood

stood as follows:

<u>Company..</u>	<u>Whales caught.</u>	<u>Oil.</u>
Norge	108	6,200 barr
Hvalen	79	3,500 "
Hektor	124	5,544 "
Ørnen	277	5,000 "
Southern	69	2,897 "
Nor	21	1,000 "
Salvesen & Co.	113	5,936 "
Laboremus	54	2,500 "
Odd		
	644.	32,577.

Throughout the month of December various attempts were made to enter Belgica Strait, but the ice remained so closely packed together that most of the factories had to operate from Deception Island up to the middle of January. The floating factories "Neko" and "Roald Amundsen" worked from Admiralty Bay, King George Island, for two or three weeks, but were obliged to again return to Deception owing to the bad weather and the scarcity of whales in that locality. With the coming of January there was a vast improvement, and the "catch" now went up with leaps and bounds, the factories at Deception Island at this time producing over 2,000 barrels of oil per week. The ice conditions farther south had now also so far improved that five of the factories were able to proceed to Belgica Strait where good "catches" were made. These excellent conditions continued up to the middle of February when long spells of bad weather set in round Deception Island and the fishing was once more delayed although whales were still plentiful enough. From the 12th. to the 17th. February I took advantage of an opportunity to visit the factories "Orn II" and "Bombay" in Belgica Strait: their "catch" up to that time had really

really been phenomenal, especially during the fortnight previous to my visit. Between the 17th. and 20th. March I paid a visit to all the factories then operating from near the south of Belgica Strait and Schollaert Channel (64½° South); all had done exceedingly well, with the exception of the floating factory "Normanna" (Odd Company) which had been severely damaged by running over a sunken and uncharted rock between the Melchion Islands on the 15th. March. By the end of the month (March) all the factories were completely loaded.

The following shows the total catch and production of each company:

<u>Company.</u>	<u>Whales caught.</u>	<u>Oil.</u>	<u>Guano.</u>
Hektor	749	41,840	brls. 14412 <i>half.</i>
Hvalen	507	24,200	" -
Ornen	445	24,300	" -
Norge	509	23,500	" 4540
Laboremus	544	24,000	" -
Southern	541	24,500	" -
Salvesen & Co.	451	19,296	" -
Nor	332	18,200	" -
Odd	353	12,500	" -
	<hr/> 4,431.	<hr/> 212,336.	<hr/> 18952

5. During the season there were nine companies engaged in the whaling industry of the South Shetlands (one British and eight Norwegian companies), employing altogether twenty-nine powerful steam whale-catchers. The Chilean company - Sociedad Ballenera de Magallanes, had previously reported that they had been unable to have their vessels ready in time for the Season.

6. The daily production of oil and guano varies according to the catch and to the condition and kind of whale under utilization. The Hektor Company have a shore factory at Deception Island for the purpose

purpose of utilizing the whale carcasses flensed on their floating factory "Hektor", and when at full pressure can turn out about 150 barrels of oil (press oil) and 200 bags of guano per diem. This company doubled their last years output of guano. The "Solstreif" (Norge Co.) is the only floating factory with a guano plant, this can produce about 60 bags of guano a day.

7. As during the past two or three years, the bulk of the oil has been obtained from the blue and fin whale. A few humpbacks have been taken, but they are now comparatively few in the present fishing waters. Three small sperm whales were caught near to Deception Island on the 19th. December: they are the first of this species reported to have been captured so far south. Blue and fin whales are ~~reported~~ to be found in almost equal numbers throughout the whole season, although the fin are often observed to be more numerous after the middle of February. I am attaching herewith a few brief notes on the Blue, Fin, Humpback and Sei whales.

Also vide Schedules A, B. and C. attached.

Observations.

Modern whaling expeditions to the South Shetlands and Graham's Land have always been profitable undertakings. The Season 1915-16 can be no exception. Like all fishing industries, however, whaling must always have its uncertainties, and more particularly I think, in these southern regions. Owing to the great distance from Europe and the necessary expensive outfitting etc. there is much at stake, although on the other hand there is much to be gained. It is a common enough question - How long can this whaling last? It is a natural question, because the time must surely come at no very distant date when whaling in the south (in those localities where it is carried on at the present day) must cease to be profitable. From my own observations the prospects would seem to be good for a number of years yet, but as aforesaid, there is always a lingering uncertainty about the matter. It takes many whales to make a payable "catch". A modern whaling expedition could hardly do it under 250. A decrease in the number of whales need not strictly mean that they were becoming very scarce, but simply that there would not be enough then to make it profitable to hunt them on the present gigantic scale. During the past season there was no visible decrease in the number of whales (with the exception of the humpback) round the South Shetlands and Graham's Land, and were reported by the whalers to be as numerous as ever they were.

Some whalers set down a fixed time for

the

the coming and going of certain kinds of whales. I hardly think this can be followed with any degree of certainty. For example it will be told that December and the first half of January is always the best of the season, &c. This year it has been quite the reverse: And so I am sure the conditions are continually altering both in the coming and going of the whale and in the weather and ice. There is nothing to work upon beyond the fact that the whales can be almost sure to come in large and small numbers at different times between November and March, and that the ice (a great drawback) will go away sometime between November and January.

Practically little or nothing is known about the breeding habits of the whale here. Females killed at about the same time during the season, have been found with foetus in all stages of development. It may therefore be assumed that they have no definite breeding season.

Whaling, as an industry, appears to be peculiarly suited to the Scandinavian. During the season under review there were 1,210 persons engaged in the whaling industry of the South Shetlands, the majority of whom were of Norwegian nationality. Under the circumstances of a short season, the workmen are quiet and law-abiding. The conditions under which they have to work and live here, are hard and rough in the extreme. There are very few cases of real sickness, but from the nature of the work, accidents are fairly common. There are two qualified Norwegian doctors (paid by the companies) with the expeditions;

one is stationed at Deception Island and the other with a floating factory in Belgica Strait. All severe cases are usually brought up to Deception Island for treatment.

The following shows the usual rate of wage paid to the workmen in the whaling industry at the South Shetlands:

<u>Capacity.</u>	<u>Wages per mo.</u>	<u>Share(oil)</u>
On floating factories .		
		per barrel.
Engineers	from 120 to 200 Kr.	from 4 to 10 Ore.
Mechanics	" 40 " 120 "	" 3 " 5 "
Carpenters	" 80 " 100 "	" 4 " 5 "
Blubber boilers	" 60 " 70 "	" 3 " 5 "
Flensers	" 55 " 70 "	" 3 " 5 "
Ord. labourers	" 40 " 50 "	" 1 " 3 "
Stewards	" 100 " 110 "	" 6 " 8 "
Cooks	" 70 " 90 "	" 3 " 5 "
Firemen	" 40 " 55 "	" 2 " "
Sailors	" 50 "	" 2 " "
Boys	" 20 " 30 "	" 1/2 " 1 "
Purser	" 30 " 120 "	" 3 " 6 "

On whale boats.

	<u>Wages per mo.</u>	<u>Share per whale.</u>			
		Blue	Fin	H'back	Right
Gunner	125Kr.	80Kr.	50Kr.	30Kr.	200Kr.
Masters (when not gunner)	100"	6"	5"	4"	10"
Engineers (1st)	160"	6"	5"	4"	10"
" (2nd)	130"	6"	5"	4"	10"
Firemen	40"	4"	3"	2"	10"
Sailors	60"	6"	5"	4"	10"
Stewards	75"	6"	5"	4"	10"

(1 Kroner equals about 1/1½: 100 Ore = 1 Kr.)

There is little to remark about the utilization of the whale. As far as I have seen this is being done to the utmost capacity, and is an immense improvement on that of the old type of floating factory which had no press boilers.

Whale hunting in the past has been almost entirely confined to the waters in the south and west of the Dependency. (Bransfield Strait, Smith Is. and in and round Belgica Strait). Very little is therefore

therefore known at the present day about the waters in the east and south side of Graham's Land (Joinville Land). Only a real scarcity of whales in the ~~localities~~ localities now being hunted over, would, I think, compel the whalers to hunt in the east. Few harbours or no harbours at all are suspected, but nothing definite is really known. The south-east therefore at the present time remains open to possibilities.

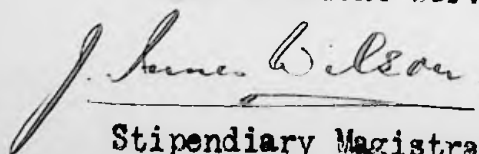
Bird life is very prolific round the South Shetlands, and is very seldom disturbed by the whaler. The protective Ordinances may have some effect in this direction, but I don't think the average Norwegian whaler is viciously inclined.

In closing this report I would beg to submit for consideration the possibility of running a mail from Stanley to the South Shetlands twice during a season. In this connection the manager of the Hektor Company informed me that his company, during the past year or two, had applied to the Government for permission to use an extra or third whaler with the Deception lease, and mentioned that should the Hektor Company be granted such a privilege, they, on their part would agree, apart from the license fee to run such a mail as that proposed, free of cost to the Government. I think the offer a good one, and would be to the advantage to the Government as well as a great and necessary blessing to the South Shetland whaler.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

James Wilson

Stipendiary Magistrate.

Duplicate.

WHALING
SOUTH SHETLANDS
1915-16.

Schedule A.

The following statement shows the total number and kind of whales taken by each of the whaling companies operating in the South Shetlands during the Season 1915-16.

Company	Kind of Whale					Total.
	Right	Sperm	Blue	Fin	H'back	
Hektor	-	-	377	359	13	749.
Laboremus	-	-	188	343	13	544.
Southern	1	-	220	311	19	541.
Norge	-	-	176	294	39	509.
Hvalen	-	3	235	256	13	507.
Salvesen & Co.	3	-	182	218	48	451.
Ornen	-	-	249	188	8	445.
Odd	2	-	49	244	58	353.
Nor	-	-	179	145	8	332.
	6.	3.	1845.	2358.	219	4,431.

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J. James Wilson
Magistrate,
7th. April, 1916.

Duplicate.

Schedule B.

WHALING

SOUTH SHETLANDS

1915-16.

The following statement shows the number and kind of whales taken during each month of the South Shetland Whaling Season 1915-16.

Month	Kind of Whale					Total.
	Right	Sperm	Blue	Fin	H'back.	
November	-	-	49	5	3	57.
December	-	3	350	206	57	616.
January	4	-	764	421	84	1,273.
February	-	-	499	904	50	1,453.
March	2	-	1232	822	25	1,032.
	6.	3.	1245.	2358.	219.	4,431.

Note:

The first f.v. "Heka" (Salvesen) arrived 17th. Nov.
" last " "Hektorla" (Hektor) departed 2nd. April.

J. James Wilson
Magistrate,
7th. April, 1916.

Duplicate.

Schedule C.

WHALING

SOUTH SHETLANDS

1915-16.

The following statement shows the total production of oil etc. by each of the whaling companies operating at the South Shetlands during the Whaling Season 1915-16.

Company.	Oil.	Guano.
Hektor.	41,540 barrels.	14,412 bags.
Southern	24,500 "	-
Ornen	24,300 "	-
Hvalen	24,200 "	--
Laboremus	24,000 "	-
Norge	23,500 "	4,540 "
Salvesen & Co.	19,296 "	-
Nor	13,200 "	-
Odd.	12,500 "	-
Total	212,336 barrels.	18,952 bags.

Equals about 35,390 tons.

J. Angus Wilson

Magistrate,
7th. April, 1916.

Duplicate.

A few notes on the Blue, Fin, Humpback and Sei whales:
- attached to the Report on the South Shetland Whaling
Season 1915-16.

Blue Whale.

The blue whale is the largest and most valuable of the fin whales. It measures from 70 to 95 feet in length, and in the southern seas up to 95 feet. A few have been caught in the south measuring over 100 feet long. The breadth of the body is usually from $1/5$ to $1/3$ that of the length. The colour is dark gray-blue with small white spots on the breast. The back fin is smaller and its position farther back than that of the other fin whales. The baleen or whalebone is black.

In former years the blue whale was only known in the northern hemisphere so that most of the available information concerning it has been obtained from observations taken there. Within the last few years however, it has been shown that great numbers of these whales also frequent the ~~waterr~~ southern seas and travel up and down the waters of the southern continents - from the equator to the antarctic. It lives chiefly on a small kind of shrimp, known to the Norwegians as "krill". The blue whale is considered to be the most solitary of all whales, and is generally to be found roaming about the ocean alone or with a single partner, while the other whales usually keep together in schools and large numbers. As observed in the north the blue whale has never been seen there in very great numbers, and although they have been hunted there for nearly the past fifty years there has never been a large "catch"

of them except perhaps on a few occasions off the coast of Iceland. On the other hand the southern hemisphere is undoubtedly rich in blue whales, especially in the localities of South Georgia, South Shetlands and South Orkneys where it is always to be seen in large numbers from November to February, when it is after the great quantities of food (shrimp) that are to be found in these latitudes during that time of the year. During the season 1912-13 nearly 2,000 blue whales were taken in these regions, and in 1915-16 - 1,845 were taken from the South Shetlands alone. Indeed it is almost certain that had it not been for the great numbers of blue whales in the south, whaling operations would have ceased there ere this ~~because~~ because of the enormous expenses required to conduct, with any hope of success, a modern whaling concern in southern latitudes. Wherever ~~whaling~~ whaling operations have been carried on, the blue whale has been found, and from observations made in different parts of the world, all are agreed that this whale travels to the northern and southern polar regions in the summer-time, thereafter returning to more temperate waters. By the end of the summer the blue whale is very fat and it is thought can now go for a considerable length of time without food.

A fully grown blue whale of average size can yield, when completely utilized, at least 100 ~~barrels~~ barrels of oil and from 60 to 100 bags of guano. The baleen is at present of very little commercial value.

The Fin Whale.

Fin whales are very numerous both in the northern and southern hemispheres. In comparison with other whales the fin whale is much better shaped and moves more gracefully through the water. It reaches a length of from 60 to 85 feet and the breadth is usually about $1/7$ that of the length. The colour is gray-black and generally white on the breast, but the older it gets so it becomes gradually gray all over. The baleen is blue-gray with a few white stripes passing through here and there.

Fin whales remain longer on the whaling 'grounds' than any of the other whales. Unlike the blue whale it not only lives on shrimps, but it is thought on different kinds of fish as well. It can sometimes become very dangerous when being pursued by the whalers, and has been known to attack whale-boats when wounded.

In the north the fin whale is still plentiful. It may also be said to represent most of the whales round South Georgia and the South Shetlands and Grahams Land. In the South Shetlands they are usually to be found in great numbers from the last days of February to April. During the Season 1915-16 - 2,358 fin whales were taken in the locality of the South Shetlands.

The Humpback Whale.

The humpback whale derives its name from the small humps or lumps on its head. The body is also very ungainly and stumpy in shape. The length is generally from 40 to 55 feet, and the breadth from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ that of the length. The colour varies very much, but is generally black with white spots here and there. At South Georgia they are often to be found black all over. The colour of the baleen is gray-black.

The humpback feeds principally on shrimps. It travels great distances in search of food and has been known to nearly always frequent the same latitudes, when it was much relied upon by the whalers. In recent years however, owing, it is presumed, to this severe persecution, it has almost disappeared from all the known whaling 'grounds', and it is thought now confines itself to those parts of the ocean as yet undisturbed by the whale hunter. Like most of the other whales the humpback usually falls an easy prey to the whaler when feeding amongst plenty of food or when pairing. It breeds in the warm waters near the equator, and is supposed to have young (sometimes twins) every year. The young whale develops very quickly. In the southern latitudes the humpback whale appears during October or November, and travels north again about the month of May when it is very fat.

Sei Whales.

The sei whale is the smallest of all the whalebone or baleen whales, and received its name from the Norwegian whalers in the north of Norway, because it came in near to the land with the sei fish (coal fish). Its length is from 35 to 45 feet, and the breadth about $1/5$ of the length. The colour is dark-blue and white on the breast. The back fin is proportionally much larger than either that of the blue or fin whale. The baleen is black, striped with white. The sei whale lives only on small "shrimps" or "krill", and the presence of this whale can only be expected in those places where such food is plentiful. This whale is very seldom seen in the antarctic regions, but at one time was very numerous round the Falkland Islands. In the north it appears about spring-time and travels south in the winter. In 1913, great numbers were observed off the coast of West Africa, but were then very thin and poor, only yielding three or four barrels of oil. It is very quick and often difficult to shoot. The breeding habits of the sei whale are supposed to be similar to those of the humpback.

J. Lewis Wilson
S.M. 7/4/16.