

**THE NATURALIST IN NORWAY:
OR, NOTES ON THE WILD
ANIMALS, BIRDS, FISHES, AND
PLANTS, OF THAT COUNTRY; PP.
1-262**

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J. BOWDEN

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NOTES ON THE WILD ANIMALS, BIRDS, FISHES,
AND PLANTS, OF THAT COUNTRY.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

The Principal Salmon Rivers.

BY

REV. J. BOWDEN, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF 'NORWAY: ITS PEOPLE, PRODUCTS, AND INSTITUTIONS,'
'GUIDE TO NORWAY,' &c.



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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD DUFFERIN AND CLANDEBOYE, K.P.,

SEO. SEO. &C.,

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THE AUTHOR.

THE NATURALIST IN NORWAY.

CHAPTER I.

- The Zoological Museum at Christiania.—Rare Birds.—Wild Animals.
—The Game Laws of Norway.—A "Heavy Fine."—The Brown Bear.
4 —Ancient Writers.—The Bear in Winter Quarters.—Modes of Capturing it.—Its Strength.—Its Size.—The Best Time for Hunting Bears in Norway.—The Tailor and the Bears.—Norwegian Proverb.

THE English sportsman or naturalist will be much pleased with the Zoological Museum at Christiania, the present capital city of Norway. Here may be seen fine specimens of almost every kind of bird, fish, insect, or wild animal, to be found in this interesting country. The Lapland gray owl (*Strix Lapponica*, Retz), Pallas's sand grouse, the roller (*Coracias garrula*), the wandering albatross (*Diomedea exulans*), the glossy ibis (*Ibis falcinellus*), and many other rare birds, all of which have been shot or captured in Norway, are to be seen in this museum. Here also may be observed the common brown bear, the white bear, the Norwegian wolf, the lynx (*Felis lynx*), the reindeer, the elk, etc.

An eminent Norwegian naturalist once remarked to me, "My country can well spare some of its wild animals and birds of prey." In a single year in Norway (1855), 205 bears, 235 wolves, 125 lynxes, and 2559 eagles and other birds of prey, were killed or taken alive. This number includes only those that were brought to the *foged*, or sheriff, by the peasants, for the sake of the head-money. If we add to this list those animals and birds that were destroyed by sportsmen and others, we can form an estimate of this kind of sport in Norway.

The following are the Game Laws of Norway now in vogue:—

The reindeer may be hunted from August 1st to April 1st.

Elk hunting continues for only three months in the year, viz. during August, September, and October.

The Norwegian hare (*Lepus variabilis*) may be killed from August 15th to June 1st.

The blackcock, male capercaillie, eider-duck, and *hjerpe* (hazel grouse), from August 15th to June 1st.

The gray hen and female capercaillie, from August 15th to the middle of March.

The partridge from the beginning of September to the beginning of January.

The penalty for shooting an elk out of season varies from 40 to 60 sp. dollars; for a reindeer, 10 sp. dollars; for a hare, 2 sp. dollars; for birds, 1 sp. dollar. The *rype* (white grouse) is not preserved by law.

The game laws are not strictly enforced in Norway. I have seen elk venison offered for sale in the streets of Christiania during the close season, and most game-birds are snared in this country at forbidden seasons.

The eider duck is not allowed to be killed north of Thronjhem (Drontheim) at any time of the year.

The following incident may be mentioned as characteristic of the treatment of poachers in Norway. An Englishman travelling in this country found on his arrival at a certain post-station that no horses were in readiness for him. The postmaster, however, hinted that some good wild-duck shooting was to be had on a neighbouring sheet of water. Now most Englishmen are fond of sport, and the one mentioned was no exception to the general rule, so he sallied forth for a raid on the wild ducks. Arrived at the water's side, the traveller found a boat almost inviting him for an excursion; so getting into it, he paddled himself into the middle of the small lake, where he managed to bag several brace of wild ducks. The trespasser was not fated to get off scot-free, for, on returning to land with the spoils of the chase, he found an enraged *bonde*, or peasant, awaiting him, who vehemently demanded how he dared to shoot his wild ducks. A visit to the nearest *foged* was threatened, and a "heavy fine" was mentioned. The Englishman began to have visions of imprisonment, with, of course, a sudden and disagreeable termination of his journey; but, on asking what the "heavy fine" was to be, the farmer sternly demanded six skillings, a sum rather less than threepence, English money. The Englishman paid the fine, and carried off the wild ducks.

THE WILD ANIMALS OF NORWAY.

Norway forms the western half of the Scandinavian peninsula, and contains 121,800 square miles, of which only a small portion is in a state of cultivation. The