

Nature Note

Musk Ox

► THE MUSK OX is not really an ox, and some say it does not particularly smell of musk.

Living in the barren wastes of Greenland and the North American Arctic, these thick-bodied, short-legged beasts are actually a kind of goat antelope, classified with a sub-family of animals related to sheep and goats. The European chamois and Rocky Mountain goat are some of its relatives.

Some authorities say the musk ox (*Ovibos moschatus*) has no glands for exuding the distinctive musky odor. Others say there are glands beneath the eyes that secrete the perfume during its mating season, or when the animal rubs them with his forefoot.

The shaggy animal, sometimes weighing as much as 800 pounds, is covered with long flowing brown hair, under which grows a thick crop of soft wool which serves as excellent insulation against the chilling winds of its frigid homeland. Four ounces of this soft underwool is enough for knitting a feather-weight sweater to keep a man comfortable in subzero cold.

Both sexes have horns that curve downward along the side of the face, then turn upward to a sharp tapered point. Once rare and nearly exterminated by too much killing, the musk ox is now protected and is increasing in numbers. Living together in bands of five to a hundred or more, this creature is one of the few animals that join forces to ward off a foe. When threatened by wolves, their principal enemies, the oxen form a circle, shoulder to shoulder, facing outward, with the calves in the center. By lowering their shaggy heavy heads, they present a formidable flank of horns to the wolves.

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ORNITHOLOGY

Scientists to Follow Penguins by Plane

► A GROUP OF PENGUINS living in the "white desert" of the Antarctic will soon have a team of scientists following them around in an airplane.

Drs. Richard L. Penney and John T. Emlen Jr. of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., will do the tracking in order to study the homing behavior of Adelie penguins. This project is part of the 1964-65 U.S. Antarctic Research Program (USARP) which will take approximately 150 U.S. scientists to Antarctica from October to March to carry on some 50 field projects.

The scientists will capture a group of penguins and take them miles from their breeding grounds. Transmitters will then be attached to the flightless birds so that they can be tracked from a plane by radio as they waddle back home across the barren icecap.

In addition to learning more about the penguin's homing instinct, the researchers

hope to discover more about the direction-finding ability of birds in general.

In another USARP project ten scientist-explorers will begin in December a 5,000-mile journey into the last unexplored Antarctic territory—the desert of snow and ice between the South Pole and Queen Maud Land on the coast nearest Africa.

The long journey will be conducted in four stages, each stage lasting about two months. Goals of the trip include determining the depth of the icecap that lies beneath it, and studies of the ice, weather, the earth's magnetic field and the geology of any mountains that may be discovered.

Dr. Charles R. Bentley, University of Wisconsin geophysicist, will lead the exploration.

Scientists also will dive into frigid waters to explore Antarctic marine life. New York Zoological Society biologists will photograph swimming seals; botanists from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., and Old Dominion College, Norfolk, Va., will study Antarctic seaweed and collect specimens for laboratory study.

The researchers, with the help of U.S. Navy Seabees, will also set up a sixth Antarctic scientific station, to be called Palmer Station, on Anvers Island. It will give USARP geologists access to exposed rock in the peninsula area, and to plant and animal life, sparse in this area, but lush compared to that on the bulk of the continent.

The National Science Foundation has announced in Washington that it will award grants and contracts totaling about \$7 million in support of the upcoming Antarctic Research Program.

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