

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
5TH COUNCIL, 32ND SESSION

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL
NO. 14-32

TABLED ON JANUARY 25, 1966



18th January, 1966.

Confidential - Not
for release before
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32nd Session of
Council.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL NO. 14
(First Session, 1966)

ARCTIC ISLANDS GAME

DISPOSITION

Accepted as Read.....
Amended.....See Text
Rejected.....See Text
Deferred.....See Text
Not considered.

ARCTIC ISLANDS GAME

- (a) Game Birds
- (b) Muskox

(a) Game Birds

At the June, 1965 Session, the Member for Mackenzie Delta proposed that holders of Game Bird Licences be permitted to hunt migratory and non-migratory game birds in the Arctic Islands Preserve. Council asked that this proposal be studied, and an appropriate amendment to the Game Ordinance be prepared if that appeared warranted. (Debates, 30th Session, Page 302).

To permit holders of Game Bird Licences to shoot migratory and non-migratory game birds in the Arctic Islands Preserve would require the abolition of the Preserve, which was established to reserve the wildlife resources for use of resident Eskimos.

It has been suggested that low fur prices, eligibility requirements for a General Hunting Licence, and the assignment of trapping areas may combine to prevent the influx of too many hunters. Therefore the purpose of the Preserve may have become obsolete. It is also suggested that the flexibility of smaller game management zones enables the Game Management Service to recommend and engage in management programs aimed at protection of the indigenous people and at fuller utilization of the available game resources. This will depend almost entirely upon sound biological data about game populations, data which are not yet available.

Abolition of the Preserve would permit the killing of birds by holders of game bird licenses. However the only birds there are ptarmigan, - except for migratory birds and they are protected until September 1, by which date every migratory bird has gone south. This date is set by a Canada - US Treaty and enforced by a Federal law.

Ptarmigan are not plentiful enough in some years that exposing it to increased hunting would be warranted. . . . A measure which contemplates diminishing ptarmigan could have unfortunate ecological effect including injury to Eskimo hunters.

The Eskimos for whose benefit the Preserve was established, have not been consulted about the proposal to abolish it. It would seem inappropriate to do this without first obtaining their views. Further the continuing existence of the Preserve is taken by other countries as evidence of Canada's genuine concern for the rights of native peoples. The abolition of the Preserve might well alter this view, particularly if it were done without prior consultation.

The Canadian Wildlife Service thinks it would be difficult to exercise surveillance let alone enforcement of regulations designed to prevent excessive killing unless staffs are much increased. That Service also expressed the opinion that it would be wise to consider abolishing the Preserve only after the development of satisfactory game management programs for the area, backed by adequate research.

(b) Muskox

During the June 1965 Session at Yellowknife, Council expressed its deep concern in the matter of game in the Arctic Islands on the occasion when a proposal came before them that would permit shooting male muskox. Council asked that Eskimos be consulted and that a plan be devised whereby any proposed killing of muskox would be confined strictly to the old, lone, non-herd bulls by sports

hunters for trophy purposes in circumstances that would profit the Eskimos of the region.

The Superintendent of Game visited Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord last August for a short examination of the subject. The Commissioner has read the report of this journey and has read also the views of the Canadian Wildlife Service. Advice, opinions and even data from these two specialist sources are conflicting. In such circumstances your Commissioner advises caution. Caution is especially called for when the subject is conservation of living things. This North American continent has seen much killing for use or for sport of wild animals, birds, fish and whales. Many of the forms of wildlife that make the land so interesting are sadly diminished and some are gone forever.

Recommendarion

Your Commissioner has, therefore, reached the conclusion and recommends that there should be no change or relaxation of the protective measures concerning wildlife in the Arctic Islands until adequate research puts us in possession of the relevant and necessary information to make us feel sure that we know what we are doing. This is prerequisite to any significant change together with the other two conditions of assured game mangement staff to supervise whatever activities are engaged in and consultation with the Eskimo hunters, some hundreds of whom still depend on wildlife for food.