

1914

NAT/SEA/1 # 10

C.S.

Seals

British Museum

No.

886.

S. 78. no 96

SUBJECT.

1914

18th September

Previous Paper.

British Museum desires collection of skulls
of Antarctic Seals & Sea Lions

MINUTES.

H.E.

1

Submitted

? B.U. on Mr Hamilton's return from Lord Falkland.

T.H.P.

20.11.19.

2

Mr Hamilton may make the collections required, except as
in para 3 of 1st

Nov 20/19

T-R-84

3

RE B.U. 10.12.19.

RE B.U. 22.12.19.

Mr Hamilton

For your information & guidance -

Subsequent Paper.

File T-R-84

T.H.P.

24.12.19.

886/19.



1

Falkland Islands.

No. 96.

Downing Street,

18th September, 1919.



Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you, for such action as you may see fit to take, the accompanying copy of correspondence with the Director of the British Museum (Natural History) regarding the desire of the Trustees to obtain a collection of the skulls of Antarctic Seals and Sea Lions.

From Brit. Museum
18th June, 1919
To -do- 17th July
From -do- 4th Sept

I have, etc.,

(Sgd) Milner.

GOVERNOR

W. D. YOUNG, ESQ., K.B.E., C.M.G.,

&c., &c., &c.

B.M.(N.H.)
1370/19

1 A
BRITISH MUSEUM(NATURAL HISTORY),
Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

18th June, 1919.

Sir,

The Trustees of the British Museum have been informed that Mr J. Erik Hamilton, the newly appointed of the West Falkland Islands, is willing to assist the Natural History Museum by collecting specimens. The Museum has for some years past desired to obtain, for purposes of study and comparison, good series of the skulls of Antarctic Seals and Sea-Lions, and the Trustees would be glad to have the benefit of Mr Hamilton's help, subject to the sanction of Secretary Lord Milner. I am accordingly to ask that permission may be given to Mr Hamilton to shoot or cause to be shot (or otherwise obtained) a series of 30 specimens of each species of Seal or Sea-Lion that may be available, for preservation in the British Museum of Natural History.

I have, etc.,

(Sgd) C. E. Fagan.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

COLONIAL OFFICE, S.W.

17th July, 1919.

Sir,

I am directed by Viscount Milner to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th June (B.M. N.H. 1370/19) relative to the desire of the Trustees of the British Museum to obtain specimens of the skulls of Antarctic Seals and Sea-Lions, and to request you to inform the Trustees that as it is not now proposed to send Mr Hamilton to the South Shetlands next season but to employ him on a special investigation in the Falkland Islands, it will not be possible for him in any case to co-operate in obtaining specimens from that Dependency.

2. There would, however, apparently be no difficulty in arranging for the desired number of skulls of the Elephant Seal and the Sea-Leopard to be obtained from South Georgia; but in that case Lord Milner would be glad to receive any more detailed instructions that the Trustees would wish to be communicated to the Magistrate for his information and guidance. The Governor could also be asked to consider the possibility of obtaining specimens of the skulls of the Sea-Lion from the rookeries in the Falkland Islands. Lord Milner presumes that the skulls should be sent direct to the Natural History Museum and that the Trustees would be willing to defray any reasonable expenses which may be incurred in obtaining such specimens and sending them home.

3. As regards the remaining species, Lord Milner would deprecate the killing, specially for this purpose, of specimens of the Fur Seal, Weddell's Seal, Ross's Seal, or the Crab eating Seal, at any rate until further information is available as to their distribution and numbers.

I am, etc.,
(Sgd) G. Grindle.

B.M. (N.H.)
1976/19.

BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY)
Cromwell Road, London S.W.7.
4th September, 1919.

Sir,

I have had the honour of laying before the Trustees of the British Museum Mr Grindle's letter of the 17th ult. (No. 36435/19) with reference to my letter of the 18th June last requesting that Mr J. Erik Hamilton may receive special permission to collect skulls of seals for the museum.

2. In reply I am to say in the first place that the Trustees concur in Lord Milner's view that it would be undesirable to do anything which might assist in the final disappearance of rare species, such as the Fur Seal, Weddell's Seal, Ross's Seal, or the Crab eating seal, and are fully prepared to wait for a more convenient season in the case of these rare seals, which it may be hoped if properly protected will increase in numbers and even become common.

3. The Trustees are glad to note that there would be no difficulty in arranging for the desired number of skulls of the Elephant Seal and the Sea Leopard to be obtained from South Georgia, and of the Sea Lion from the rookeries in the Falkland Islands and they will be much obliged if the Colonial Office will kindly take steps to effect this object.

4. It is desirable that the following instructions should be sent to the Magistrate at South Georgia with regard to specimens to be collected at that place. The animals should if possible be killed without breaking the skull, as is commonly done when seals are killed by clubbing. If this cannot be avoided, skulls which are not badly injured might be selected. Skulls of various ages and of both sexes are really wanted, so as to make a thoroughly representative series containing a good proportion of fully adult specimens of both sexes. Female elephant seals and their pups ought to be killed as little as possible, and perhaps those which have been accidentally killed might suffice. The skulls should not be cleaned more than is absolutely necessary, and particular care should be taken to avoid injuring or losing any of the teeth, which should always be left in place. The hyoid bones (see p. 2 of "Instructions" enclosed) should be preserved, and it should be understood that the term "skull" includes the lower jaw with its teeth.

5. Six copies of the museum pamphlet "Instructions for Collectors, No. 1A - Mammals Part II, Skeletons, with special notes on the collections of specimens of Cetacea" are forwarded herewith for the use of anyone who may be concerned. Special attention should be called to pp. 2, 3, where information is given on the preparation of skulls. More copies of this pamphlet may be had if required.

6. Elephant Seals, Sea-Leopards and Sea-Lions would all be welcome, from whatever locality they were obtained. The exact locality and the sex of each specimen should be stated.

7. The Trustees will, of course, be prepared to defray any reasonable expenses which may be incurred in obtaining the specimens and sending them home.

I have, etc.,

(Sgd) C.E. Fagan.