

SEA OTTER-EXTINCT?



THE SEA OTTER R. Bruce Horsfall in Nature Magazine

Romance of America's Most Valuable Fur Animal

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

IS THE sea otter extinct? Has this most valuable of all American fur-bearing animals gone the way of the great auk and the passenger pigeon? The fate of the sea otter will not be officially known for a year or more. In 1927 there will presumably be a renewal in some form of the agreement for the protection of the fur seal which has been in existence since 1912 among the United States, Great Britain, Japan and Russia. The negotiations will presumably show whether or not the sea otter is extinct. If it is not extinct, an extraordinary international effort may be made to bring it back.

Why should it particularly concern the people of the richest and most powerful nation of earth whether or not it is extinct the sea otter—an animal of which nine out of ten have probably never heard?

Well, all good Americans should have a deep and abiding interest in the history of their country. And the history of the United States can no more be written without the sea otter than without the beaver.

It was the beaver, as everyone knows, that led to the exploration of the continent. It was the trapper and fur trader in pursuit of beaver skins who mapped the country and blazed the trails for the settler's covered wagon, and for the railroad and for the march of the American people across the continent. It narrowly escaped extinction, but is now safe in the national parks.

The extinction of the sea otter now seems to be an open question. The animal has apparently vanished from the eye of the white man. Yet natives at infrequent intervals report seeing it. And occasionally a pelt is marketed by poachers.

On the other hand, the sea otter is neither polygamous nor gregarious. So there are no rookeries as in the case of the fur seal. Moreover the sea otter is an aquatic animal and seldom visits the land except in the heavy storms of winter. In the spring and summer it goes out to sea for a hundred miles or so. It is here that the single cub is born, the mother usually resorting to a mass of floating kelp. So the sea otter is usually found in families, rather than in herds.

Now, here is why the history of the United States cannot be written without the sea otter:

Peter the Great of Russia, on his death-bed in 1725, issued a decree that Vitus Behring, a Dane in his employ, should cross Siberia to Kamchatka, build ships and search for the mainland supposed to lie east of Japan. The result was that in 1742 Behring's men returned from Alaska with furs of the sea otter, which they had used for coats and bedding, and found a ready market at \$200 a pelt. Thenceforth the sea otter grounds of the North Pacific were as important to

Russia as were the gold mines of Mexico and Peru to Spain. Within five years after 1742 there were 77 profit-sharing companies at work catching sea otter.

Out of this came directly the Russian occupation of the Northwest Coast as far south as San Francisco; the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 that checked Russia's vision of an American Pacific empire; the acquisition of the "Oregon Territory" and the purchase from Russia by the United States of Alaska in 1867 for \$7,000,000.

An English exploring expedition headed by Capt. James Cook sailed into Nootka Sound in 1778. The sailors bought sea otter pelts for trinkets and sold them for \$100 each in Canton—as the Chinese had no heat in their houses and knew nothing of woolen cloth. New England learned of this about 1785. Forthwith New England merchants established a flourishing and increasing triangular trade: New England notions to the Pacific Northwest; furs to Canton; teas and silks to New England.

New Englanders enjoyed a practical monopoly of this triangular trade. The Russians were barred from Chinese ports. The East Indian company had the exclusive right in England to trade with China, but could not send its vessels to the Pacific Northwest for furs. The South Sea company could get furs, but could not take them to China. So the Americans and Russians worked together, ignoring the Spaniard in the Californias.

Out of this came the Mexican War, the annexation of California, the gold rush of 1849, the transcontinental railroad of 1869 and the hastening of the American march across the continent. The original habitat of the sea otter extended from Mexico to the Aleutian Islands. It was found in largest numbers off the coasts of Upper and Lower California and on the coast islands, including those of the Santa Barbara channel. San Francisco bay was also a favorite haunt.

After commercialized hunting began the white man took fleets of bidarkas (small skin canoes) on sailing ships to the hunting grounds, the natives living on the ship for months at a time. Another plan was to leave small colonies of native hunters from Alaska all along the coast.

So fast and furious was the pursuit of the sea otter and so indiscriminate the slaughter—its pelt is prime the year round—that the trade diminished rapidly after 1820. Later expeditions took only hundreds of skins where thousands had been the catch. In 1895 a catch of fifty pelts was the exception.

How many skins were marketed in

China is a matter of estimate. William Sturgis, one of the most successful of the New England traders, estimated the number at approximately 18,000 for the year 1801. For the eight years between 1804 and 1812 these figures are given:

Year	Skins	Year	Skins
1804-5	11,000	1808-9	7,944
1805-6	17,448	1809-10	11,000
1806-7	14,251	1810-11	9,292
1807-8	16,647	1811-12	11,593

The profits in the sea otter fur trade with China were enormous, though fluctuating greatly. Sometimes competition between the traders raised the price, demanded by the Indians to high figures. Sometimes the Chinese market became glutted.

The average price for sea otter skins at Canton was somewhere around \$40. In 1785 prime skins brought \$120 each; in 1802, the price was \$20; three years later sales were easy at \$50. The record price for a pelt is said to be \$2,500, place of sale unknown.

Some astonishing stories of the early days are told—and they are apparently authentic. William Sturgis (previously mentioned) on one voyage collected 6,000 skins; he purchased in one half-day 500 skins with goods worth a dollar and a half in Boston. The same skins sold for \$40 each in the Canton market. Richard Cleveland, like Sturgis a well-known New England trader, bought 300 skins from the Norfolk Sound Indians for two yards of cotton cloth each; he sold them in Canton for \$23 each.

The prize story—and it is a pity that names are lacking—tells how a most fortunate trader secured \$8,000 worth of sea otter skins for a rusty steel chisel!

The sea otter, as seen from the accompanying reproduction of a painting by R. Bruce Horsfall in Nature Magazine, has a body suggesting that of the common seal. The animal is from three to four feet long, including a nine-inch tail, and weighs from 80 to 110 pounds. The flat, oar-like hind feet, suggest the flappers of the seal; the forefeet are very small. There is little or no neck and the head is blunt. It feeds on mussels, crustaceans and possibly on tender kelp growths.

The fur is generally of a deep liver-brown color, frosted with a scanty growth of long, silver-tipped stiffer hairs, and underlain with a beautiful soft woolly fur which gives the pelt its value. The skin of a mature animal is about five feet long and more than two feet wide. The fur is especially adaptable to a gilt or golden dye. In the old days it was thus colored by the Russians for use in court garments.

"Apparently not, according to documentary evidence. Practically all the advertising I have seen shows very few persons but a child or two here and there and any number of large and husky ladies dressed in nothing much. I have reached the conclusion that when the latter are not loitering or strolling on the beach they probably are exercising their muscles by cultivating the soil or otherwise busy themselves with tasks that would be done by the men, if there were any there."—Kansas City Star.

The KITCHEN CABINET

(C. 1926, Western Newspaper Union.)

"Happiness is the natural and the normal; it is one of the concomitants of righteousness, which means living in right relations with the laws of our being and the laws of the universe about us. No clear-thinking man or woman can be an apostle of despair."

THINGS YOU WILL ENJOY

Soups are always a welcome addition to any meal on a cold day. Try the following:

Oatmeal Soup.—Soak over night one cupful of oatmeal in two quarts of mutton broth or water. In the morning bring to a boil and simmer on the back of the stove

or in a fireless cooker for three to four hours. An hour before serving prepare the following: Cook one good-sized onion chopped, in two tablespoonfuls of flour, two teaspoonfuls of butter until delicately browned; add four tablespoonfuls of flour, two teaspoonfuls of sugar, a dash of cayenne and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, add to the soup with one cupful of tomato pulp and serve hot.

Breaded Pork Chops.—Cut out the bone from the chops and skewer, then press into shape. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and put into a frying pan, sprinkle the top of each with crumbs. Pour boiling water to one-half the depth of the chops, cover closely and bake in a slow oven for one and one-half hours. Remove the cover, sprinkle with buttered crumbs and bake until the crumbs are brown. Arrange on a hot platter, garnish with celery tips and serve with tomato sauce.

Veal Rolls.—With a wooden potato masher, pound slices of veal to one-fourth of an inch in thickness. Cut into pieces five inches by three. Chop the trimmings with one-eighth as much fat salt pork. Add by measure half as much bread crumbs as meat, season highly with salt, pepper, poultry dressing, onion and lemon juice, with four fresh mushrooms finely chopped. Moisten the mixture with beaten egg and hot water as much as possible and still hold its shape. Spread each piece of steak nearly to the edge with the mixture, roll and fasten with skewers. Shape the remaining mixture into balls and cook with the rolls. Dredge with flour and cook in butter until brown. Place in a casserole, cover with thin cream and bake one hour.

Norwegian Potatoes.—Slice one small onion and cook in two tablespoonfuls of fat, add one pint of diced, raw potatoes and one cupful of diced carrots, also raw. Put into a baking dish, add salt to season and boiling water to just cover the vegetables. Bake until the vegetables are tender. Drain off the surplus water, add two tablespoonfuls of butter and let brown uncovered. Cook about one hour.

Cinnamon Toast With Apples.—Prepare toast well buttered and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Serve hot with a slice of fried apple on each.

Heat-Producing Foods.

During the winter months, in the Northern states, heat producing foods are needed, as cold uses up the body heat as the body is more active during cold weather. The stomach is able to digest more hearty foods which in warm weather are not relished. The following are a few pork dishes which are reasonable.

Sauerkraut and Spare Ribs.—Take a nice spare rib and wrap it around two quarts or more of sauerkraut. Roast in a moderate oven until the ribs are brown and well done. For those who prefer the sauerkraut boiled, add pigs' feet to the kettle of kraut and cook for several hours.

Pork Tenderloin, French Style.—Wipe the tenderloin and cut across in slices about an inch thick. Flatten each piece, season with salt and pepper and roll up. Have ready smoking hot fat and brown the tenderloin, then lower the heat and cook slowly for twenty minutes. Pour off all the fat except two tablespoonfuls, add three tablespoonfuls of flour and a little salt. As soon as the flour is golden brown add milk, stirring until the right consistency. Season to taste and pour around the meat when serving.

Broiled Pork Tenderloin.—Split the tenderloins in two and broil over coals or gas flame. Have the heat intense at first, then when well seared on both sides continue cooking until the meat is puffed and well done. Beef tenderloins are served rare, but pork never. Season with salt, pepper and plenty of butter.

Stuffed Pork Tenderloin.—Select medium-sized tenderloins and wipe with a cloth dipped in cold water. Cut the meat lengthwise and pull until it is almost split in two. Make a dressing of bread seasoning, a little canned corn, summer savory, onion, and one egg beaten light. Spread with the dressing and place another tenderloin cut nearly in two and flattened on top. Sew the edges with a coarse thread and bake in a moderate oven three-quarters of an hour, lowering the heat after the first twenty minutes. Baste frequently and dot with bits of butter.

Antiquated.
He sat in his chair at the end of a busy day.
"Are there any fashions in that paper, Jack?" asked his wife, anxious to borrow his newspaper.
"Yes, but they're quite out of date. It's this morning's paper."

Slow for Nell.
"Have you heard about Nell's eloping with her father's handsome French chauffeur?"
"Mercy, no!"
"Neither have I. I wonder what's delaying her?"

Extraordinary Frankness.
First Visitor—My dear, these cakes are as hard as stone.
Second Visitor—I know. Didn't you hear her say when she passed them around, "Take your pick?"

Nellie Maxwell

Scraps of Humor



AN OPTIMIST

"Gosh! You had a close call! That certainly was an awful accident!" exclaimed the friend who had dropped in at the hospital to call on the bandage victim.

"Yes," he replied dreamily; "but thank goodness I got an eye full of what I was looking at before the car hit that telephone post and I was knocked unconscious."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Big Fish in Home Puddle

McAllister—Those pants are about eight sizes too big for you. Where did you get them?

Lancaster—A tailor in my home town made them for me.

McAllister—They look as though they had been made for a man twice your size.

Lancaster—Well, I'm a bigger man in my home town.—Loew's Circuit.

MORE THAN A SECOND



Mother (to departing caller)—You've been kissing my daughter in there, young man?

Caller—Why—why, how could I? I only stayed for a second.

Mother (sternly)—Stayed for a tenth or a twelfth, you should say!

He Spoke English

A native minister in India was telling the missionary in charge of the district that a sparrow had built a nest on the roof of his house.

"Is there anything in the nest yet?" asked the missionary.

"Yes," replied the Indian, proud of his English; "the sparrow has pups."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Things Were Brighter

Jones met his old friend Smith, who had been out of a job for months, and the following conversation took place:

"Well," said Jones, "how's things? Any brighter?"

"Brighter!" repeated Smith. "Why, things are so bad at home that the mice are giving themselves up to the cat."

With a Crook in His Tail

"What kind of a dog is that cur?" "He's a shepherd."

"Oh. Then that's the reason he has a sheepish look, is it?"

Borrowed, Too

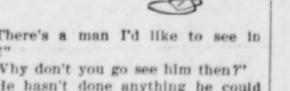
"You gotta admit that I've got the manners of a gentleman."

"Well, I suppose they were borrowed, too."

Very Much So

Brunette—Is Jack stingy?
Blond—Stingy? Say, he gets in an uncomfortable position to eat so he won't eat so much.

NOT THERE YET



"There's a man I'd like to see in jail!"

"Why don't you go see him then?"

"He hasn't done anything he could be jailed for yet."

Antiquated

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"Are there any fashions in that paper, Jack?" asked his wife, anxious to borrow his newspaper.

"Yes, but they're quite out of date. It's this morning's paper."

Slow for Nell

"Have you heard about Nell's eloping with her father's handsome French chauffeur?"

"Mercy, no!"

"Neither have I. I wonder what's delaying her?"

SUFFERED MANY YEARS WITH FEMALE TROUBLE PE-RU-NA LIKE A GIFT FROM HEAVEN



Mrs. Katie Scheffel, R. F. D. No. 5, Lowell, Ohio

"I have been suffering for years with female trouble. Was operated on five years ago. It relieved me some but I did not regain my strength. Two years later was taken sick and bedfast several months. I treated a long while without much relief. I was discouraged, my mind affected, so nervous I could neither eat or sleep and unable to do anything.

We tried several doctors but one after another gave up my case as hopeless. Finally a good friend advised me to try Pe-ru-na. I did. It relieved me almost immediately. Your medical department said I was suffering from chronic catarrh of the system. I began taking your medicine in March, 1914, and continued until August. I took ten bottles of Pe-ru-na and felt like a new person. Your medicine seemed like a gift from Heaven. It was like coming from darkness into light.

We have used your medicine since for coughs, colds and grip with good results. We will always keep it on hand. I weigh twenty-five pounds more than I ever did, eat and sleep well and can do a good day's work. Everybody says I look fine. Even the doctors are surprised. I cannot thank you enough and will always recommend Pe-ru-na to sufferers from catarrh."

MRS. KATIE SCHEFFEL

R. F. D. No. 5, Lowell, O.

Mrs. Scheffel is only one of many thousand women in the world, who owe their present health to Pe-ru-na. The record of this medicine is a proud one as Pe-ru-na has held the confidence of both sexes for fifty years or more.

If your trouble is due to a catarrhal inflammation in any organ or part of the body, do like Mrs. Scheffel. Try Pe-ru-na. Insist upon having the original and reliable remedy for catarrhal conditions. You won't be sorry.

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Clear Your Skin With **Cuticura** Soap to Cleanse Ointment to Heal Absolutely Nothing Better

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BLACKHEADS cannot be hidden. Get rid of them now by regular treatments with **Resinol**

JAPANESE CLOTHING

"The ordinary Japanese costume," says E. W. Clement in "A Handbook of Modern Japan," "may be said to consist of a shirt, a loose silk gown fastened at the waist with a silk sash, short socks with separate places for the big toes and either straw sandals or wooden clogs. For ceremonial occasions, a divided skirt and a silk hat adorned with the family crest are used; these are called respectively

bakama and haori. In winter two or three padded gowns are added, and in all seasons many persons go barefooted, barelegged and bareheaded. The female garb does not differ greatly from the male costume except that the sash is larger and richer and the gown is made of lighter fabrics."

The Adamless Eden

"As there are few or no men in Florida—" began J. Fuller Bloom. "No men in Florida?" we astoundedly echoed.