

Editorial—

Sad Idea to Make Musk Ox a Trophy Animal

There is something wrong—something disturbing about the seeming greed and relentless desire of the sports hunters to classify the unique musk ox into a big game trophy animal.

Although quite a number of overaged musk ox bulls apparently need to be weeded out of the Nunivak Island musk ox herd, there perhaps should be some other way of disposing of them instead of offering them as sitting ducks for some trophy hunter. Perhaps they are more valuable on the hoof as producers of six pounds of fine wool each year. That six pounds could make quite a few sweaters at about \$200 apiece when the sweater weighs only ounces. The six pounds per year wool's worth in the raw is about \$300.

It has been found beyond doubt that the musk ox has the propensity toward being domesticated. Taken when young, it soon likes to be around their herders, to be fed by them or to have their herders help them shed their yearly growth of wool. They come running when called by name, line up in a row to be fed or weighed, even mischievously pick locks and butt a large inflated rubber ball playfully. They can also become somewhat dangerous when mating but what animal doesn't including man.

In its wild state, the musk ox is hardly a challenge for any hunter be the hunter a teenager or an accomplished sportsman. When in danger, instinct dictates to the animal to form a circle around its less stronger members and calves to protect them. The only movement is the occasional feint by the bulls in the cordon. They are veritable sitting ducks for any hunter, a characteristic that almost spelled the animal's doom by methodic slaughter by hunters in the past.

When one stops to think a bit, and to imagine a bit as well, the idea and vision of a sports hunter becomes a comical scene owing to the fact that the animal is neither fleet of foot nor does it run when it meets with danger. Nor will it flee at once when it does lumber off but will stand immobile for long moments to watch.

It hardly seems sporting enough to hunt the musk ox as a trophy animal—an animal that offers little challenge.