

make sure that the mother had returned. Again I had to have the nest pointed out to me. The yellow grass had been combed up and drawn in at the top with cunning art to conceal its enclosed treasures. There the old Duck was, however. Walking up softly and speaking in low tones we were able to get so near that we could see her eye, the fine brown pencilling of her head and breast, and the blue speculum of her wing.

Early the next morning we again made our way eagerly to the nest. Could our tracks have betrayed her to a prowling enemy? Had the sun been too hot for her eggs? What should we find? There she sat on her grassy nest, and—under the edge of one wing to our delight we discovered a protruding patch of yellow down. Misinterpreting our excited comments, after a courageous stand she burst away from almost under our hands, coming down in the grass a few yards away, waddling along dragging her wings in appealing decoy. Turning our backs we hurried guiltily down the beach. When we ventured to look back she was swimming around on the lake, picking about with apparent indifference; but even as we watched over our shoulders, back she swam, straight for the shore. How fast she went! When nearly there she stopped and took one last look at us, then quickly climbed up the bank and across the beach to the nest.

At sunset we were again at the lake and went to see what had happened to the little family in whose fortunes we had become so much interested. Mother and duckling were both gone! Had the old Duck despaired of the rest of her eggs and hurried off to get safe cover for her one small nestling? Where had she taken it? We scanned the water eagerly. She was nowhere to be seen. But she must know the secrets of lake and shore, and could choose well the safe harbors for tender little ones.

As we stood thinking of the tragedies of the deserted home, the sunset light deepened to orange. In the sky overhead a flock of Texas Nighthawks were beating, and as we watched they flew off toward the hills. Just before we turned to go a Night Heron came flying up the shore and lit beside the water, standing silent and motionless, ready for its night's work. The interests of the day had given place to those of the night. Would that we could stay and see all the nocturnal birds and mammals come out under the stars and take up the task of caring for their families! For in the world of the wild sunset does not end the joys and labors of the day. When the stars shine out, another day begins.

*Washington, D. C., May 28, 1916.*

## BOTTA'S VISIT TO CALIFORNIA

By T. S. PALMER

**D**R. PAOLO EMILIO BOTTA (1802-1870), an Italian traveller and archaeologist, spent more than a year in California in 1827 and 1828. This visit was made in the course of a voyage around the world, nine years before the visit of Thomas Nuttall, three or four years before David Douglas reached California, and at about the same time that Dr. Alexander Collie, surgeon on H. M. S. 'Blossom' was on the coast. Prior to 1827 apparently only a few of the most characteristic species of birds such as the thrasher, the valley quail and the condor had been described from California. The thrasher or 'Promerops de

la Californie Septentrionale' and the quail or 'Perdrix de la Californie' had been reported by the French expedition under La Pérouse which visited Monterey in 1786, and specimens of the quail and condor collected by Archibald Menzies, botanist of the English expedition in command of Capt. Vancouver, had been taken to England where they were described in 1797.

With the exception of the botanist Menzies, Collie and Botta were the first naturalists who collected in California. Botta's collections were small and no special report on them was published, but several of the species named in his honor serve to recall his visit. His name is borne by the pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*) which is common in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay; by an unidentified squirrel (*Sciurus bottae*), by the peculiar rubber snake (*Charina bottae*), and by *Saurothera bottae* now regarded as one of the synonyms of the Roadrunner. Botta collected the type specimens of the Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*), and Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), and also a young male of the latter species, all of which were described by Lesson. A record of his work may be found in his paper on the Roadrunner' and an account of his trip in Duhaut-Cilly's narrative of the voyage and a brief statement in H. H. Bancroft's 'History of California'.

Botta was born in Turin, Italy, December 6, 1802, and died in his 68th year at Acheres, near Paris, March 29, 1870. He is well known from his archaeological explorations in Arabia, Mesopotamia, and especially in the vicinity of Nineveh. When a young man, not yet 24 years of age, he sailed from Havre, France, in April, 1826, as surgeon on the sailing vessel '*Le Heros*' in command of Capt. Auguste Duhaut-Cilly bound on a three years trading voyage around the world. After touching at several South American ports the '*Heros*' anchored at San Francisco, on January 27, 1827, where she remained six weeks and where during the month of February a number of birds were obtained. During Botta's stay on the coast he spent most of his time at the various Spanish Missions and visited all of the more important ones from Solano to San Diego, some of them two or three times. With the exception of the trips to points in the vicinity of San Francisco and to San Gabriel and San Luis Rey, the journeys were made chiefly in the vessel as it went from port to port. Following is a rough outline of his itinerary as shown by the route of the vessel:

	1827		1828
Jan. 27-Mar. 7—San Francisco.		Oct.—Monterey, and departure Oct. 20 for Callao, Peru.	
Mar.—Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Barbara.			
April—San Pedro, San Diego.		May 3—Arrival at Monterey on return from Peru.	
May-June 10—Trip to Mazatlan, Mexico.		June—Bodega, Ross, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Pedro, Los Angeles, San Gabriel.	
June—San Diego, San Luis Rey, Santa Barbara.		July—San Diego.	
July—San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Jose.		Aug. 27—Departure for Sandwich Islands.	
Aug.—Solano, Santa Cruz, Monterey.			
Sept.—Santa Barbara, San Pedro, Los Angeles, San Gabriel.			

In both of these visits Botta missed meeting Capt. F. W. Beechey and the naturalists on H. M. S. '*Blossom*'. Beechey on his first voyage to Bering Strait to meet Sir John Franklin had been obliged to turn south on the approach of winter and sailed for San Francisco to obtain supplies. Here the '*Blossom*' remained from Nov. 8 to Dec. 25, 1826, while Collie and a party went overland

<sup>1</sup>Description du *Saurothera californiana*, Nouv. Ann. Mus. Hist. Nat., IV, pp. 121-124. pl. 9, 1835.

<sup>2</sup>Bancroft's Works, XX, pp. 128-130, 1835.

to Monterey. Beechey then sailed for Monterey and spent five days (Jan. 1-5, 1827) at that port. On his second visit late in the same year, 1827, he remained three weeks (Oct. 29-Nov. 17) at Monterey, and two weeks (Nov. 19-Dec. 3) at San Francisco. It was during these two visits that the surgeon Dr. Collie collected the California birds which were brought back by the expedition. Thus Botta arrived at San Francisco just a month after Beechey had left that port the first time, and he was absent on his trip to Peru during Beechey's second visit.

The material obtained by Botta was important and formed the basis of the descriptions of several new species. Immediately upon his return to France in the summer of 1829 some of his birds evidently passed into the possession of the Duke of Rivoli as Lesson mentions that the specimens of the hummingbird and the roadrunner which he described that year were contained in the Rivoli collection and were brought back by Botta. These specimens were not labeled with the exact localities where they were obtained and consequently it is important to ascertain as accurately as possible where they were collected. The type localities of the Roadrunner and Anna Hummingbird are given simply as California in the A. O. U. 'Check-List' of 1910, but it is now possible to determine them more accurately. It is probable that the Roadrunner was collected in southern California, and, from the places mentioned above, the type locality may reasonably be assumed as the vicinity of Los Angeles or San Diego. Similarly, San Francisco may be accepted as the type locality of *Calypte anna* since Botta collected here longer than at other places and in the narrative of the voyage hummingbirds are especially mentioned among the birds obtained there in February, 1827.

The narrative of the voyage of the '*Heros*' by Capt. Duhaut-Cilly was published in Paris in 1834-35 under the title 'Voyage autour du Monde'. In 1837 an Italian translation in which were incorporated some notes by Botta was made by his father, Carlo Botta, the eminent Italian historian, and appeared under the title 'Viaggio intorno al Globo' in at least two editions, one published in Turin in 1841, and the other in Naples in 1842. A copy of the Turin edition of the 'Viaggio' is in the Library of Congress in Washington and a copy of the Naples edition is in the collection of Californiana in the Los Angeles Public Library. These works should be carefully examined to see whether they throw any further light on the California collections made by Botta.

Washington, D. C., July 8, 1917.

## SOME BIRDS OF THE DAVIS MOUNTAINS, TEXAS

By AUSTIN PAUL SMITH

THIS article deals with the more interesting of the hundred or more species of birds met with during a six weeks' trip (September 2 to October 16, 1916) to the Davis Mountains. This is the most accessible of the several small ranges which lie between the Pecos River and the Rio Grande, in western Texas. Leaving the Southern Pacific Railway at Marfa, Texas, one goes by auto-stage twenty-two miles to Fort Davis. This little town, charmingly situated at the very base of the mountains, at an altitude of slightly over 5000 feet, is distant about a mile from the opening of Limpia canyon, the principal