

Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist

Del Monte Lodge, Pebble Beach, Calif. — Looking down from the Carmel-San Simeon highway, a ledge-like road which clings precariously to the cliffs above the great Pacific, a glad sight greeted me—a herd of the rarest and most valuable of all animals—sea otters.

I wish all of you might have seen it and rejoiced with me. Less than 25 years ago, these



sea otters, owners of beautiful fur, were believed extinct, thanks to the ungodly rapacity of the white man.

For example, in San Francisco bay, one group of hunters within a week, working from small boats, knocked 800 dead with cars and clubs.

Once these friendly frivolous creatures lived by the hundreds of thousands along the cold shores of the North Pacific, their range extending like a giant 6,000-mile horseshoe from southern California up to the Aleutians and down the Kurile chain to Japan. Mostly, they congregated in sheltered bays where there was help in which they could truss up their young while they dived down a hundred feet for sea urchins—abalone, cuttlefish and clams.

Part of the animal's undoing was its friendliness. At first man could easily approach them, and besides they have a fanatic devotion to their young. When a market-hunter captured the baby in the kelp the parents would lose all sense of caution and become easy prey for clubs, spears and rifles. Usually those shot would sink to the bottom, unrecovered.

Looking down upon them to-day—a small remnant, but still they seemed a part of the water, as they are: they are born in the water, they eat in the water, grow old in the water, and die in the water.

Size of Mastiff
When full grown, these fabulous seal-like mammals are about the size of a mastiff—but with a low slung body, a heavy flattened tail, big webbed hind feet, and paddle-like front feet, small and adapted for holding food and young. When wet their beautiful dark brown fur glistens—at close view the long white hairs give it a frosty appearance. They make a friendly family group—the male caresses the female by stroking her; the female

splashes and plays with her young one, between times grooming it carefully with her tongue and claws; and the young nurses blissfully from the floating mother's breast, while the half-grown disport themselves nearby.

Because the water in which they live is always cold with little change in temperature, their elegant fur is extremely dense. In fact, you can stretch a sea otter pelt half again its normal size and still not be able to force your fingers through the thick hair to touch the hide. And regardless of season, summer or winter, this most costly of furs is always in prime condition.

When I say costly, the prices ranged from a low of \$30 a pelt in the early 1800's—which was big money—to better than \$2,000 in modern days. So, in 1884, a single ship under command of Alexander Barano sailed back to Russia with 15,000 pelts—by today's prices, a cargo worth more than \$30,000,000.

Value Brought Destruction
The sea otter's tremendous value, of course, brought about its own destruction: in 1737 the white man first learned of its beauty. Within 74 years the species was nearly extinct. But not before making history. Bering's voyage of discovery to Alaska in 1741 was actually in quest of this beautiful fur to make a cloak for the Empress Catherine. Later, it brought the Russians down our west coast to Fort Bragg, within a 100 miles of San Francisco. It helped to bring the Spanish missions north—otter skins were one of the greatest sources of revenue for early Spanish missions. At Mission Dolores, in San Francisco, a processing room seldom contained less than 100 pelts.

Finally, though it was thought that the sea otter might be extinct, a small band of conservationists got an international law slapped down to make the selling or even the possession of sea

National Guardsmen To Start Camp June 16

Portland—(U.P.)—Oregon and Washington National Guardsmen of the 41st Infantry division open their annual summer training encampment at Ft. Lewis, Wash., June 16 under the command of Gen. George S. Cook of Seattle.

The division will be at its greatest strength since World War II with nearly 10,000 men enlisted.

otter skins illegal. For a time it seemed as though action had come too late—but after World War I, a group of sea otters was found in the Aleutians. Later, another group here south of Monterey—the nucleus of the herd I looked upon today.

And now, I am told there are 400 in this area; together with 4,000 or so in the Aleutians. Otters, despite their beautiful furs now are free to feed, sleep, play in the surf. A gory page of fur history has been turned; and now, happily, we look upon a new leaf—that of conservation, thanks to a small band of determined life savers!

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Each week new submissions will be considered. Sorry, I simply can't answer your many friendly letters. Please address your letter to: Is That So! c/o Medford Mail Tribune, Box 575, Sausalito, Calif.

Knights of Columbus Elects Officers Here

The 48th annual State Convention of the Oregon Knights of Columbus concluded a three-day session in Medford last week.

The closing sessions included election of officers and delegates to the supreme convention in Detroit, Mich., this August. The Dalles was selected as the convention city for 1957.

Saturday evening the convention banquet was served to over 400 officers, delegates and guests at the St. Mary's gymnasium. Dan Hull was toastmaster.

Elected officers were Fred J. Schwab, Mt. Angel, state deputy; Edward J. Bell, Stayton, state

secretary; Eugene P. Roden, Pendleton, state treasurer; Arthur H. Flynn, Hillsboro, state advocate; and Joseph Bernards Jr., Milwaukie, state warden.

Delegates to the supreme convention in Detroit are Ross Coleman, St. Paul; Ed Zielosowski, St. Helens; William G. Ely, Klamath Falls; and Carl Kebeck, Cottage Grove.

St. Helens Knights of Columbus were winners of the membership trophy, and the scrapbook trophy was won by the Lakeview Knight's of Columbus. Charles Duby, Baker, received the special district deputy trophy for outstanding accomplishments.

The greatest vegetable oil source in the world is believed to be the Amazon valley in South America.

4-H Club News

Antelope Club
Several activities are planned by members of Antelope 4-H Forestry club. The next meeting will be held June 24, on 4-H Sunday, at the home of Dianna and Arthur Gardener on Yankee creek when the group will first attend church at Eagle Point. They will picnic and swim at the Gardener home.

On June 29 they will make a camping trip to the Klamath river and in late August they plan another camping trip to Blue canyon near the foot of Mt. McLoughlin.

On May 18 and 19 they were at Azalea where they met jointly with other members of forestry clubs from Douglas, Josephine, Coos and Jackson counties. The

Antelope club won a treasure hunt and received a gavel as a prize. They also participated in a number of other activities Saturday at Azalea.

Nyla Murray, Reporter.
Read and Use Classified Ads

Salem — (U.P.) — Charles D. Schmidt, 42, assistant superintendent of Salem schools since 1954, has been named superintendent.

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180 Only	Men's Better Cotton "T" Shirts . . . 38 to 46 . . . White . . . To Clear	2/1.00
100 Only	Chenille Bedspreads . . . Full and Twin . . . Many Colors . . . To Clear	2.50
60 Only	Better Shower and Window Curtains . . . Plastic . . . Good Patterns . . . To Clear	1.00
120 Only	Men's Better Sport Shirts . . . Wash 'N' Wear . . . Short Sleeves . . . S,M,L . . . To Clear	1.33
100 Pair	Boys' Better Jeans . . . 13 3/4 oz. . . Western Cut Denim . . . 12,14,16 . . . To Clear	1.00
60 Pair	Men's Better Gabardine Slacks . . . 32 to 38 . . . Wrinkle Resistant . . . To Clear	4.00
22 Only	Better Chenille Bedspreads . . . Full and Twin . . . Jacquard . . . To Clear	5.00
100 Only	Boys' Short Sleeve Cotton Sport Shirts . . . 4 to 16 . . . Summer Materials . . . To Clear	1.00
200 Pair	Ladies Better Casual and Dress Shoes . . . 5 1/2-9 . . . Leather and Canvas . . . To Clear	2.44
132 Only	Toddlers Polo Shirts . . . 1 to 4 . . . Pastel Colors . . . Snap Shoulder Opening . . . To Clear	.50
14 Pair	Men's Much Better Whipcord Pants . . . 100% Wool . . . 30 to 40 Broken . . . To Clear	8.00
84 Only	Ladies Better Slips . . . Embossed Cotton . . . 34 to 42 . . . White . . . Lace Trimmed . . . To Clear	1.44
100 Only	Men's Better Pajamas . . . Cotton Plisse, Short Sleeves . . . A,B,C . . . Coat or Pullover . . . To Clear	1.88
30 Pair	Ready Made Drapes, Unlined . . . Rayon Acetate . . . Rose, Aqua, Eggshell, 48x84" . . . To Clear	Pr. 2.44
13 Only	Better Shop Coats . . . Grey Herringbone . . . 36 to 44 . . . To Clear	3.00
27 Pair	Men's Better Work Oxfords . . . Leather Uppers, Neoprene Soles, 6 to 11 . . . To Clear	pr. 4.44
50 Only	Toddlers' Better Short Slacks . . . Bib Front . . . 1 to 4 . . . Gay Colors . . . To Clear	1.00
96 Only	Girls' Better Sleeveless Blouses . . . 7 to 14 . . . Assorted Prints . . . To Clear	.77
600 Pair	Ladies Much Better Knee High Hose . . . 60-15 . . . Sizes 8 1/2 to 11 . . . To Clear	2 pr. 1.15
60 Only	Boys' Better Cotton Sweat Shirts . . . White and Grey . . . 10 to 16 . . . To Clear	.66
30 Only	Women's Much Better Plastic and Corde' Clutch Purses . . . To Clear	.50
52 Only	Ladies' Much Better All Wool Short Coats . . . Entire Stock . . . To Clear	9.00
55 Pair	Men's Boxer Denim Sport Slacks . . . 30 to 34 . . . Faded Blue, Charcoal, Pink . . . To Clear	1.88
72 Only	Much Better Rayon Panels . . . Full 42"x81" Size . . . White . . . To Clear	.66
120 Pair	Boy's Boxer Shorts . . . 4 to 12 . . . Denim and Twills . . . To Clear	.50
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64 Pair	Children's Leather Barefoot Sandals . . . 6-12 . . . Red, Brown . . . To Clear	1.77
19 Only	Ladies' Much Better Butcher Rayon Suits . . . 11, 12, 13 . . . Navy . . . To Clear	4.00
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22 Only	Ladies Better Uniforms . . . Dacron Plisse . . . 12 to 16 . . . White . . . To Clear	5.00
300 Yards	Better Barkcloth Drapery Yardage . . . Excellent Patterns . . . 45" Wide . . . To Clear	yd. .66
120 Only	36" Square Silk Head Squares . . . Gay, Floral Prints . . . To Clear	2/1.00
35 Only	Men's Much Better Wool Sport Coats . . . 35 to 44 . . . Grey and Brown Tones . . . To Clear	15.00
400 Yards	Much Better Percales and Broadcloths . . . Discontinued Patterns . . . To Clear	yd. .29
100 Pkgs.	Men's Bandana Work Handkerchiefs . . . Red and Blue . . . 18" Square . . . To Clear	8/1.00
40 Only	Women's Better Pajamas . . . Cotton Plisse . . . Short Style . . . 32 to 38 . . . To Clear	1.00
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30 Pair	Better Cafe Curtains . . . Smart Cotton Prints . . . 30" Length . . . To Clear	1.66
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60 Only	Men's Orlon Polo Shirts . . . Gaucho Style . . . Machine Washable . . . S,M,L . . . To Clear	1.88
100 Only	Men's Better Long Sleeve Sport Shirts . . . Gingham Plaids . . . S,M,L . . . To Clear	1.50
19 Only	Girls' Better Summer Skirts . . . Cottons and Butcher Rayons . . . 7 to 14 . . . To Clear	1.50
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