



The **OBSE***R***VER**

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

There will be no general meeting for the month of December. Our next meeting will be held January 20, 2011, with a presentation from Andy Engilis, on birding in Chile. See page 8 for other programs planned for 2011.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

Sally Walters, Program Chair

NEW PROGRAM CHAIR

Thank you Lea! Lea Landry is 'retiring' as our Program Chair after having presented us with some outstanding speakers. Our programs have always been well attended thanks to Lea's resourceful and diligent preparation of informative presentations.

Sally Walters will be taking over as our next Program Chair. Sally is a Wildlife Biologist and graduated from Humboldt State University (HSU) in 1979. Early in her career she worked for the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and upon graduating from HSU worked for US Fish and Wildlife Service as a naturalist, and for Caltrans as a biologist. Recently she retired from California State Parks where she worked as the District Ecologist in the Gold Fields District that included several parks in the Sierra foothills and Delta region. She is married to Don Schmoltdt who is also a retired Wildlife Biologist. Both are active birders and have lived in the River Park area of Sacramento since 2001. Please send any potential Thursday night program ideas to BajaOwl@SureWest.net or call 739-6465.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2010-2011

**Saturday, December 4, Daybreak
American River Natural History Wildlife Count**

Lea Landry, 638-1141, llandry@softcom.net

Join Jack Hiele and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway sponsored by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). See further write up at the bottom of page 6.

Saturday, December 18, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Andi Salmi, 691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 26, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422, e-mail: mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, January 2, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610, e-mail: conardc@gmail.com

Other Christmas Bird Counts:

Saturday, December 18. Auburn Christmas Count

Compiler: Deren Ross, (530) 885-9740, derenross@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 19, Putah Creek Christmas Count

Compiler: Steve Hampton, stevehampton@gmail.com

Sunday, December 19, Stockton Christmas Count

Compiler: Jim Roworth, (209) 956-2648, roworth@sbcglobal.net

Monday, December 20, Benecia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island), 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net or
Compiler: Robin Leong, (707) 643-1287, robin_leong@netzero.net

Tuesday, December 28, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, ERPfromCA@aol.com

Thursday, December 30, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert and Derren Peterie, (707) 939-8007, www.SonomaBirding.org

Saturday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Contact: Louise Vicencio, 707-224-9386, jlvicen@sbcglobal.net
Compiler: Murray Berner, 707-224-5897, vireocity@hotmail.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit <http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm>.

Field Trip Findings

Yolo Wildlife Area (11/14) — Marlene Ishihara reported: “On a bright Sunday morning, five birders had a productive day at the Bypass. Over 40 species of birds were seen. In addition to the usual assortment of ducks, shorebirds, and raptors, birds of particular interest were a Merlin, Cooper’s Hawk, Virginia Rail, Long-billed Curlew, and Wilson’s Snipe. Also observed was a fly-over of a pair of Sandhill Cranes, a Red-tailed Hawk exhibiting hovering behavior, and an American Kestrel enjoying breakfast with gusto.”

Beginning birders trip, Folsom Lake State Park (11/13) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “We totaled 40 species on this morning walk, with good looks at Red-shouldered Hawk, male and female Kingfishers and Spotted Sandpipers. Best birds were a pair of cooperative Blue-grey Gnatcatchers spotted by Mary Beth Metcalf.”

Mather Lake (11/7) — Rained out.

Northern Sutter Co. and Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge (11/6) — Co-leader Don Schmoltdt reported: “Five people joined Sally Walters and me to explore the south, west and northern perimeter of Sutter Buttes, and Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area. The rain held off and we had a really beautiful, calm day of birding. The total for the group was 81 species. Highlights were a Eurasian Collared-Dove at the corner of Hwy 20 and Acacia Road (not sure what the status of this species is in Sutter County); an immature Golden Eagle along West Butte Road; 3 Lewis’s Woodpeckers in a small stand of blue oaks along North Butte Road; and at Gray Lodge, at least one Eurasian Wigeon, 3 Aleutian Cackling Geese, and really good looks at an adult and immature blue morph Snow Goose that Gary Fregien found. As always, it was really great to see and listen to the thousands of ducks and geese, which included a good number of Snow and Ross’s Geese; and the evening light on the Sutter Buttes was beautiful. Most of the trip was in Sutter County, with Gray Lodge in Butte County.”

Isenberg Crane Preserve/Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk (11/3) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Today’s group, made up of mostly new birders, observed 54 species with Sandhill Cranes being the star of the show. At the Isenberg Crane Preserve there were an estimated 2,000 cranes, while about 200 more were viewed at the Cosumnes River Preserve. Among other species the group saw were Loggerhead Shrike, Wilson’s Snipe, and Eared Grebe. We also enjoyed good studies of several duck species at both locations.”

American River (10-31) — Leader Dan Kopp reported: “I and eight participants had a lovely sunny day with no wind. Our highlights included three Western Tanagers, one Black-throated Gray Warbler, several Orange-crowned Warblers, two Fox Sparrows, my pet White-throated Sparrow that was seen coming to seed by some of the group, a Red-breasted Sapsucker, Western Bluebirds and several Lincoln’s Sparrows. We tallied 59 species.”

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area (10/26) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “On a beautiful sunny day, seven birders enjoyed a morning tour through the Yolo Bypass. During the early fall trip, we saw the expected species of ducks, shorebirds, and raptors. Highlights included a Cooper’s Hawk, a Lesser Yellowlegs, a Long-billed Curlew, and a fly-over of a Greater White-fronted Geese flock accompanied by a lone Snow Goose. Several Northern Harriers flew over the ducks and shorebirds to keep bird activity interesting.”

Bodega Bay (10-24) — Rained out.

Hope Valley (10-23) — Rained out.

Putah Creek Preserve (10-17) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Eight birders had 39 species of birds on a cold, overcast morning. Not many highlights, but we did have dozens of Yellow-rumped Warblers and about 100 Cedar Waxwings. Other birds seen were Lincoln’s Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Varied Thrush.

After Putah Creek we went to the Yolo Bypass and had great scope views of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.”

Discovery Park (10/16) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “In spite of the good turnout (about 16) and good weather, there were hardly any birds! Best were a Common Merganser and long, close looks at 3 accipiters. There were no sparrows, which is amazing, and very little of anything else. At the end of the trip, a skunk surprised everyone by darting out of the bushes to chase away a probably feral cat, most likely to go after the cat food left by someone nearby.”

Crane Tours: Coordinator Mike Savino of Save Our Sandhill Cranes (SOS) reported: “There were four Audubon/SOS Cranes “crane tours” in October. The first two were almost a total rainout, two visitors on the 23rd and none on a very rainy 24th. The tours on the 30th and the 31st, however, were productive and well-attended. The last one was especially noteworthy. After our usual crane talk at the Visitor Center of the Cosumnes River Preserve, we caravanned to Woodbridge Road. There were about 18 people and they were in a partying mood. Some of them brought beach chairs and set them up in the parking lot of the Department of Fish and Game south unit. Lon Yarbrough brought his vehicle with the photographer’s platform on top and let people take turns sitting up there for a better view. The weather was perfect; clear and almost warm. Not only were the cranes there in good numbers, concluding with a spectacular fly-in at sunset, there were good close-up looks at White faced Ibises, a Western Meadowlark, Long billed Dowitchers, Dunlin, Western Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, Black-necked Stilts, and Northern Shovelers, as well as other waterfowl and a juvenile Peregrine Falcon. Most of our visitors appeared to be first-timers and they seemed to have a great time. Lots of ‘wows’ were heard.”

Pete Hayes

RECENT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON BOARD ACTIONS

ARNHA is publishing a 4th edition, updated and expanded, of their publication *Biking and Hiking the American River Parkway*. The SAS Board voted to place an ad in the book inviting readers to Bird the American River Parkway, featuring our local field trips. The book should be ready by late November, in time to pick up copies for Christmas gifts.

SAS Board, at the request of Chris Conard, agreed to fund the materials cost for publishing the Sacramento Bufferlands poster calendar again this year. The calendar will be available at no charge to Sacramento Audubon members at our January meeting.

Field Trips

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net for trips through December. For trips from January 1st on call the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ride-sharing/carpools. Participants are, however, encouraged to voluntarily share rides. Any carpool arrangements are private agreements between the driver and the passengers. Drivers must carry adequate insurance coverage. Please be courteous and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on all trips. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.



Cedar Waxwing
Kirsten Munson

Saturday, December 4 **American River Natural History** **Association Annual Animal and Bird** **Count**

Compiler: Lea Landry, 638-1141
lrandry@softcom.net

Join Lea and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway sponsored by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). See next page for complete details.

Sunday, December 5, 8am **Paradise Beach/American River** **Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791** **rey_ality@hotmail.com**

Dan lives near the American river, birds here often, and knows this area well. Join him in exploring the rich riparian habitat along the Parkway. This area is dominated by cottonwoods, alder, box elder and willows, with a few oaks, a combination which often turns up excellent wintering birds, plus the usual residents found on the Parkway. Dan is a great birder and is good with beginners and experienced birders alike. This trip will involve walking on well-defined trails and will last until late morning. Meet Dan at Glen Hall Park at the corner of Carlson Drive and Sandburg.

Wednesday, December 8, 8am-Noon **Wetlands and Waterfowl Tour II** **Leader: Roger Jones, 875-9174** **jonesro@sacsewer.com**

Tour one of the seasonal or permanent wetland areas within the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands in Elk Grove. The Wetlands and Waterfowl Tour offers a chance to see many bird and

mammal species including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, beavers and coyotes. Tour participants will enjoy a short walk guided by a Bufferlands staff wildlife biologist who will explain current wildlife management and habitat restoration techniques. Space is limited. The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Roger Jones during the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

Saturday, December 11, 8am **Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge** **Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216** **andisalmi@yahoo.com**

Andi will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way further south. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Please note there is a fee for each vehicle at the refuge: either \$3 for a day pass, or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass.

Saturday, December 11, 7am **River Walk Bird Count** **Cosumnes River Preserve** **Recorded Information, 684-2816** **www.cosumnes.org**

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd, south of Twin Cities Road, for this monthly birding census trip. It is a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group is a good way to find out

what's happening and to hone your birding skills. This walk covers about four miles at a leisurely pace and takes approximately five hours, so bring lunch and liquids. Be sure to check the website activity schedule a day or two before for exact meeting time and possible updates.

Sunday, December 12, 7:30am **Jepson Prairie/Wilcox Ranch** **Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804** **Ken Poerner, (707) 580-6277** **mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net** **kenpoe@sbcglobal.net**

The Jepson Prairie south of Dixon is well known for the magic of its vernal pools in late spring but less so for the wintering raptors and shorebirds which arrive in good numbers by this date. Join Maureen and Ken in exploring the Prairie and the Wilcox Ranch, property owned by the Solano Land Trust not normally open to the public. They will also explore the Barker and Calhoun Sloughs and the legendary Robinson-Flannery Roads in search of Mountain Plovers, shrikes, falcons, eagles and other wintering raptors. Time permitting, they will cross Hwy 12 and check the Collinsville area for shorebirds and waterfowl. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids. FRS radios will be useful. Meet Maureen at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left, and the Park and Ride will be on your immediate left. Or meet at the entrance to Jepson Prairie at Cook Lane and Hwy 113 south of Dixon BY 8am.

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Field Trips continued from page 3

Sunday, December 12, 6:30am
Tall Forest Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information: 684-2816
www.cosumnes.org

Meet at the Farm Center Gate at the intersection of Desmond and Bruceville Roads, ON TIME, to join this monthly bird count. Usually led by John Trochet, this area is normally closed to the public, so this is your opportunity to bird there. John has an appreciation of nature on many levels, and a trip with him is always informative. You must check the website activity schedule a day or two ahead to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details. Arrive a little early, as this trip always leaves promptly.

Saturday, December 18
Woodfords Christmas Count
Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net

Sunday, December 19, 9am
East Lawn Cemetery
Leader: Mary Beth Metcalf, 456-7382

Join Mary Beth for a 2-3 hour slow-paced walk through East Lawn cemetery where one can spot many of the common wintering species. Sometimes there will be less common finds such as red-breasted sapsuckers or golden-crowned kinglets, and some years there have been red-breasted nuthatches as well. Meet Mary Beth at the entrance gate at 43rd Street and Folsom Boulevard. There is street parking on 42nd and 43rd streets.

Saturday, December 25, 3:30pm
Christmas with the Cranes!
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip but ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot at 3:30pm to hear a brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or

Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners.

Sunday, December 26
Sacramento Christmas Count
Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, December 26, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip

Too much turkey? Try cranes instead! If you're not doing the Sacramento Christmas Count, (and you should be!), get out in the fresh air and enjoy the wintering waterbirds. All information is the same as the December 25th trip.

Saturday, January 1, 8:30am
Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary
Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146

Start the New Year with a fresh morning walk rather than sitting around watching television! Join Brian for a stroll through this great riparian habitat. Herons, egrets, cormorants and grebes should be on the water. Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a variety of sparrows will be seen. Take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. Bring liquids and snacks.

Sunday, January 2
Folsom Christmas Count
Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

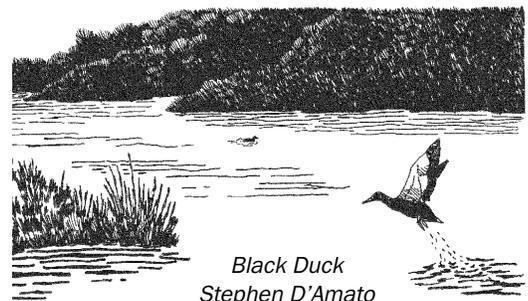
Tuesday, January 4, 8:30am
Yolo Wildlife Area
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
ishiM2000@comcast.net

Join Marlene in this great area just 10 minutes from downtown. On the auto tour

route there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl and possible raptors such as Peregrine Falcon. White-faced Ibis and Northern Harriers may be seen overhead, and Savannah Sparrows and Horned Larks are visible on the road. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78, E Chiles/Rd 32A) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A), on your left. If bypass is flooded trip is canceled.

Saturday, January 8, 7am SHARP
Hot Birding Spots in the North Bay
Leader: Ron Storey, 707-762-5276
ronstorey@ronstorey.com
Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net

Meet Tim at the West Sacramento Park and Ride to start the trip. We'll meet Ron at Ellis Creek Park, just east of Shollenberger Park in Petaluma at 8:30am, and spend a little time there looking for Blue-winged Teal, Sora and Virginia Rail, and any other odd birds that may be around. We'll then drive to Las Gallinas and do a little bird watching there, looking for Eurasian and



Black Duck
Stephen D'Amato

Common Teal, Hooded Merganser, and any other odd birds (i.e. Peregrine Falcon). From Las Gallinas we will drive south to Corte Madera Marsh in search of Clapper Rail. Dress appropriately for the weather; bring lunch and water. (Option: Ron plans to make a lunch stop for pizza!). Bring FRS radios and scopes if you have them. To meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Another Trip for Kids and Families!
Saturday, January 8, 8:30-11am

William Pond Park, Carmichael
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
Cell that day only: 281-6652
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

This morning walk at William Pond Park along the American River will be specifically geared toward families with children who are interested in birds and nature. Binoculars suitable for smaller hands will be available for those who do not have them, and a checklist will be provided. Maureen will work with children on how to use binoculars and find birds, discuss a few basics of birding, and show everyone some of

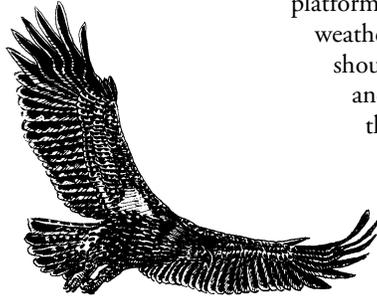
Sacramento's great resident and wintering birds. This will be followed by a leisurely walk through several of the park's different environments. There are restrooms in the park. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden follow Arden till it dead ends into the park. There is a \$5 per car charge unless you have a Sacramento County Regional Parks Pass. Park in the first available space after you pass the kiosk and Maureen will meet you near the kiosk. Spaces are limited, so please contact Maureen to let her know you plan to come.

Sunday, January 9, 8am
Salt Springs Valley
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net
Carla Barbaro, 717-8808

This area is located in western Calaveras County about an hour and a half drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake are home to many wintering ducks, hawks, eagles, owls and grassland birds. This is a unique area you will not want to miss. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and FRS radios. Meet in the parking lot in front of the Wal-Mart located on the west side of Hwy 99 at the Elk Grove Boulevard exit.

Tuesday, January 11, 7:45am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 606-6518
dtankers@winfirst.com

The Colusa NWR is another great location in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many



Bald Eagle juvenile
Stephen D'Amato

duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's and Greater White-fronted Geese as well as other wetland birds. This refuge often provides an opportunity to view the elgasi race of the Greater White-fronted Goose. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well. We can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We will spend a good amount of time on the main viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through a riparian forest next to the main viewing pond. We will then take the short auto tour and finish our outing with a return visit to the platform. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Weather permitting, there should be ample photo ops. Scopes and FRS radios will be helpful on this trip. Meet Dan at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 7:45am. From Sacramento, take I-80 to west to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again to the Park and Ride behind Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Rain, strong wind, or thick fog cancels. Bring snacks and liquids as the trip will end in the very late morning to very early afternoon. We will leave the meeting area at 8am SHARP.

Saturday, January 15, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: John York, 409-9276
sonofyork@att.net

John will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. We'll return through the Dunnigan Hills, a good area for raptors, Burrowing Owls and wintering sparrows. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. Meet John at the Woodland Jack-in-the-Box. Take I-5 north toward Woodland; exit at County Road 102 (#536); turn right (north) on 102 and turn right into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot. Please note that at the refuge there is a fee for each vehicle: either \$3 for a day pass, a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass or a Duck Stamp!

Sunday, January 16, 8am
Gray Lodge Wildlife Area
Leaders: Linda Pittman, 715-1876
pittman@frontiernet.net
Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Join Linda and Cathie for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, we'll take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes. This area is great for raptors and grassland birds including wintering sparrows. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. FRS radios and scopes are helpful if you have them. Meet in the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden1. There is a \$4 per person charge at the wildlife area.

Tuesday, January 18, 8:30am
Yolo Wildlife Area
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
ishiM2000@comcast.net

Join Marlene in this great area just 10 minutes from downtown. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl and raptors including possible Peregrine Falcon. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78, E Chiles/Rd 32A) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A), on your left. If bypass is flooded trip is canceled.

Saturday, January 22, 7am
San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

The San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex is composed of the San Luis NWR, Merced NWR, San Joaquin River NWR and the Grasslands Wildlife Area. The refuge units are located in the northern San Joaquin Valley in Merced and Stanislaus Counties. There are nearly 45,000 acres of wetlands, grasslands and riparian habitats, plus over 90,000 acres of private lands under conservation easements to protect and benefit wildlife, and together they constitute the largest contiguous freshwater wetlands remaining in California. The complex is within the Pacific Flyway,

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a major route for migrating waterfowl and other birds. These refuge units are noted as major wintering areas for Ross's and Aleutian Cackling Goose, as well as Snow and Greater White-fronted Goose, and many kinds of ducks, totaling 30 species of waterfowl using the complex during winter. We can also expect to see Sandhill Crane, numerous other bird species associated with these diverse habitats and, with luck, Tule Elk. We will hike easy trails, drive auto tour routes and stop at viewing platforms. Bring food and water. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. We will meet at the Park and Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 near the Sheldon Road exit. Take Hwy 99 south from Sacramento to the Sheldon Road exit. Turn left and cross over the freeway to the second signal light; turn right on East Stockton Blvd and proceed about a ¼ mile to the lot.

Saturday, January 22, 3:30 pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Another chance to view the cranes and other waterfowl. All information is the same as the December 25th trip.

Sunday, January 23, 8am
Road 113, Robinson Road and Birds Landing Area
Leader: Paul Cordero, email preferred: pkcordero@gmail.com, or 454-4061

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks,

Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. This trip will last into the afternoon.

Sunday, January 23, 3:30 pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Another chance to view the cranes and other waterfowl. All information is the same as the December 25th trip.

Tuesday, January 25, 8am
Isenberg Crane Preserve/Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk
Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net

Join Tim to look for wintering geese and ducks, including Gadwall, Northern Shovelers, teal and wigeon. In shallow water there may be shorebirds, such as dowitchers, sandpipers, yellowlegs, Dunlin, and maybe some surprises. Our wintering Sandhill Cranes will be back, and the usual herons and egrets will be around. The boardwalk is also a good place to look for the noisy but hard-to-see Marsh Wren, and the cryptic Wilson's Snipe. Meet Tim at the Nugget Market at 8am. Going south on I-5, take the Florin Road West exit; go west to the first signal light, (Greenhaven Drive), and make a U-turn. The parking area for the

market will be on the right. This trip will end by noon. Bring FRS radios and spotting scopes if you have them. This is a great trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Thick fog cancels this trip.

Saturday, January 29, 8:30am
Nimbus Fish Hatchery
Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey-ality@hotmail.com

Sharpen your identification skills as this is a gathering place for a variety of gulls. Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, California, Ring-billed and Mew Gulls are all possibilities. Then we'll walk downstream looking for Hooded and Common Mergansers, Osprey and other raptors, Barrow's and Common Goldeneye, Spotted Sandpipers, White-throated Swifts, and a variety of the smaller woodland birds. Meet Dan in the Fish Hatchery parking lot off Hazel Avenue north of Hwy 50.

Saturday, January 29, 8am
Tonzi Road, Amador Co
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

Join Gary on a road trip to the Sierra foothills in Amador County, along Highway's 16, 124 and 49. The focus of the trip will be the Tonzi Road area, a back-country road north of Ione. Travel along this route will include some stops and walking short distances. There are an interesting and surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area. There have been a Red-naped Sapsucker, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Western Bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, American, Lesser and Lawrence's Goldfinches, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and a variety of flycatchers, sparrows and rap-

THE ANNUAL AMERICAN RIVER WILDLIFE COUNT.

Saturday, December 4, 2010. Daybreak until early afternoon, rain or shine
Compiler: Lea Landry, llandry@softcom.net (preferred) or 638-1141

Join long-time American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) Count compiler, Jack Hiehle, and other team leaders in the annual ARNHA Wildlife Count on the first Saturday in December, the 4th for a day of competition, companionship, and challenge in finding and identifying wildlife along the American River Parkway. The Count stretches from Nimbus Dam to Discovery Park with 12 teams of at least 2 persons, including birders in canoes, vying to find the most birds and increasing the count total from the 115 species seen last year (176 total species in 25 years since the count's inception in 1985).

The ARNHA Count differs from Christmas Counts in that teams count species of birds, rather than total numbers of each species. Additionally, ALL wildlife are counted, including mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The team leaders will be contacting their "usual" team members to ascertain their availability and loyalty. We are always in need of enthusiastic birders to join our teams. You need not be an expert to contribute to the fun and competition. If you are interested in joining one of the teams, contact Lea for details, team assignments, and meeting and compilation locations.

tors observed here. Time permitting, this trip may also include stops for waterfowl at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along hand held radios, food and water. Meet Gary at the College Greens/Raley's Shopping Center lot at 8391 Folsom Blvd Park near the Starbucks. This Folsom Blvd Raley's is between Jackson Road (Hwy 16) and Florin-Perkins Road.

Sunday, January 30, 8am

**Rush Ranch and King Ranch,
Solano County**

Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804

Email: mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277

Email: ken@solanolandtrust.org

This trip to Solano County will begin with a birding tour of Rush Ranch, an operating cattle ranch on the beautiful Suisun Marsh owned by the Solano Land Trust. Maureen and Ken will find the birds of Rush Ranch and then head to the King Ranch, another Solano Land Trust property high above Hwy 680. This site has a spectacular view of the surrounding area and is good for Golden Eagles and other raptors as well as Burrowing Owls and Say's Phoebes. Bring lunch and liquids, and be prepared for possibly muddy conditions. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento.

From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. This trip will last into early afternoon. Maureen's cell phone that morning only is 281-6652.

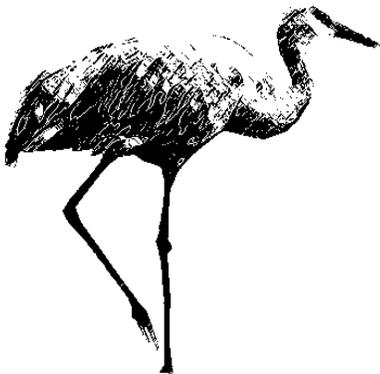
Sunday, January 30, 3:30pm

**Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley**

**A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored
trip**

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Another chance to view the cranes and other waterfowl. All information is the same as the December 25th trip.



GET YOUTH INVOLVED IN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Next year, Sacramento Audubon volunteers are hoping to have a Christmas bird count for children and youth aged 8-15. For this year, however, if you know children who might like to participate in this world-wide, citizen science effort, the Yolo Audubon Society will be conducting its junior bird count on Saturday, January 22, 2011.

Their website states, "The brainchild of Sonoma birder Tom Rusert, this count is now in its fifth year and is proving extremely popular. It's an excellent way to get children ages 8-15 involved in the natural world and to introduce them to the concept of citizen science, besides having a really good time and seeing (and counting) some great birds." If interested, check the Yolo Audubon website, www.yoloaudubon.org for more information.

2011 FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Time: 8am, ending by noon

Location: William Pond Park on the American River or similar area

Each Trip Limited to 10 participants: Registration required

2011 Dates (all Saturdays): January 8, February 12, March 12 and April 9

These outings will be geared toward people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the costs of hand-out materials. (If you're a repeat participant and already have the materials no donation is requested.) You do not need to be a member of Audubon to participate.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Each trip is limited to 10 participants. Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number, email address and the field trip date of your choice, or by calling Cathie at 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

2010 DUCK STAMPS

I'm not a hunter - why should I buy a duck stamp?

Since 1934, federal duck stamp sales have raised more than \$750 million, and this funding has been used to purchase or lease over 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat. Ninety-eight cents out of every dollar generated by duck stamp sales goes directly to the purchase or lease of wetland habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge system, and the federal duck stamp program has been called one of the most successful conservation programs ever initiated.

Not convinced? Waterfowl are not the only species that benefit from wetland habitat preservation. Thousands upon thousands of shorebirds, riparian songbirds, and Sandhill Cranes thrive at California's wildlife refuges, and many mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians rely on these landscapes as well. An estimated one-third of the nation's endangered and threatened species take advantage of these habitats.

The federal duck stamp serves as an entrance pass for national wildlife refuges where admission is normally charged, and duck stamps are also popular collector items.

The number of hunters is declining, but the need to protect our wetlands is not. Purchasing a duck stamp each year is one of the best investments you can make to ensure that these valuable habitats continue to thrive.

The 2010 federal duck stamp features an American Wigeon, and California's 2010 stamp features a pair of Redhead Ducks. You can purchase federal stamps at many post offices, online (www.duckstamp.com), and at many sporting/outdoor stores, and the California stamp at hunter check stations or from Department of Fish and Game offices or online (www.dfg.ca.gov).



Jordan Wellwood, Audubon California

Birding and Nature Events

GALT, 4TH ANNUAL, WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Mark your calendar now for the 4th Annual Winter Bird Festival, in Galt. It's scheduled for Saturday, **January 29, 2011**. The City of Galt in collaboration with the Cosumnes River Preserve and Galt Joint Union Elementary School District are pleased to bring you the 4th Annual Winter Bird Festival. The Winter Bird Festival steering committee and volunteers hope that you will find this festival to be an exciting and educational opportunity to celebrate the Winter Birds and habitat we all call home. Guided Tours offer an exciting opportunity to see the birds in our local habitat. Hop on a bus and have your binoculars ready!

Speakers include Lon and Kat Yarbrough and Chris Conard, with additional presentations on bats and the insects they eat and also a group called Wild Things that cares for displaced wildlife. There are lots of activities for kids including crafts and an art festival. Lon Yarbrough is leading a sunrise photography tour, Chris Conard is leading a tour to the Bufferlands and the Cosumnes River Preserve tour is being led by John Trochet, including areas not normally open to the public. For more information and to register for the tours see the website at www.ci.galt.ca.us, or call 209-366-7115.

KLAMATH FALLS, WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

The 32nd annual Winter Wings Festival will offer three full days of activities **February 18-20, 2011**. Home to the largest concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states and located in both south central Oregon and northern California, the Klamath Basin is a key stopover on the Pacific Flyway, hosting 80% of the birds that use the Flyway. Keynote speakers this year include Jeff Gordon, field editor for Birdwatcher's Digest and Arthur Morris, widely recognized as one of the world's premier bird photographers.

Check out the website at www.WinterWingsFest.org for the latest in Festival planning information. As of press time their schedule was not yet available. On-line registration will not begin until early or mid December. Brochures are scheduled to be distributed in early December and will also be available on-line.

DEPT OF FISH AND GAME IS OFFERING WINTER SWAN TOURS IN SACRAMENTO VALLEY

Join a Department of Fish and Game (DFG) naturalist-led swan tour of Marysville's Rice and Waterfowl area this November through February. Co-hosted by local rice farmers and land owners, these tours will focus on finding Tundra Swans, as this tract is one of the best locations for seeing swans in California. Ducks, geese, cranes, shorebirds, white pelicans, herons, egrets and raptors including bald eagles are also commonly seen in this area, known as District 10. The area contains 23,000 acres of rice fields and restored habitat not normally open to the public. This is an excellent example of rice farming for wildlife habitat.

Tours are held on the second and third Saturdays of each month from 9 to 11am. They are driving tours along a short route with very little walking required. Pre-registration is required on the DFG website, www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/2/SwanTours. Up to 30 people may register for each tour. The tours are free, but registrants are encouraged to make a donation online to the California Wildlife Foundation to support this program.

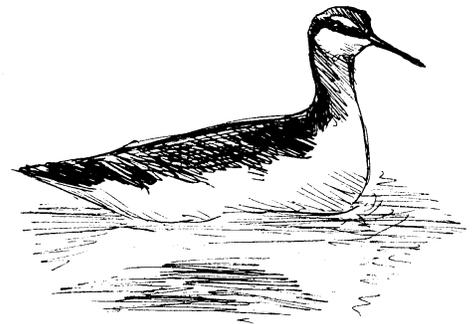
The swan tours are part of DFG's wildlife viewing services program, which includes similar outdoors opportunities at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Yolo Basin Wildlife Area, Isenberg Crane Reserve and North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve.

For more information about the swan tours, call (916) 358-2852.

EAST AFRICA 2011

Ed Harper's Tanzania safari that he and Susan Scott are leading next July is full. However, responding to requests, Ed and Susan are offering another safari to Uganda. Tentative dates are from July 19 to August 3, 2011. Special highlights include Mountain Gorilla tracking as well as Chimpanzee tracking. The birding is spectacular with Shoebill and other Uganda bird specialties being high priority. Ed and Susan draw on their many years of experience traveling, birding, and photographing in Africa to design a highly productive itinerary for their tours.

For more information on prices and itineraries, contact Ed at calidris@surewest.net or call him at (916) 971-3311 or (916) 704-7954.



Wilson's Phalarope
Kirsten Munson

AUDUBON OUTREACH

The two-day Lodi Crane Festival was another successful Outreach activity. Talking to visitors and selling our books and checklists were Marlene Ishihara, Kathy Moore, Judy Denney, Darrell Mohr, Cathie LaZier, Linda Pittman, Maureen Geiger and Mary Beth Metcalf. Some of the Sacramento Audubon members leading field trips there were Tim Manolis, Tim Fitzer, Harlan Perryman, Chris Conard and Mark Martucci.

Our Outreach table will be at the Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton, and then at the Galt Winter Bird Festival on January 29th. If you'd like to come and help out give Cathie a call or email, empid@earthlink.net, or 457-6882.

SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS FOR 2011

February 17 - Scott Crosbie, *Yellow-billed Magpies* (Tentative Date)

March 17 - Ed Pandolfino, *Raptor Survey*

April 21 - Ben Sacks, *Central Valley Red Fox* (Tentative Date)

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Jean and Bob Bonar

David Cook

Cheryl J Franzi

Gregory F Jamnetski

Denyse Serrano

Peggy Sloan

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Jeanne Conry, Dennis Klocek, Kathleen Knight, Kenny Matelk, Colene Rauh, Dixie Robinson, Rich Soehren, Keith Wagner and James and Patricia Wells, to the **General Fund**.

Anonymous, Joellen Arnold, Karinne Bauer, Karen Benson, Peggy Garick, Terrie Gray, Christine Holmstrom, Richard Howard, Rodney Kingsnorth, Kenny Matelk, Bob and Muriel Parker, Joyce Rietz, Dixie Robinson, Julie Serences, Denyse Serrano, Jerry Simkins, Craig Swolgard, Richard Turner and Patricia Wagner to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Norm Eade and Ed Harper made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund** in memory of longtime SAS member and avid birder Ken Head.

Ed Harper also made a donation in memory of Elmer Aldrich, another great contributor to the Sacramento Audubon Society.

Dan and Jan Tankersley made a donation to the **Education Committee** in honor of Julie Serences.

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds;

Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach;

Provide, encourage and support environmental educational opportunities; and

Provide proactive leadership in the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Your membership supports the SAS mission of conservation, environmental education and protection of the region's natural ecosystems and diverse wildlife populations. Please include your email address if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List for letter/email writing on conservation issues.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

Date _____ *The Observer* Newsletter \$25 per address \$ _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

Send address changes to our Membership Chair to help keep down our costs.

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. There is no meeting in December. The next meeting will be held on January 25, 2011 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

Observations continued from page 10

audubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html).

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv" for details. With nearly 100 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Roger Adamson, Dan Airola, Dan Brown, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Kevin Guse, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Scott Hoppe, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, John Luther, Jeff Mangum, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Zack Smith, John Sterling, John Trochet, Ed Whisler, and Dan Williams.

Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Yolo County was the hotspot for rarities in the Sacramento area, if not Northern California. Topping the list was a gorgeous and mostly cooperative **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** at Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA), seen by many despite its furtive habits from 10/7 to at least 10/16. A **Red-throated Pipit** was reported by a couple of parties on 10/20 in the same area as the sandpiper, but was far less cooperative, and a **Glossy Ibis** was reported on 10/9. A fairly common bird off the coast on pelagic trips, but a real treat inland was an adult **Sabine's Gull** at Woodland WTP from 10/6 to 10/8; a juvenile was at the same location from 10/27-28. This site held an adult **Pacific Golden-Plover** for most of the month and a late **Bank Swallow** on 10/8. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was found in Davis on 10/30, and a first county record for **Cassin's Kingbird** was found on 10/15 north of Winters at Rds 27 and 88; it continued through press time. Rounding out the list are a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Babel Slough on 10/3, a **Northern Waterthrush** along Putah Creek above Lake Solano on 10/6, and a **Green-tailed Towhee** at the Yolo Grasslands Region Park archery range on 10/10.

Following a few reports in and around Davis beginning on 9/25, there was a flurry of **Evening Grosbeak** reports. Most came from north Davis and UCD, with the last on 10/28. There were also several

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11054 Autumnwind Lane
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

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Sacramento County reports into the second week of the month from the American River, Carmichael, and East Lawn

Cemetery, as well as numerous reports from low elevation sites throughout the state. This flurry of reports is unprecedented in the past two decades, and may go in hand with the unusually abundant **Red-breasted Nuthatches** just about anywhere there are ornamental conifers and in some riparian areas. Other interesting finds included two **Golden-Plovers** near Jepson Prairie not identified to species on 10/11, a **Willet** flying over a Rosemont home (east of downtown Sacramento) on 10/3, two **Red Phalaropes** flying by at close range at Sherman Island (only the second report for Sacramento County) on 10/25, a bright **Red Fox Sparrow** at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 10/31, and a calling flyover **Chestnut-collared Longspur** at CRP on 10/9.

We are now featuring photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<http://sacramento->

Observations continued on page 9

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

Correspondence: P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: Lea Landry, 11054 Autumnwind Lane
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

(916) 638-1141, e-mail preferred: llandry@softcom.net

Seasonal Observations: Chris Conard, 2405 Rio Bravo Circle,
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 203 1610,

e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Send all copy to the Editor. Observations must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

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