

effect to destroy the Sea Cow Fishery, appears to have been a very proper object of your immediate attention and if the licenses required to be taken out by persons carrying on that fishery are not made to operate as a burden upon this useful branch of commerce, I do not see, at present, any objections to the regulations prescribed by your ordinance, but as this is a matter upon which the heads of trade must be consulted, I have received the King's commands to transmit the ordinance to them for their consideration."

I have no copy of the Ordinance itself.

These efforts proved unavailing. The fishermen and others quickly exterminated the herds, so thoroughly that not one has been seen or heard of in these waters within the memory of the "oldest inhabitant." It is an illustration of the old story of "killing the goose," just as fishermen and some traders whose real interest it is now-a-days to preserve the lobster and oyster fisheries; seem to be the most determined, despite all law and common sense, to destroy them.

Though the sea-cow is no longer found on our shores, it has left its name on the nomenclature of the country. In the western part of this province we have "Sea-Cow Pond." On the right hand, as we make Summerside Harbor, "Sea-Cow Head" tells of the animals that once haunted the waters there or made their clumsy way on to and over the dry land.

The sea-cow was of much value to the old settlers. Its oil would not only be of use to them, but would also be an article for barter or trade. Whether or not use was made of the flesh, I cannot say, but the hide was of great consequence.

At a time when all ordinary articles required about the new settlement were most difficult to procure, when goods could only be obtained with much trouble, and most frequently not at all, the sea-cow's hide afforded an exceedingly strong and excellent material for traces and other parts of harness used in the new lands, and to a great extent would take the place of leather for other purposes.

The herds frequenting these coasts must have been large, as I have seen it stated that the number of sea-cows caught in the season sometimes ran up into the thousands. The correctness of this statement I am unable to verify, but that the animals were numerous is evidenced by the interest taken by the government in their preservation, as well as by the facts, regarding the parties hunting them, set out in Patterson's despatch.

The sea-cow would seem to have been very easily captured. It frequently came on to the land and made its way for short distances inland. Its unwieldiness would render it practically helpless on shore, where it would fall an easy prey to its captors. In the water it was more at home, and its pursuit, at least in the smaller boats, was probably without an element of danger. The late Judge Alley, who was an authority on matters relating to the earlier days of settlement in this island, informed me that one method adopted by the fishermen in hunting the animals was, when possible, to catch a young calf and take it on board their craft, when the noise made by the youngster attracted the old ones the vessel's side where they were readily despatched.

Whatever the methods employed to catch them, there can be no doubt but that they were only too successful, the results being that the herds have long since become extinct. That they ever existed is almost forgotten, and with the exception of a few references to them in official papers and a few place-names, there is little now to tell of what was once an important industry.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thanks to all observers who contributed records to this month's newsletter: Lenore Andrew (LA), Alan Beach (AB), David Cairns (DLC), Winifred Cairns (WEC), Thelma Clark (TC), Rosemary Curley (FRC), Susan Dalziel (SDa), Stuart Drummond (SDr), Geoff Hogan (GH), Anne Landry (AL), Gerald MacDougall (GM), Sue Marshall (SM), Mary Lynn McCourt (MLM), John Wright (JW).