

SEALING

1920

C.S.

No. 813 A

S. M. West Falkland

SUBJECT.

1920

Report on Fur Seal Rookery at
Jason Island

19th October

Previous Paper.

MINUTES.

H.P. Submitted
M.B.
for C.S.
26. 10. 20

①

② Acknowledge with thanks.

③ W.M.
28. 10. 20

Letter to Mr Hamilton of 29/10/20

Subsequent Paper.

The Office of The Magistrate.

Fox Bay

West Falkland.

19th. October 1920

Sir,

I have the honour to make the following brief report on a visit to the Fur Seal rookery at Elephant Jason.

2. On October 1st. 1920 S.S. Falkland arrived at Carcass Island and I landed there, having ascertained by telephone from Hill Cove that there was no matter requiring attention at Fox Bay.

It was my original intention to stay on Carcass about a week, and I was aware that if I were required I could be landed on West Falkland in a short time after the recognised fires should be lighted as a signal from the mainland.

When I spoke to Mr. Hansen about being taken over to West Falkland he said that he was going to Elephant Jason about the 10th to collect Mollymawk eggs and that if I would stay until he went I would be able to inspect the Seal rookery, which I was anxious to do in order to find out if any undetected raid had been made and also to see if breeding had begun.

3. We eventually sailed for the Elephant Jason at 7 a.m. on the 12th. October, and by 10 a.m. had covered little more than half the distance, the wind being very light. Mr. Hansen therefore decided to row the remaining five miles ^{to the Elephant Jason} in the boat which was towing behind the schooner. There were four persons in the boat and after about two hours we arrived at the Seal Rock which is some two miles from the landing place on the Elephant.

There was a slight swell but we were able to land and walked almost the whole length of the rock. Besides myself Mr. Hansen alone landed.

There

(2)

There was a great number of seal present, but the number was less than that which I saw on the 12th. December 1919, but in my opinion this is only due to the breeding season not having begun. That this was the case I concluded because no harems or newly born pups were seen and the adult bulls were hardly more bold than the other stages and sex, their bearing differing markedly from the stubborn ferocity of the breeding season.

By far the greatest proportion of the seal seen were immature, very many of them being apparently last season's pups, and not one of the animals showed more than a reasonable fear of man, thus clearly indicating that they had not been molested since last December, which afforded me great satisfaction.

Only one dead seal was seen, but it would not bear examination. It had not however been skinned and so had probably died a natural death.

There were plenty of seal in the water as well as on the rock and these showed no fear of the boat, but followed it for a considerable distance.

May I say in conclusion that although the rookery has not been molested and the seal are numerous on it I feel that until the arrival of the patrol boat there is no certainty of this state of things continuing. One well executed raid might undo the whole work of the peace of the last few years and therefore I beg most respectfully to emphasise most seriously that it is my opinion that every day during which the rookeries are without a protecting vessel is one of danger to them and that any acceleration of the arrival of the patrol boat is of the greatest value.

4. After leaving the Seal Rock we rowed back to Elephant Jason to collect Mollymawk eggs, and then rowed to the schooner in which we arrived at Carcass about 10.30 p.m. by which time the wind which had been light most of the day was blowing fairly hard.

(3)

I remained on Carcass next day because everyone who had taken part in the trip, including the crew of the schooner, was greatly tired and I had sustained a slight injury which would have been aggravated by riding immediately.

On the 15th. I proceeded to Dunbar and thence to Roy Cove, and on the evening of the 16th. arrived at Fox Bay.

5. I should like to record my gratitude to Mr. Hansen for his assistance and to Mr. Clement of Roy Cove, who supplied me with a horse for my journey to Fox Bay.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. E. Hamilton

(J.E.Hamilton)

Stipendiary Magistrate,

West Falkland.

The Honourable Colonial Secretary.

Stanley

215/20.

20th October, 20.

Sir,

I am directed by the Administrator to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th inst., containing a report on your recent visit to the Fur Seal Roekery at Elephant Jason, and to convey to you His Excellency's thanks for same.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


For Colonial Secretary.

J. E. Hamilton, Esq.,
Stipendiary Magistrate,
West Falkland.