

Aircraft Trophy Hunts Could End Game Guiding

Alaska's guiding profession is threatened with extinction due to abuses of aircraft-using trophy hunters, according to State Senator Jay Hammond of Naknek, a registered big game guide.

In his article, "Tarnished Trophies" in the Alaska Sportsman's special July hunting issue, Hammond describes aircraft trophy hunting as "often less venturesome by far than lady's night at little league."

Noting that guiding qualifications have been upgraded and some airplane controls have been established, Hammond commented, "Much remains to be done."

He estimated that in the spring of 1968 "perhaps only ten per cent of the bear taken on the Peninsula were taken legally. Game agents suggested that a more realistic figure would probably be not more than ten bear.

Aircraft hunting has depleted game stocks near some villages to the point where native hunters have difficulty in finding meat for subsistence.

"Until this past season on the Alaska Peninsula perhaps as much as seventy-five per cent of the game meat was left in the field. Reportedly two years ago one agent located some 82 moose carcasses from which the antlers alone had been taken. Legislators are determined to do something about it."

Without effective restrictions on aircraft trophy hunting, claims Hammond, "declining game stocks—or even simply public outrage toward guides, already most evident—will serve to shorten seasons and reduce bag limits to the point where the guiding profession will become a thing of the past."