

Polar Bear Taken From Big-Game Competition

The official keeper of North American big-game records, the Boone and Crockett Club, has decided to eliminate polar bear from the list of animals eligible for big-game record competition. The recent decision has drawn commendation from Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall.

The club said its action to remove polar bears from record competition was based in part on the question of fair chase involved in the use of airplanes and the undetermined status of the polar bear population.

Alaska's regulations prohibit the use of aircraft for molesting or herding polar bears in the State's territorial waters and also prohibits the killing of cubs or females with cubs. However, aircraft hunting is outside the three-mile limit and over international waters. The first international scientific meeting on the polar bear was held in Fairbanks, Alaska, September 6-10,

1965, when representatives of the five nations concerned with polar bears met. Those nations are the United States, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the Soviet Union.

The federal government has no authority to control the methods of hunting or the harvest of polar bear. Alaska recently reduced the polar bear hunting season, and established a quota system to limit the total number of bear taken.

Alaska-based hunters are required to present the skin and skull of polar bears they have killed to State agents for examination. More than 75 per cent of the polar bears killed by hunters operating from Alaska during the past six years have been males.

The 1965 harvest of polar bears from Alaska contributed about \$450,000 to the State's economy. Three Eskimo villages on the Arctic Coast receive considerable economic benefit as a result of this hunting.