

breeding has been allowed on account of their valuable fur; but they have to be carefully guarded so as to exclude the possibility of their escaping and doing harm to other people's stock. *Reindeer* were brought from Norway in 1771, and live in a wild state in the interior, especially in the north-eastern regions. Before and about 1900 they were killed in such great numbers as to be almost completely exterminated. They have therefore been protected during the last few years. Polar bears do not live in Iceland, but are sometimes carried to the north coast on floes of Polar ice.

A great variety of *seals* is found round the coasts of Iceland, the best known being the common seal, which is extensively caught and of some importance to the people. On the other hand, this seal often does a great deal of damage to salmon and trout-fishing by keeping to the river mouths and devouring these fishes when they ascend from the sea. There are also various kinds of *whale* to be found along the coast. Formerly whaling used to be an almost unknown trade, but the drifting ashore of whales with the Polar ice was by no means an uncommon „godsend“ to the people. But when late in the 19th century whaling in Icelandic waters was begun by the Norwegians, the larger species were so rapidly reduced in number, that the hunting of baleen whales on the coast of Iceland is now forbidden by law.

Among the very few kinds of *birds* wintering inland, we may here mention the *ptarmigan* which is extensively shot and exported, and the Icelandic *falcon*. Formerly hawks were caught alive and trained for the hawking sport (gerfalcons), and were in such great demand, that the king issued an order to the effect that he alone should enjoy the privilege of having hawks caught in, and exported from, Iceland, and he used to send a ship to the island expressly for the purpose of fetching them. A hawk is drawn on the royal *flag* of Iceland. The *swan* generally hibernates on the shores of Iceland, and the *sea eagle*, now rarely met with, stays there all the year round.

In summer many birds come to Iceland to hatch, the most common of which are the *golden plover*; the *ringed plover*; the *redwing*; the *whimbrel*; the *redshank*; the *wheatear*; the *white wagtail*. These birds, which are mostly protected, are met with all over the country, where they delight people with their singing and vivacity. Landbirds lay their eggs here and there far and wide, and are of very little economic importance, while from some of the swimmers which, in great numbers lay their eggs in islets, bird cliffs, and other convenient places, no mean benefit is derived. Of such aquatic birds the following may be mentioned: