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Prince Rupert Branch

Prince Rupert's Hunting Grounds

(By Captain H. B. Babington.)

The sportsman finds a happy spot indeed in the vicinity of Prince Rupert, whether his inclination is toward big game hunting, the pursuit of the fleet footed deer, or idly fishing for mountain trout and lordly salmon.

At no place in the world is there better spring salmon fishing than that to be found in the vicinity of Prince Rupert and Port Simpson. At the latter place for a number of years the Indians have fished for the market, trolling from a canoe, averaging about six fish of a weight of forty pounds per fish per day. For some reason that has never been satisfactorily determined, the coho salmon will not take a spoon bait.

Excellent trout fishing is to be had in nearly all of the fresh water lakes, to most of which trails are cut, making them easily accessible. The trout run to a good size, and during the fine weather in the summer offer splendid sport with a fly. Although the many streams in the neighborhood abound with trout, good fishing can only be obtained at the beginning of the summer, as the salmon start to go up the streams early and entirely destroy the chance of capturing fish with a hook and line. For the visitor bent on a successful fishing excursion it is necessary to obtain the services of a guide, as very few of the lakes are

marked on the charts of the district.

For the doughty nimrod in quest of bear, the country round Prince Rupert and the mouth of

coats are in much better condition than in the fall.

Experience has proved that in hunting bear the best course to pursue, is to select an inlet, with



SHAWATLANS LAKE AROUND WHICH THERE IS EXCELLENT HUNTING

the Skeena should prove a veritable Elysium. April and May are the best months for this form of sport for, although somewhat harder to get, their

steep, thinly timbered shores, containing a number of rock and snow slides. By making a close and careful scrutiny of the mountain sides with a strong field glass one will be almost sure to find them browsing on little open patches of early spring vegetation. The fact that bear spend the winter in a comatose condition in the caves and holes in which they hibernate, necessitates them working overtime and as soon as they turn out in the spring they start to rustle in order to fatten up and get in good shape for another winter. For this reason they are liable to be found at almost any time of the day that one looks for them.

A gasoline launch is almost a necessity for following this form of sport, as sometimes, even without landing, it is possible to get a good shot from the boat. Both black and grizzly bear are comparatively easily obtained by hunting in this fashion.

At the time of the opening of the hunting season, September the first, bear are also very numerous on the various creeks of this part of British Columbia. If it happens to be a dry season, and the creeks are low, they will be found on the beach near the mouths of the small streams.

While cruising timber in the fall a few seasons ago, the writer saw as many as ten black bear on one creek. If the season is a wet one, and there is plenty of water in the creeks, the salmon, their favorite food, will be away up the streams, and it will be necessary if one wishes to obtain good sport to camp out for a night or so, some distance up from the shores of the lake, as there being plenty of food easily obtainable by brute force, he will only feed for a short period each day in the early morning and evening. He is then much more wary and difficult to get a shot at. As a matter of fact it is really a pity to shoot them at this season of the year, as their hides are valueless owing to the looseness of the hair.

Deer shooting abounds in the district, and these animals are to be obtained almost anywhere along the coast in great quantities. At the start of the open season in September, they are still pretty high up and require real hunting, but later on, as the snow gradually arrives, they are driven down to the lower levels and during October, November and December—the latter month especially—are to be met with almost anywhere a short distance in from the shore. The Northern deer are of a far superior quality to the little runts that inhabit the islands of the lower coast. The flesh is firmer, of a better flavor, and the deer generally seem to be a great deal larger and fatter. To the man who is fond of

wild fowl shooting, no place could offer greater attractions than does this district. Duck and geese abound on the Queen Charlotte Islands. A visit to these islands is well worth while, apart from the sport to be obtained. Nowhere on the coast will one come across such a number of quaint oldtime Indian villages, with their historic totem poles and century old graves. Wonderful marshes, a mass of wild cranberry bushes, on which the wild geese feed, are to be

down by the snow at this time, however, and if one is of a determined nature and not afraid of hard work, some good shooting can be obtained.

As a guide for the possible sportsman, the following information as regards the districts where the different kinds of game are to be found, may prove useful.

Bear in the spring may be discovered on Gardiners and Cascade inlets, whilst in the fall Kimsquit, South Bentinet Arm, Kwaina Sound, and Gardiners Inlet are good for grizzly and black bear on almost any creek where the salmon run.

The best places for wild fowl on the Queen Charlotte Islands are Maset Inlet and Viragos Sound.

Porcher Island simply abounds in deer and is by far the easiest place to shoot them owing to the vast stretches of open meadow land.

Pitt and Princess Royal Islands are good, but the thickness of the bush makes them much harder to hunt.

For a good all round place for sport, it is hard to excel Kiewmugget Inlet. Near here are several lakes which afford excellent duck and geese shooting.

Taking it altogether the entire coast of Northern British Columbia affords the sportsman a variety of first-class hunting, shooting and fishing all the year round almost, that would be hard to beat in any part of the world. Although the country is fast becoming settled it is impossible for the district, large as it is, to be very much affected by the inrush of settlers.

Nearly every man living in Prince Rupert or the vicinity takes an opportunity if the chance occurs to get out into the woods with a gun or rifle and have a bit of sport at least once or twice a year.

For the man who comes here solely for sport, it is best to hire a competent guide and a gasoline launch, the cost of which will not be found unreasonable, when he will be assured the best possible sport that a man who loves the wilds could hope to obtain anywhere.

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