

## Page 17 - Breeding Behaviour of the Grey Seal off the Coast of Cape Breton ISSUE : <u>Issue 1</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1972/10/31

the territory. As soon as she turned back, the bull proceeded no farther, and usually returned to his station. The reception which bull A received from the cows varied from cow to cow and from one day to the next, F5 almost invariably accepted him, whereas F2 seemed gener? ally to be hostile. When the cow was overtly hostile to the approaching bull, the pup generally remained with her. If the cow resented the intrusion of the bull, she exhibited her hostility by opening her mouth and lunging in his direction, and this gesture was generally sufficient to discourage a closer approach. No actual fighting was observed between a cow and bull, although such encounters were observed in the Outer Hebrides. If the cow exhibited no obvious hostility towards the bull, he cautiously ap? proached her in slow stages. When he had approached close enough, he would ex? tend his head forward and caress her face with his snout. Usually she responded by lifting her head and rubbing her snout against his; on other occasions, she appeared to remain completely passive. If the cow were receptive, the bull even? tually positioned himself parallel to her and the snout caressing would continue. After several minutes of this, the bull generally laid his head across her neck and the two would remain in this position for 15 to 20 minutes. In a few cases, if the two were lying together at the water's edge, or on level ground, they would assume a head to tail position. In one case, a younger bull lay for alraost half an hour with his head across the cow's tail. Interaction of the Bulls No contact was observed between the resident bulls on Green Island. Possibly conflicts occurred when the territories were being established and before the boundaries had been defined. On occasion bull A did skirt the boundary, but on only one occasion did bull B approach the territory of bull A. These two bulls differed radically in their behavior during the period of study. Bull B remained virtually immobile at his station throughout the entire period of observation, visiting the three cows F6, F7, and F8 and average of only four times during the 93 hours of observation. He did, however, spend considerable time with F9, whose resting spot was close to his station. By contrast, bull A was alraost continually on the move, resting for only a few minutes at a time and obviously conscious of everything going on in his territory, even when he appeared to be sleeping. He visited each cow several times during the course of the day and went to sea at least once in each 8 hour period of observation. He stayed at sea any- where from a few minutes to as much as 2 hours, with an average of slightly more WOLFSON'S LTD. 96 Townsend Street Sydney When you shop in Baddeck it's nice to plan to include a visit to The Thistledown Restaurant. The Thistledown Restaurant A guiet, relaxed atmosphere for a snack or family raeal. Ike's Your Cheese & Gourraet Shop Health Foods Imported Foods • Candy Cheeses & Smoked Meats Home Wine & Beer Making Supplies 413 Charlotte Sydney 564-8421 SMOKEY RIDGE TRAILER & TENTING PARK Ingonish Harbour Victoria County, Cape Breton The Old Country Store & Museum on the Cabot Trail N.E. Margaree Open 12 months a year Catering to our neighbors and their friends Cape Breton's Magazine/17