



# The *OBSE*RVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

## General Meeting

**Thursday, March 20, 2014**  
**Effie Yeaw Nature Center**  
**Assembly Room, 7pm**

### **Lessons learned from the Forest Health and Fire Behavior Teams of SNAMP**

Kim Ingram

The Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project (SNAMP) is an 8 year collaboration effort between the US Forest Service, the University of California, UC Cooperative Extension and the general public to research the effects of fuel reduction projects on forest health, fire behavior, water quality and quantity, wildlife (CA Spotted Owl and Pacific Fisher) and public participation. The roles of the university and cooperative extension, as neutral 3rd parties, are to conduct scientific research in an open and transparent manner; measure the physical and natural process as relevant management scales; integrate competing interests; identify conflicting outcomes; involve all interested stakeholders in the many phases of the SNAMP project; and build public trust. SNAMP has 2 research sites: south of Yosemite National Park in the Sierra National Forest and the other in the Tahoe National Forest outside of Foresthill. The project will submit its final report in December 2014 to the US Forest Service and all interested stakeholders.

The purpose of this presentation will be to share the many lessons learned from SNAMP, with specific data from the Forest Health and Fire Behavior Teams. More information on SNAMP can be found at: <http://snamp.cnr.berkeley.edu/>

Kim Ingram is the SNAMP Program Representative for the northern study site and works for the University of California Cooperative Extension as a natural resource

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## **BIRD AND BREAKFAST AT EFFIE YEAW, MARCH 22-23**

Traditional Event – Saturday, March 22

Family-Friendly Event – Sunday, March 23

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Sacramento Audubon are teaming up to offer a special weekend of morning birding trips coupled with wonderful breakfast fare.

This event, held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, starts with Bird Walks guided by some of our best local birders. For weeks in advance of the Walks, these guides scout the Nature Study Area so they will be able to point out nests and local rarities. After the Walk, you will join fellow birders for wonderful food, good coffee and other fun to help raise money for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. No extensive birding experience is necessary–this event caters to all levels.

On Saturday the Bird Walk will be approximately 90 minutes long, followed by the traditional casserole breakfast buffet provided by some of the best cooks among ARNHA Board members and Nature Center volunteers. Participants can also bid in a silent auction for attractive baskets and experiences.

On Sunday, you can choose to join either a Family Bird Walk, a one hour walk with children 6 or over welcome, or a longer, approximately 90-minute, Adult Bird Walk open to those ages 12 and above. The Sunday event features an excellent pancake breakfast prepared by the Carmichael Kiwanis. On Sunday there will also be a nature-themed craft activity for children.

Mendocino-based Discount Binoculars will be available on Saturday showing a wide range of binoculars and spotting scopes. They feature over 25 styles of binoculars and scopes, made especially for birding, for you to compare and test.

This event often sells out. Reservations are required. Call 489-4918 for information, questions and to make reservations or register online at [www.sacnaturecenter.net/birdandbreakfast14.html](http://www.sacnaturecenter.net/birdandbreakfast14.html).

## **THE 17TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT** **FEBRUARY 14-17, 2014 CHECK THE RESULTS**

The Great Backyard Bird Count took place from February 14-17. The object of the GBBC is for participants to count all the birds seen in their backyard (or chosen location) in 15 minutes. This can be done any time during the 4 days or once each day. The record is then submitted to the GBBC website. Now, with submissions from around the world, this gives scientists a great snapshot of how the birds are doing at this point in time and they can compare this year's results to years past for a look at population trends. As of mid-morning on Sunday, February 16, (eastern US time zone) checklists have been received from 103 countries, including Australia, China, Argentina, Kazakhstan, Iceland, India, Kenya, and many more.

**GBBC** continued on page 7

# Field Trip Findings

**Yolo Bypass WLA (2/11)** — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “With a break from the recent rains, our group enjoyed a leisurely drive through the auto loop. We saw most of the expected duck species and very few shorebirds were seen due to limited habitat. Highlights included a Great-horned Owl, several Common Ravens, a Golden-crowned Sparrow, and a Peregrine Falcon. It is always a treat to tour the Yolo Bypass!”

**William Pond Park (2/9)** — Heavy Rain Day!: Leader Craig DeMartini reported: “I got a call from Mark Sawyer who wanted to go out, and we DID. But only for about 30 mins. He was an enthusiastic new birder (4 months). We drove out to the pier at the last parking lot to look at waterfowl and hope for an osprey. There was less there than I expected, but we had a great time. I was prepared with my water proof pants, etc, but Mark was soaked to the skin and soon called it quits. Plus his glasses kept fogging. Still we got a few birds, but nothing out of the ordinary. Mallards were all over in new puddles everywhere, and seemed very happy.

**Yolo Bypass (2/8)** — Heavy Rain Day!: Leaders Dan and Pam Thompson reported: “We went out anyway! Pam got interviewed by channel 3. They were out on the levy. We got a Short-eared owl and two Blue-winged Teal. Great day! Lots of rain! 36 species. There were 4 of us.

**Colusa NWLR (2/3)** — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Thirteen of us enjoyed beautiful Colusa NWR on a fine winter afternoon. Sunshine and just a slight chill in the air greeted us when we arrived at the viewing platform. Four species of geese, adding up to several thousand individuals were on the pond and totally indifferent to our presence. The majority of the geese were Ross’s, the next largest population were Greater White-fronted with Snow Geese a distant third followed by Cackling Geese. We enjoyed a wonderful opportunity for side-by-side comparisons of Ross’s and Snow Geese, a close up view of a “Tule” goose, which is a race of the Greater White-fronted complex, and a hybrid goose, Cackling X Greater White-fronted which

was pointed out by the Colusa NWR manager, Mike Peters.

We also walked the riparian trail and enjoyed scope views of two Great Horned Owls, a White-tailed Kite and a Red-shouldered Hawk. Also found were several passerine species. Besides many ducks, the auto tour provided Wilson’s Snipe, White-faced Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, over 100 Black-crowned Night-herons, and two more Great Horned Owls. It was almost totally dark when we wound our way back to the start of the auto tour route and reluctantly decided our afternoon afield was at an end.”

**Lincoln Grasslands (2/2)** — Mark Martucci, co-leader with Tim Fitzer reported: “Eleven birders saw 80 species of birds on a cold overcast day in Placer county. Highlights included Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Prairie Falcon, Eurasian Wigeon, Tricolored Blackbird and Lewis’s Woodpecker.”

**William Pond Park (2/2)** — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Red-breasted Sapsucker and an Osprey, both spotted by Craig DeMartini, were highlights of this Beginning Birders field trip. Craig also spotted Western King Bluebirds and a Horned Lark Sparrow, but both birds were rejected by the beginner’s committee.

Red-shouldered Hawks were also active and noisy, and we totaled 54 species for the morning.”

## Yolo/Solano Big Day (2/1)

— Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “There were 17 participants on this trip, and it turned out to be an incredibly productive day for such a large group. We tallied

121 species! We started out at Lake Solano County Park and spent most of the morning there, but it was worth it. Highlights included Wood Duck, both Lesser and Greater Scaup, Barrow’s Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, a swimming Sora (many had never seen one swim), Lewis’ Woodpecker and what was almost a flock of Downy Woodpeckers. From there we drove down to Lagoon

Valley outside of Vacaville. Here we added Canvasback and Wilson’s Snipe to the list, as well as other species that we would also see later on. We then headed east to Highway 113 and Jepson Prairie and Robinson/Flannery Roads area. Highlights in this area included Ferruginous Hawk, Great Horned and Burrowing Owls, and Loggerhead Shrike. We then headed east to the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. Of course here we added lots to the list. Highlights included Blue-winged Teal, Cattle Egret and Yellow-headed Blackbird. From there, we headed north to the Davis Water Treatment Plant and Landfill area. We added Thayer’s and Glaucous-winged Gulls among others here. Our final stop was Road 30 just to the south. The target here was Short-eared Owl. We spent considerable time here as the light waned, thinking that we might miss this one. Several of the group called it quits. Then finally one, then two were spotted with the last remaining light. What a great day!”

**Western Placer County (1/26)** — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “13 participants enjoyed a great day of birding this incredibly rich and diverse area. As is often the case here, raptors were the stars of the show. We had 14 species, including Cooper’s and Sharp-shinned Hawks, 6 Ferruginous Hawks, Golden and Bald Eagles, 2 Merlin, 4 Prairie Falcons and Peregrine Falcon. Often forgotten in the raptor category are owls, which are technically raptors. We had 2 Great Horned Owls and a Burrowing Owl. Other highlights included Cackling Goose, Sora, Lesser Yellowlegs, at least 7 Say’s Phoebes and Tricolored Blackbirds. A really great day, despite the dry conditions in many areas.

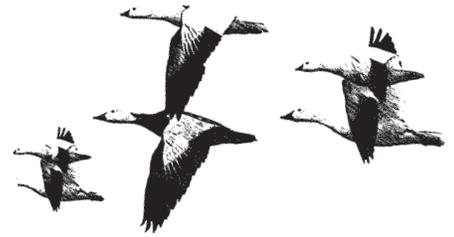
**Flood/Waverly Roads (1/25)** — Leader Jane Taylor reported: ““A group of twelve, including a gentleman visiting from Southern California enjoying his first Yellow-billed Magpies, met in Galt on a cool, droughty morning. We wended our way on country roads through parts of San Joaquin and Calaveras Counties in oak woodlands. Reaching our destination in the grasslands, a father-son pair met up with us. Highlights of the day included several Lewis Woodpeckers, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, an immature Bald Eagle, two Prairie Falcons and



Short-eared Owl  
Dan Thompson

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# Field Trips



## Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, [offleash56@yahoo.com](mailto:offleash56@yahoo.com), 761-1124, for trips through March 2. For trips beginning March 8 through April 6, contact the scheduler Mark Martucci, [matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com), 833-6722.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/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. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER contact the trip leader for trip status.

**Saturday, March 1, 8am**  
**North Natomas Regional Park**  
**Leader: Ben Graber, 844-8682**  
**Bgraber984@gmail.com**

Join Ben for a leisurely morning walk around the North Natomas Regional Park. We can expect to see a wide variety of grassland species including Meadowlarks, Ring-necked Pheasants, and Savannah Sparrows, along with herons, egrets, and waterfowl. Various wintering species of raptors, including falcons, are also possibilities. This trip will include approximately 2 to 3 miles of walking over flat terrain, and bringing liquids is recommended. Meet Ben at the parking lot on the North side of New Market Drive across from Inderkum High School. New Market Drive is off Truxel Road approximately a mile north of Interstate 80. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

**Sunday, March 2, 7am**  
**Highway 37 and**  
**Schollenberger Park, Petaluma**  
**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

From the West Sacramento Park and Ride, Mark will lead the group towards Petaluma, with various birding stops along Hwy 37. Moving on to the Petaluma area, he'll look for Blue-winged Teal and a variety of other waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, Common Yellowthroat and the occasional rail and possibly a Peregrine Falcon. Bring lunch, liquids and layered clothing. Meet Mark at 7am 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 is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

**Saturday, March 8, 7:30am**  
**Discovery Park**  
**Leaders: Maureen Geiger,**  
**444-0804 or 281-6652**  
**mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net**  
**Larry Hickey, 415-305-0651**  
**Larryhickey1@gmail.com**

This park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers is a great place for a walk in any season with open lawns, revegetated sections and dense riparian stands. Join Maureen and Larry to look for resident species such as red-shouldered hawks, white-tailed kites and yellow-billed magpies plus still wintering sparrows. Woodpeckers, towhees and white-breasted nuthatches are usually found in March, and hermit thrushes can be common. This is an easy walking trip for beginners and experienced birders and will last until late morning.

To reach Discovery from I-5, drive east on the Garden Highway, turning right into the park at the first traffic light. Once in the park, you need a Sacramento County Parks Annual Pass, or you must stop at the kiosk and register, paying the \$5 entrance fee. Then turn left at your first opportunity and then left again, driving a short distance to the farthest parking lot at the archery range where we will meet.

**Sunday, March 9, 8am (Note: Daylight Savings Time begins today)**  
**Cosumnes River Preserve**  
**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Mark at this Nature Conservancy area 20 minutes south of Sacramento. He will search the ponds and fields on Desmond and Franklin Roads for waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. Walks along the boardwalk, bridge and trail areas should turn up

other interesting species in this rich riparian area. Meet Mark at the Visitor Center parking lot on Franklin Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road, (Exit #498); go left (east) about 1 mile 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 [cosumnes.org](http://cosumnes.org).

**Wednesday, March 12, 9am**  
**Effie Yeaw Nature Center**  
**Cathie LaZier, 457-6882**  
**empid@earthlink.net**

This area of the parkway is excellent for birding and Cathie will be looking for early nesting birds and returning migrants, as well as blooming wildflowers. This is a very good trip for beginners, as well as more experienced birders. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park in Fair Oaks. The trip will end by noon. An ARNHA membership card, Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Friday, March 14, 8 to 11am**  
**Arbor Day Birding**  
**Estates Drive – American River Parkway**  
**Leader: John Huls 396-5261**  
**johnhulsnaturalist@gmail.com**

Join us as we explore the natural history of trees and the birds that rely on them. This walk will feature magnificent examples of native trees and those introduced by gold rush era settlers. From Watt Ave take American River Drive east to Estates Dr. Turn south on estates until it dead-ends at the levee. Note: Arbor Day is cel-

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celebrated at different times by different states and some, like California, designate an Arbor Day week rather than a single day.

**Saturday, March 15, 8am**  
**Lake Solano/Putah Creek**  
**Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207**  
**spskua2@comcast.net**

This is a great area to find Pileated Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Brown Creeper, Barrow's Goldeneye and many other late wintering birds. Meet Tim 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.

**Saturday, March 15, 10:30am**  
**Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk**

Spring means the birds are up and singing, establishing territory and beginning to construct nests. Join Dave Rosen of Sac Audubon and a Nature Center docent for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see [sacnaturecenter.net](http://sacnaturecenter.net).

**Sunday, March 16, 8am**  
**Yolo Wildlife Area and Davis Wetlands**  
**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Meet Mark in the first parking lot (Lot A, on your left) at the beginning of the auto tour route of the Yolo Wildlife Area. From here we will drive over to the Davis Wetlands for a couple of hours, then head back to the Yolo Wildlife Area. Depending on the extent of flooded fields, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl. Tricolored and Yellow-headed Blackbirds are also a good possibility. Scopes and FRS radios are helpful on this trip. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (32A, E Chiles Rd) 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.

**Saturday, March 22, 8am**  
**Sunrise Boulevard section of the American River**  
**Leader: Jane Taylor, 444-0429**  
**jg.taylor@att.net**

The Sunrise Blvd stretch of the American River Parkway offers good spring birding for resident and returning riparian birds. This is a good trip for beginning birders and those wishing to hone their birdsong identification skills. Dress for walking dirt trails, possibly 4 to 5 miles, and bring liquids and snacks as the trip will last into late morning. Meet Jane at the parking lot at the foot of the pedestrian bridge east of Sunrise Blvd. Take Highway 50 to Sunrise Blvd, north on Sunrise and right on S Bridge Street. Pay a \$5 per-vehicle entry fee, use your Sacramento County Parks Pass, or park where allowed on S Bridge St and walk in. Rain cancels.

**Sunday, March 23, 8am**  
**Sacramento Bar**  
**American River Parkway**  
**Leader: Paul Cordero, email preferred**  
**pkcordero@gmail.com, 454-4061**

Paul will lead you on a morning walk along the American River. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early spring migrants. This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced birders. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Tuesday, March 25, 8:30am**  
**Yolo Wildlife Area**  
**Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758**  
**IshiM2000@comcast.net**

Join Marlene in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl and possible raptors such as Peregrine Falcon. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) 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. Scopes and FRS radios are helpful on this trip which is good for both beginners and more experienced birders. Note: trip will be canceled if bypass is closed due to flooding.

**Wednesday, March 26, 8:30am**  
**Ancil Hoffman Park**  
**Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290**  
**dtankers@winfirst.com**

Meet Dan at the picnic area parking lot at Ancil Hoffman Park. We'll bird the park

and the riparian area next to the river looking for resident nesting birds and spring migrants. If time permits, we may walk a bit into the nature area at Effie Yeaw.

Participants should be prepared for variable weather conditions and bring liquids. Scopes could be helpful. This outing will involve considerable walking, and will end around noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.



*Merlin*  
Sharon Wisecarver

**Saturday, March 29, 8am**  
**American River Parkway,**  
**Spanos Ct. Access**  
**Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791**  
**rey\_ality@hotmail.com**

Join Dan for a leisurely walk on the north side of the river across from the Paradise Beach area. The area is fairly typical of most Parkway locations but does have an overabundance of grapes with slightly less blackberry and elderberry which helps in attracting possible overwintering fruit lovers such as Western Tanager. We may encounter common winter birds such as Fox and Lincoln sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Common Goldeneye, crowned sparrows and hopefully a Merlin as well as residents such as Bewick's Wren, Spotted Towhee and California Quail. There are elevated views of the river and well-worn trails. Trip will probably end around 11am. Meet Dan in the parking area at the end of the Spanos Court cul-de-sac along the levee. Spanos Court runs west off Howe Ave between Northrup and Sierra Blvd.

**Sunday, March 30, 8am**  
**Sailor Bar, American River Parkway**  
**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident birds, and looking for early nesters and spring migrants. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. This is a good trip for beginners. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Sunday, March 30, 8am**  
**Beginning Birding Field Trip**  
**William Pond Park**

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 people per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

**Saturday, April 5, 7am**  
**Caswell Memorial State Park**  
**Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636**  
**calaveri.gary@gmail.com**

Caswell Memorial State Park is located in the Central Valley near the town of Ripon, about an hour south of Sacramento. The park's position along the meandering Stanislaus River affords a combination of water, mature cottonwood riparian and valley oak woodland vegetation. Its multi-level tall tree canopy, low scrubs and vines provide lush cover, nesting and foraging habitat, and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant bird species. For more information about the park, go to [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov), click on "Find A Park" and use the drop-down menu to find Caswell.

Passerines, including several species of swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers and warblers are park specialties in spring and summer, and resident Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and Great Horned Owls nest here. The park is surrounded by ag lands, so Swainson's Hawks are seen regularly here this time of year. California Thrasher and Wrentit, not that common on the valley floor except in riparian areas, are also here.

There is a day-use fee per vehicle to enter the park. Plan to spend several hours in the park along some of the numerous nature trails, so bring food and water. The trails

**LAST CHANCE FOR DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES!**

A great trip for families, youth groups and beginning birders.

Don't forget to stop by the Cosumnes River Preserve and check out the "Ducks In Scopes," where preserve docents have a row of scopes set up, some set lower to accommodate children. They'll focus on giving you good views of the many colorful ducks and geese, as well as some of the more interesting shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts and Common Snipe. A table display features "Duck Soup", dishes of water dipped from the pond full of sand

are generally level, but these paths and the vegetation along them may be damp. Dress appropriately.

We will meet at the Park and Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 near the Sheldon Rd exit. Take Hwy 99 south from Sacramento to the Sheldon Road exit. The new off ramp here cloverleaf's and then crosses over the freeway. After crossing, proceed to the second signal light; turn right on East Stockton Blvd and proceed about a ¼ mile to the lot.

**Sunday, April 6, 8am**  
**Mather Field Park**  
**Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457**  
**wayne.blunk@gmail.co**

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. The lake and its surrounding grasslands host a wide variety of birds. Great-tailed Grackle and Yellow-headed Blackbirds both nest at the lake. Meet Wayne in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Zinfandel for this morning trip. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.



*Grebe species*  
Daniel Kilby

fleas, dragonfly nymphs, and other squiggly things that provide the protein the birds are feeding on. A microscope and hand lens provide close-up looks. The Preserve is a quick drive from Sacramento—south on I-5 to Twin Cities Road; left (east) on Twin Cities for 1 mile; then right (south) on Franklin Blvd; the viewing area is in the first parking lot on your right as you drive into the preserve.

The time is 11am to 2pm, and it's a great day trip for families and youth groups. The last scheduled date is Saturday, March 1st.

**FAMILY-FRIENDLY TRIP DATES**

Sacramento Audubon is merging education activities with Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael as a way of maximizing efforts to serve families with children who would like to be out of doors and enjoy nature walks. The next date is **Saturday, March 15**, followed by April 12. The walks begin at 10am.

Reservations are not needed. Simply show up at Effie Yeaw Nature Center at the appropriate day and time and walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge.



*Roughleg Hawk*

**FIELD TRIPS FOR**  
**BEGINNING BIRDERS**

**Location:** William Pond Park, American River Parkway

**Dates:** Sundays, March 30 and April 13

**Time:** 8am

**Each Trip:** Limited to 10 participants  
**Registration required.**

These outings are 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.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on where to look and what important field marks to look for. This walk will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. An optional brief session at a picnic table afterwards will cover field guides, smart phone applications and optical equipment.

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 (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

## General Meeting

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program representative. She has conducted outreach and research for SNAMP since 2008. Kim has also been trained as a facilitator and a California Naturalist.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website [www.sacramentoaudubon.org](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org) and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

*Sally Walters, Program Chair*

### 2014-15 SAS NOMINATIONS

It's time for nominations to the Sacramento Audubon Board for the 2014/15 fiscal year. Positions are: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and five Directors. The Board recommended slate will be announced in the April newsletter and at the April general meeting. The vote will be held at the May general meeting. If you are interested in running for office please contact one of the Nomination Committees members:

Tim Fitzer, [spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.net)  
Darrell Mohr, [mohrdd@att.net](mailto:mohrdd@att.net)  
Linda Pittman,  
[pittmanl@frontiernet.net](mailto:pittmanl@frontiernet.net)

### POLLINATOR GARDENING WORKSHOP

One of the programs from the California Center for Urban Horticulture is a Pollinator Gardening Workshop in which experts will be teaching which plants are best to attract pollinators to your garden. The date is Saturday, March 15th, from 7:30am to 2pm at Giedt Hall, room 1001, UC Davis.

Presentations end at 11:30, then you can enjoy lunch in the Häagen-Dazs Honey Bee Haven.

The cost is \$40 and there is a Special Pollinator Plant sale for attendees from 1-2pm at the UC Davis Arboretum Teaching Nursery. Registration is required and may be done online at [ccuh.ucdavis.edu](http://ccuh.ucdavis.edu) or for more information call 530-752-6642.

### Findings continued from page 2

Loggerhead Shrikes. We tallied 56 species, not including the Burrowing Owl that was seen only by young Sam and his dad as they brought up the rear of the caravan on Waverly Road."

**Sandhill Crane Trips (1/25 and 1/26)** — Leader Mike Savino reported: On Saturday there were about 70 visitors even though the tour was not mentioned in either the Observer or at the SAS web site. There were too many people to fit in the Visitor Center so we did our presentation out on the deck. We skipped our usual hike on the Wetlands Walk as there was very little to see at that time. Therefore we went, via car caravan, down to Woodbridge Road. While waiting for the crane fly-in we answered questions and pointed out the few ducks and shore birds that were close by as well as the swans, snow geese and other geese at some distance away. (It took six of us to give this crowd the personal attention we like to provide. Four of us had scopes which greatly enriched the experience for many of our visitors.) Finally, at sunset, the cranes arrived and it was glorious. The sky was turning colors as the cranes came in close to roost for the night. Just before it started to get dark there were massive flights of hundreds of geese taking off and hundreds of cranes flying in. The sound was amazing. Most all our visitors were thrilled with the spectacle.

**Yolo Bypass WLA (1/21)** — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: "Eight birders enjoyed a productive morning observing a variety of birds. Highlights included Lesser Scaup, Ring-neck Duck, Tundra Swans, Tri-colored Blackbirds, Cattle Egrets, Greater White-fronted Geese, Great-horned Owl, and American Bittern. Also, among the high concentration of birds we found large numbers of Buffleheads, Herring Gulls, and Pintail Ducks. Very few shorebirds were seen as available habitat was limited. A bright day and virtually no wind made for a satisfying morning."

**Robinson Road and Bird's Landing (1/19)** — Paul Cordero, leading the trip with Mark Martucci, reported: "A dozen intrepid birders set out on a convo-

luted path traversing a disappointingly dry and barren Robinson Rd and Hwy 113. Alas, no Mountain Plovers were found, but we had excellent looks at several Ferruginous Hawks including a dark morph. Other raptors included Great-horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel and a solitary Merlin. Loggerhead Shrikes were abundant as well as typical roadside birds such as Meadowlarks, Savannah Sparrows and American Goldfinch. We called it a day early and were further disappointed when the Niners lost to the best bird of the day: the Seahawks."

**Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk (1/18)** — Leader John Huls reported: "As the Nature Center limits groups to 20 participants, the more than 30 people who showed up were split into two groups, with EYNC docent Brena Seck leading one group while I led the other. Deer were so plentiful as to make one wonder if they've neared the carrying capacity of the nature area. Praise and admiration to Jack Hiehle and his many years of installing protective cages around young oaks to protect them from these voracious browsers. Acorn Woodpeckers were busy and vocal, and we had great scope views of a Red-shouldered Hawk. We also enjoyed the Coyote Bush in full bloom and the Toyon full of berries."

**Salt Springs Valley (1/18)** — Leader Dan Williams reported: "We had 82 species in the Calaveras foothills and east San Joaquin grasslands on this unseasonably warm winter day. Highlights from Salt Springs Valley were 5 Bald Eagles (including one of every age), a subadult Golden Eagle, at least 10 Ferruginous Hawks, a pair of Hutton's Vireos as well as multiple Lewis's Woodpeckers and Phainopeplas along rock creek road, the continuing Red-breasted Merganser on the reservoir, and a Hooded Merganser and Redhead on a small pond north of the old schoolhouse. On the way home we had 3 different Prairie Falcons, a few more Ferruginous Hawks, lots of Horned Larks, and a Vesper Sparrow along Waverly Road."

*Cathie LaZier  
substituting for Pete Hayes*



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Although the data are still pouring in, here are some of the trends noted so far in the United States:

- There are fewer winter finches across North America. Last year the GBBC documented a finch “superflight,” driven by food shortages in Canada. Ten species of irruptive species (mostly finches) staged a record invasion. This year the numbers do not reflect last year’s lack of food “superflight.”
- The Snowy Owl invasion continues: a massive irruption of Snowy Owls into the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes states of the U.S. has been producing headlines for the past several months. Though only halfway through the GBBC, a total of 476 Snowy Owls in 20 states and provinces of the U.S. and Canada has been counted.
- The polar vortex effect: in much of North America, the impact of this frigid cold on birds is most apparent in areas such as the Great Lakes which are almost completely frozen. Only Lake Ontario has any significant open water now and that has resulted in major movements of waterfowl and grebes. The GBBC is capturing these patterns well. For example, the White-winged Scoter is not usually found inland in February, but has been widely reported from interior locations over the past few days as has the Long-tailed Duck.

At press time there is a realtime map showing where checklist submissions are originating from. California is currently leading the country in number of species with 354, followed by Texas. We’re also leading the nation in number of checklists submitted.

So just because the counting is over for 2014 doesn’t mean the GBBC is over. The website has been redesigned so now have some fun checking the results. Explore what’s being reported with the new “Explore a Location” tool. You can see what species are being reported and how many checklists are being turned in at the county, state/province, and country levels. Just click “Explore Data” on the GBBC or eBird websites and you’ll see the “Explore a Location” tool at the top of the list. The web address is [birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://birdsource.org/gbbc/).

## TWO RECENT ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

### **Hedgerows bring birds, Audubon California says**

Excerpted from the *Davis Enterprise*, By Jason McAlister

In a drought, the only thing stopping the eye from seeing endless beige in parts of Yolo County are 10-foot-wide strips of mini-forests on the edges of the area’s fields. These darker lines in the distance are the hedgerows. Indigenous bushes, shrubs and small trees like toyon, coffeeberry, coyote brush, valley oak, cottonwood, willow, mule fat, buckwheat and elderberry can be found here, and they’re used by Audubon California to study bird species diversity and populations.

But would there be as many birds on county farmland without hedgerows? This is the question Karen Velas, bird conservation project manager for Audubon California, is asking. Twenty hedgerow and 20 non-hedgerow farm sites were chosen last year to study differences in bird populations, and her studies show a statistically significant difference in the number of birds found—about 35 birds at the hedgerow sites versus six at non-hedgerow sites, said Velas, whose data is not yet published.

“We take an approach where we’re trying to put in a high diversity of plants,” Velas said. “Part of the study is looking at the vegetation and trying to figure out what plants are specifically providing the most resources for the birds. What would be the ideal hedgerow? Cooperation with landowners is the future of conservation,” she added. “And even a thin hedgerow can provide spaces for nesting and food resources.”

### **Cities Have More Native Biodiversity Than Previously Thought**

Contrary to conventional wisdom that cities are a wasteland for biodiversity, a study found that while a few species—such as Rock Pigeons and annual meadow grass—are shared across cities, overall the mix of species in cities reflects the unique biotic heritage of their geographic location. The new study, involving 147 cities worldwide, highlights the value of green spaces in cities, which have become important refuges for native species and migrating wildlife. This phenomenon has been named the Central Park Effect because of the surprisingly large number of species found in New York’s Central Park, a relatively small island of green within a metropolis. The findings of the study, conducted by a working group at UC Santa Barbara’s National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) and funded by the National Science Foundation, were published in the *Proceedings B*, a journal of the Royal Society of Biological Sciences..

## IMPORTANT TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD SURVEY

Tricolored Blackbirds were reported to be among the most abundant birds in California during the 19th Century. Since the 1930’s, the population has declined dramatically from several million to an estimated 150,000 in 2011. Biologists working closely with the species estimate the current population to consist of fewer than 100,000 birds. Because the global population of Tricolored Blackbirds lives almost entirely in California, it is up to Californians to conserve the species and help to sustain it indefinitely into the future.

As a major component of on-going efforts to monitor the species, a Tricolored Blackbird Statewide Survey will again be conducted this April 18-20. The results of this effort will provide an estimate of the population of this species throughout California in 2014. Recent Statewide Surveys have been conducted by more than one hundred volunteers, including local birders, consultants, and state and federal biologists. All will donate their time and expertise to count tricolors at their breeding colonies throughout the state.

This year, we are asking you, Audubon Chapter members, to participate in the 2014 Tricolored Blackbird Statewide Survey and to help count Tricolored Blackbirds. Many chapters have participated in the past, and we are encouraging both experienced and first-time volunteers to participate and to help to make this count as thorough as possible. Tricolored Blackbirds need your help.

Please contact Monica Iglecia ([miglecia@audubon.org](mailto:miglecia@audubon.org)) or Robert Meese ([rmeese@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rmeese@ucdavis.edu)) to volunteer to participate and learn how you can help make this year’s count as complete as possible. We will assign you to a county and help you to communicate with the Survey’s county coordinator to integrate you into a survey team. Please provide the following information:

- Your name; your contact information (phone number and email); and your county preference

Garry George  
Chapter Network Director  
Renewable Energy Director  
Audubon California  
(323)933-6660,  
[www.ca.audubon.org](http://www.ca.audubon.org)

## Birding and Nature Events

### OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2014, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From April 4 through 6 in Sequim, WA the Olympic Birdfest will take place. It's the place for a bird watching vacation for beginners and experts, with leisurely strolls or active hikes, you can bird for a few hours or all day... from the dawn chorus to the evening owl prowl. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, a silent auction, gala banquet, and the bird festival with the most spectacular setting! Visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, vendors and artists are also featured. The keynote speaker this year will be Noah Strycker presenting "Bird World: the fascinating parallels between bird and human behavior."

Program information and registration can be found at [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org). Their E-mail address is [opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com](mailto:opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com) or you can contact Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society at 360-681-4076.

Immediately following BirdFest, there is a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 6-8, 2014. Register separately at [www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon](http://www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon).

### GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 19th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 17-22** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. The northern coast of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where over 270 species of birds have been sighted. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Snowy Plover and even whale watching. This year's keynote speaker will be Keith Hansen, a wildlife artist who specializes in the inspirational and accurate portrayal of birds. He recently finished creating the images for a newly released book entitled *Birds of the Sierra Nevada, their Natural History, Status and Distribution*. Published by the UC Press and beautifully written by authors Ted Beedy and Sacramento's Ed Pandolfino, this 420+ page guide, showcases the entire Sierra Nevada and the birds that call it home.

The selection of over 100 small group field trips, lectures, workshops, boating excursions, and community activities are led by experienced local guides. For further information and registration visit [www.godwitdays.org](http://www.godwitdays.org) or call 1-800-908-WING.

### DON'T MISS THE 5TH ANNUAL POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL!

Save the dates of **April 25-27** for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. The Festival will once again be headquartered in Point Reyes Station and will include field trips in and around the Point Reyes National Seashore. The keynote speaker has not been announced yet.

For more information, visit [www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org). Tickets are scheduled to go on sale February 19, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

### ANIMAL HOUSE THE EXHIBIT

Check out "Animal House, The Exhibit" at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center. This annual juried show features many images of birds, including the Best Of Show Award, "Mallard Ducks Protecting Ducklings". It's on view from February 18th through March 8th.

Check [www.sacfinearts.org](http://www.sacfinearts.org) for times and directions. Sacramento Fine Arts Center, 5330B Gibbons Dr, Carmichael, 95608. Gallery Hours: Tuesday 11am-7pm, Wednesday through Saturday, 11am-3pm.



### SAS OUTREACH HELP WANTED!

Spring events are on the calendar and we need volunteers to work at our table. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding, and talking to people about our field trips and you would work with an experienced volunteer. Please volunteer for one of the following events.

Earth Fest at the Sacramento City Zoo,  
Saturday, April 5th

Creek Week at Carmichael Park,  
Saturday, April 12th

Walk On The Wild Side, Beach Lake,  
Saturday, May 17th

If you can work a 3 or 4 hour shift on one of the above days, please contact Cathie LaZier at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net), or 916-457-6882

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Carol Baker, Joan Clark, Linda Lasswell, Sonja Sorbo, Peter Stoddard and Judith Tracy, to the **General Fund**.

Dorrit Ahbel, Dennis Bryerton, Thomas Graham, Robert Klass, Kenneth Lee, Sandra Serpa, Sonja Sorbo, Carol Sughrue, Peter Stoddard, Judith Tracy, Dee Warenycia, John Whitelaw and Alana Wyatt, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Wendy Money made a donation to **Sacramento Audubon** in memory of Anne Adams

## SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these  
new members:

Carol Baker	Naomi Gilbert
John and Marianne DeRonde	Kelly Hosier
John Whitelaw	
Jane Galustian	Bob Wiedman

### Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on March 25, 2014 at 7pm, at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

### YOUR DUES AND DONATIONS AT WORK

The Sacramento Audubon Society Board has voted to make the following donations:

- \$100 for a Sacramento inner city classroom to purchase materials through “Bluebirds Everywhere” to assemble, install and maintain Bluebird boxes on the school property.
- \$500 to Sacramento Splash, to further their work helping children understand and value their natural world through scientific investigation and outdoor exploration.

### 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

llandry46@comcast.net

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

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

*Observations* continued from page 10

a species perhaps undocumented in the region in winter, molted into a distinctive male **Costa’s Hummingbird** by the end of the month along Putah Creek upstream of Davis. Songbird highlights included a “**Solitary Vireo**” (likely **Cassin’s** or **Plumbeous**) singing at Lake Solano on 1/12, a **Townsend’s Solitaire** at upper Lake Natoma near the Young Wo Circle access on 1/23, a **Sage Thrasher** at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 1/18, the continuing **Harris’s Sparrow** in north Davis off of Cortez Ave, here for its third winter, and the **Swamp Sparrow** first reported from Lagoon Valley on 12/28 continued through at least 1/1. Another **Swamp Sparrow** was found along Putah Creek downstream of the Pedrick Rd Bridge from 1/16 through the end of the month, and a **Gray-headed (Dark-eyed) Junco** was an extremely rare report from the Orr Forest portion of CRP on 1/1.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site ([sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html](http://sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html)). The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000’ contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve ([cvbirds.org](http://cvbirds.org)) and eBird.

It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Dan Airola, Terry Colborn, Chris Dunford, Gil Ewing, Kevin Guse, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Shawn Lockwood, John Luther, Tristan McKee, Frances Oliver, William Rockey, Deren Ross, Jim Rowth, John Sterling, Ron Storey, Craig Swolgaard, John Trochet, Charley Walker, Dan Williams, and Bruce Webb.

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

*Chris Conard*

# Seasonal Observations

January 1 to January 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

First things first: rain on 1/29 ended a record 52-day stretch without any precipitation, an unprecedented dry spell for mid-winter, and summer-brown fields persisted into February. The six **Trumpeter Swans** at Lagoon Valley in Solano County continued through at least 1/2, with some sightings at a nearby pond adjacent to Travis Air Force Base. Impressive high counts in Yolo County of 28 **Blue-winged Teal** came from Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 1/5, and a spectacular 56 were seen at Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento on 1/14. The species has never been so numerous in Sacramento County, so while only a single **Blue-winged Teal** was found along E Levee Rd in Natomas, two to three **Eurasian Wigeons** were notable there among the numerous American Wigeons. One of the most impressive observations in recent years was a communal night roost of up to nearly 150 **Northern Harriers** along Yolo County Rd 30 east of Rd 105. These birds continued into February and were seen interacting with up to four **Short-eared Owls**. As dusk approached, the owls attempted to forage in the field while harriers were streaming in from all directions. A dark morph **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk** was found at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) from 1/17-18.

A **Semipalmated Plover** continued through at least 1/7 at the Farmers Central Rd Pond along Yolo County Rd

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102 for a very rare January record. **Western Gulls** are rare in the Sacramento

area away from Sherman Island, so notable reports this month included a first-cycle bird at the Nimbus Hatchery on 1/12, an adult along the American River Parkway at Ancil Hoffman Park on 1/24, and an adult near the Tower Bridge along the Sacramento River on 1/31. An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found at the Yolo County Landfill on 1/7 and 1/14, and a second-cycle **Glaucous Gull** was reported from the same location on 1/8. On 1/19 at the Davis WTP, a first-cycle **Glaucous Gull** was reported along with an adult "**Kumlien's Gull**" at the Davis WTP (**Kumlien's** is currently considered a subspecies of **Iceland Gull**, a state review species, but thought by many to be on a continuum between **Iceland Gull** and **Thayer's Gull**).

A wintering bird originally identified as a hatch-year **Black-chinned Hummingbird**,

*Observations* continued on page 9

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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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