



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

EXPANDING CIVILIZATION THREATENS ALASKA'S WILDLIFE

Civilization's expansion into Alaska's once inaccessible areas is depleting the Territory's wildlife resources, the Alaska Game Commission declared today in its annual report for fiscal year 1948 to Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug.

The sudden influx of population, the tremendous improvement in transportation facilities, and the presence of thousands of troops, who have much leisure time and good hunting equipment, have all had a serious effect on Alaska's wildlife, the Commission said.

The Commission predicted that white sheep and barren ground caribou, found nowhere else under the U. S. flag, may soon become extinct in Alaska. The giant Alaska moose is also reported to be fighting a losing battle for existence against hunters and predators.

The Commission called for a larger wildlife law-enforcement staff, more wildlife research, an expanded predatory animal control program, and increased Federal funds for wildlife restoration.

Composed of five Territory residents, the Alaska Game Commission is the Territory's counterpart of the game and fish departments found in each of the 48 state governments. It performs in an advisory capacity to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Game and fur animals and fish have always been the basis of the Territory's economy. The commercial fisheries provide almost 80 percent of Alaska's income. During fiscal year 1948, about \$4 million worth of raw furs were taken out of Alaska; and conservative estimates place the on-the-hoof value of the Territory's game animals at about \$150 million.