

# **European Dipper, Providentially Equipped to Hunt: Flying, Rowing, and Walking Underwater**

**Dr. James J. S. Johnson**



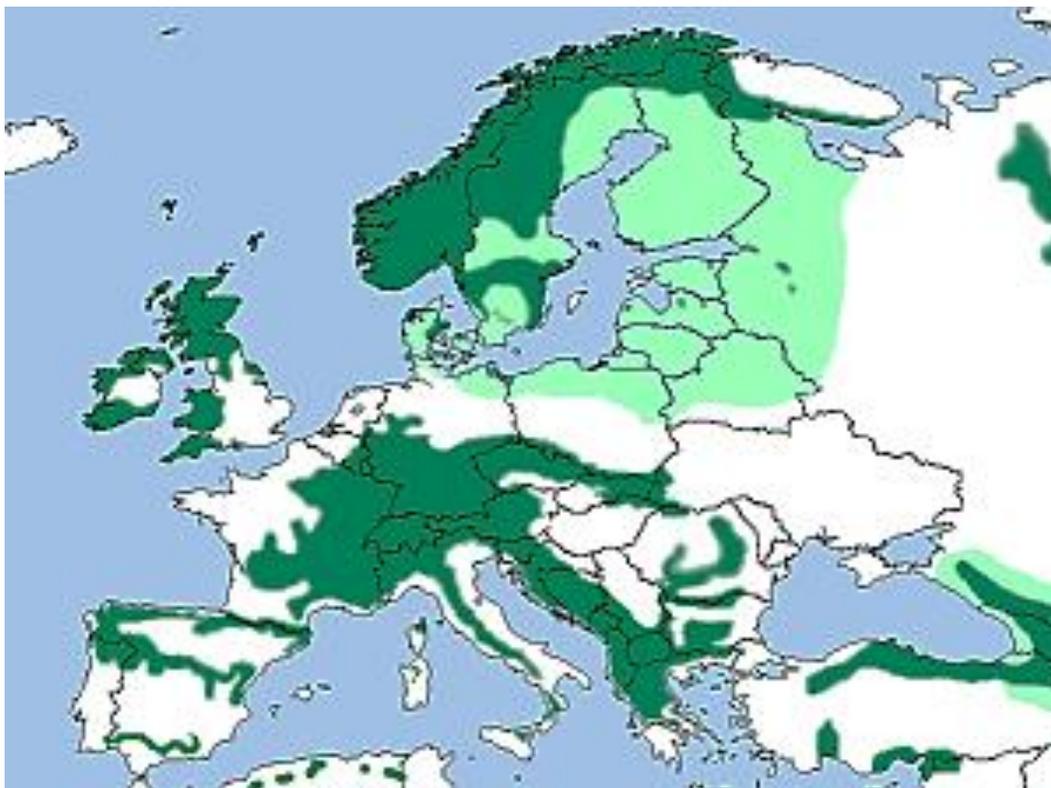
Take therefore no thought for tomorrow; because tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto today is the evil thereof.  
**(Matthew 6:34)**

1. The official bird of Norway is the **White-throated Dipper** (*Cinclus cinclus*), a/k/a the **European Dipper** and the **Water Ouzel**. Unlike the **American Dipper** (*Cinclus mexicanus*, which is also known regionally as the “Water Ouzel”, but is dark-black all over), it has a mix of colors: brown head, white throat/bib, chestnut belly, and blackish back and tail. It’s designed to forage under water, but not like a dabbling duck. Rather, this bird dips, flies, rows, and even walks under water to catch its food. Unsurprisingly, evolutionists have no plausible explanation for how this behavior originated, much less why this small bird is so skilled in these strategic

submarine stunts. (Animal behaviors that purposefully and beneficially utilize providential anatomies and physiologies cannot be explained as accidentally acquired habits gained by trial and error because one error, such as miscalculating how much food energy is needed to migrate during migration, often would be fatal and stop reproductive success.

1. [See James J. S. Johnson, “Withstanding Winter Weather: Super-Cool Creatures Can’t Be Lucky Products of Evolutionary Magic”, **Acts & Facts**, 47(7):21, posted at <https://www.icr.org/article/withstanding-winter-weather> .]

This bird needs running freshwater, because that is where its primary source of food resides. And Norway has lots of fast-running freshwater, especially as mountain snow melts and flows downhill, in crevices, waterfalls, streams, and other drainage pathways that lead westward to the sea. As the range map (*below -- with dark green showing year-round residence*) shows, this little bird is known to range over all of Norway, as a year-round resident.



This passerine (i.e., perching songbird) bird is deemed an “aquatic” bird, due to its familiar habit of dipping into freshwater for food – and “walking” across the streambed as it fishes (underwater) for insect larvae and other edible morsels.



Specifically, this dipper has characteristic behavioral movements fitted for acquiring its diet from lotic freshwater habitats: (1) as it perches near quick-flowing stream-waters, it often (and suddenly – some say “spasmodically”) bobs, with its tail propped up (somewhat like a wren), near the splashing water; and (2) it dives into such lotic waters, sometimes after wading into the water’s edge: then submerges itself by quickly plunging in (or diving in), with a small splash. While underwater it seems to swim, though its wings actually “fly” underwater (like a penguin), ---- or (when the current is strong) the submerged bird vigorously “rows” its sturdy wings, like oars, to resist the under-current, in order to steady its underwater position.



The Dipper can use its strong prehensile toes (i.e., gripping with its feet, almost like a human hand) to grab onto projecting substrates on the bottom of a stream, while simultaneously straining its muscles (and keeping its head bent down so that it can see what is on the streambed) to prevent it from rising to the water's surface – thus giving the appearance that it is “walking on the bottom” of the stream!

While underwater the dipper collects its food (which is often “epibenthic”, i.e., located on top of the stream-bottom sediments), such as caddisfly larvae (and other insect larvae), as well as small freshwater mollusks, fish, and amphibians – and a favorite freshwater crustacean, the thin amphipod shrimp (of the genus *Gammarus*, a genus containing marine “scud”, estuarial, and freshwater shrimps known for their detritivorous / scavenging habits).



White-throated Dipper aka European Dipper

What a strange bird!

Yet the European Dipper is determined to use its anatomical equipment and its muscular strength, to get enough food for the present day, even as it appears to defy gravity while it does. God equipped this bird with the remarkable skills it needs to reap the riches of freshwater streams to supply its daily needs (which makes perfect sense when we remember God's providential care of wild birds --

see **Matthew 6:34**; see also James J. S. Johnson, “Survival of the Fitted: God’s Providential Programming”, *Acts & Facts*, 39(10):17-18 (October 2010), posted at <https://www.icr.org/article/survival-fitted-gods-providential-programming/> .)

It may not be a huge buffet banquet table, underwater – by our standards – but it is enough – so the industrious bird gets to eat what it needs, one day at a time.

*Just face one day of challenges at a time – what a concept!*

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (**Matthew 6:34** KJV)

><> JJSJ [profjjsj@verizon.net](mailto:profjjsj@verizon.net)

