



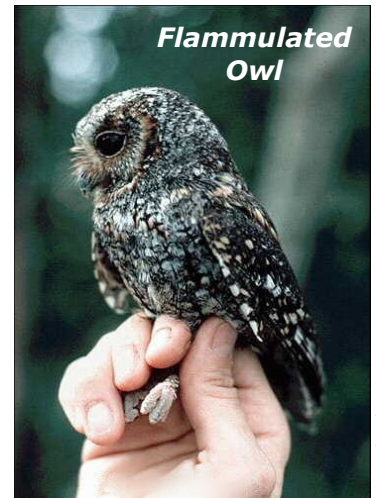
# The Hooter

Kittitas Audubon      September 2011

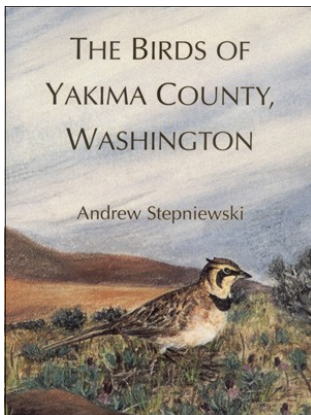
**Membership Meeting - Thursday, September 15th**  
@ 7:00 PM ~ Hal Holmes Center

## **"The Ponderosa Pine Forest" presented by Andy Stepniewski**

Heading up into the Cascades from the Kittitas Valley, the first forest type you encounter is the Ponderosa Pine Zone, the classic dry forest of the American West. The wonders of this picturesque forest have been celebrated annually for more than 40 years by Washington State Auduboners at the Wenas Memorial Weekend Campout. It turns out there is an amazing diversity of plants and animals in this dry forest, as documented by a number of scientific studies. On September 15th, I will introduce you to this ecosystem and its various plant community types. I will focus on the birds associated with each of these communities, and especially on declining species such as White-headed Woodpecker and Flammulated Owl. Both of these species are dependent on mature trees which are becoming scarce because of the high timber value of this forest.



Web photo



Kittitas Audubon has hosted speaker Andy Stepniewski in the past. Every program has been a delight filled with valuable information. He is a naturalist who has been traipsing about the mountains, forests, and deserts of the American West for more than 45 years. Birds have been his focus, but plants and critters besides winged creatures capture his interest. Andy is the author of *Birds of Yakima County*, and has served as a resource for several books on birds of Washington by other authors. Please join us for an evening of learning new things about familiar places!

All Audubon meetings, held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hal Holmes Center next to the Library, September through May (except December), are open to the public, so feel free to come and meet with us. A brief business session precedes the program. Stay afterwards for juice, treats, and conversation.

Many thanks to the Ellensburg Public Library for sponsoring our meetings here!

**Future Programs** (mark the dates on your calendar! Details to follow.)

**October 20th ~ TBA**

**November 17th ~ TBA**

**December 17th:** CBC ~ 33rd Annual Christmas Bird Count

## KAS BOARD MEMBERS

Co-Presidents – Gloria Baldi	933-1558
Vice President – Bud Rechterman	962-4508
Secretary – Jim Briggs	933-2231
Treasurer – Marte Fallshore	925-6745
Conservation – Janet Nelson	509-674-6165
Education – Bud Rechterman	674-1855
Field Trips – Steve Moore	933-1558
*Newsletter – Jan Demorest	933-1179
Historian – Marianne Gordon	964-2320
Program Coordinator – Jeb Baldi	933-1558
Publicity – Gerry Sorenson	968-4857
Wildlife Habitat – Joe Meuchel	933-3011
*Bluebird boxes – Jan Demorest	933-1179
Past President – Gloria Lindstrom	925-1807
Membership – Tuck Forsythe	925-2356
*Christmas Bird Count – Phil Mattocks	962-2191
*Librarian – Ginger Jensen	925-5816
Social/Greeter – Kay Forsythe	925-2356

\*NON-VOTING VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

**KAS Board Meetings are held at 4:30 PM on the 1st Thursday of each month on the third floor of the CWU Science Bldg, Room 301 (above the elephant desk). These meetings are open to the public and all Audubon members; please come and join in the discussions. Meetings adjourn by 6:00 or 6:30, after which we all go out for a sociable dinner ~ NO business discussion allowed!**

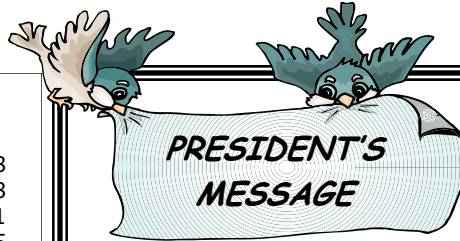
## Send in your stories & photos!

**The Hooter is the newsletter of Kittitas Audubon, published monthly except for July.**

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~ Submissions from readers / members are most welcome and encouraged! ~

**The editor reserves the right to edit for space, grammar, and/or suitability. Email text and/or photos to [bobcat@kvalley.com](mailto:bobcat@kvalley.com) or snail mail to Jan Demorest, Hooter Editor, 712 E 2nd Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Submissions need to be in by the 20th of the preceding month.**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

End of summer produces significant bird activity, the most anticipated being migration.

This is my favorite time of

year, and a quick review of my personal

bird diary (which is not the most comprehensive) reminds me to watch the yard and the skies. Trees and large shrubs will host migrating song birds, i.e., Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Warbling Vireos. Outside of town, watch the skies for small groups of Turkey Vultures, and just possibly Sandhill Cranes. On the last day of August in 2010 we watched from our deck for over an hour, a flock of about forty Common Nighthawks swooping and hawking bugs over our yard and weed field, often only ten feet above our heads.

Edges of ponds, small lakes, or a river can provide lucrative habitat to view migrating shorebirds, such as Spotted Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, Yellowlegs, and less common sandpipers (take your bird book). Drive up Reecer Creek into the hills, find an open meadow, unfold your chair, snack on cheese and crackers while you count birds of prey coming over the ridges. We tallied fifteen (15) within an hour as early as August 17<sup>th</sup> ~ and migration continues into October. Visit the old hospital on Craig's Hill between 7:00-8:00 PM and you will see Vaux's Swifts spiral into the chimney for a night's rest.

Although the male hummingbirds left much earlier, it will not be long before the last of the females leave, followed by this year's young. All at once you realize the Ospreys are not around, but your feeders are filled once again with those voracious Evening Grosbeaks (*and young American Goldfinches!*). Fall migration, an avian phenomenon that scientists are just beginning to understand, is such a wonderful event for us to enjoy ~ and contemplate.

End of summer also marks the beginning of the new year for Kittitas Audubon. However, this year we started early, with two events in August. The first was a cooperative presentation with *Conservation Northwest* regarding wolves and the proposed Wolf Management Plan. Information about our Washington wolves, and plans for the present wolf packs in our state was given to an over-flow crowd.

Our annual festive potluck in the flower-filled yard of Gloria and Hal Lindstrom was the second event. Delicious food and congenial chatter continued through the evening enjoyed by more than forty members. We do hope you will join us on September 15<sup>th</sup> for our next program.

*Gloria Baldi*

**August 6th ~ First Saturday BirdWalk ~** Another First Saturday BirdWalk with perfect weather! Thirteen people, including two children, searched for and tallied twenty of our usual species. A new sighting for the Park, although common throughout Kittitas Valley, was the Eurasian Collared Dove. The Gray Catbird appeared for a second month to the delight of all, and we examined an active bald-faced hornet's nest (from afar, of course). The fate of a garter snake with several dead yellow jacket bees smashed on the road was contemplated. (Even bees need to be alert while feasting.)

Considering the loss of habitat and seasonal activity, the conversion of the old golf course to hay storage may have a negative impact on the number of species we find. However, on the positive side, the expansion and completion of the Reecer Creek floodplain project between Irene Rinehart Park and Rotary Park provides us with a new and improved creek basin habitat just a short walk under I-90 from the ponds. Do join Tom Gauron on September 3<sup>rd</sup> (Yup, that's Labor Day Weekend!) for the next First Saturday BirdWalk.

**August 14th, Sunday ~ Potholes Rookery Canoe Trip ~** For the last thirty years I have visited the islands in the Potholes Reservoir at least once a year and never have I seen the water so low as it was on August 14th when I led eleven canoeists and kayakers into the Columbia Basin's version of the Everglades. Looking at the vast expanse of mud flats I wasn't sure we would get a hundred yards from the little-visited dirt road, much less the half mile into the partially submerged forest where the rookery begins. But it was a beautiful day with just enough breeze and cloud to soften the mid-summer heat; in half an hour all the boats were launched.



It wasn't quite as bad as I had feared. My usual and quite direct route from the road to the rookery was two feet

dry and we needed to follow a more convoluted path. Sally led the way in her kayak, threading

channels that were barely a boat width's wide and only inches deep, linking ponds bright green with duck weed. All the while much of our attention was diverted by the three hundred (Steve's estimate) pelicans flying in interlacing formations as they climbed thermals until they were specks around the sun, and long lines of cormorants coming and going between the main lake and the rookery. A group of Caspian Terns accompanied us, flying ahead in a swirling, squawking bar fight and then settling on the next mud flat in complete quiet and calm. The terns were obvious, but the Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs sharing the shallows were so perfectly camouflaged that at first I didn't notice them at all, then I managed to see one and suddenly realized there were twenty of them just fifty feet away.

We moved at what I've come to think of as an



Audubon pace, exploring each pond and spending most of our time with our binoculars, instead of paddles, in our hands, and seeing many more birds than I ever do in my usual canoeist's

rush. We spent fifteen minutes looking at what we hoped was a bittern posing on a bare branch; we finally decided it was really an immature Black-crowned Night Heron. (Steve and Jan are pretty sure they saw the bittern flying from one hide-away in the tall grasses to another.) There were disagreements about duck identification; they were all kind of medium-sized and brown and quite beyond me. I missed the Northern Shoveler (Steve identified him by bill width/length alone) but was the only one to see an adult night heron. We saw twenty-four species, and literally thousands of individuals. We never found the passage that led to the heart of the rookery but did manage to get to the outskirts where several huge willows were so laden with nests that they had been killed by the fresh guano. It was, as always, an almost magical experience, this astounding swamp in the desert and the myriad birds that live there.

Jud Weaver

## September

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park.** Labor Day weekend brings out the most dedicated birders, and the birds always put on a good show for those select few. Last chance 'til spring to see a Turkey Vulture, Western Wood-pewee, or vireo. 8 AM at Rinehart bridge parking lot.

**24<sup>th</sup> ~ Saturday ~ Chelan Ridge raptor migration.** A visit to a raptor-counting station high in the eastern Cascade Mountains near Winthrop, WA. Migrating hawks on southward migration are spotted and tallied yearly by Hawkwatch International, who welcome visitors. KAS supports this effort. A full day's trip beginning at 7 am (approx. 3 hrs driving time one way ~ we might consider an overnight if people are interested in birding on the return trip on Sunday); visit includes a ¾-mile walk on a forest trail to the site. Call Steve, 509-933-1179.

## October

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park.** Join us for a morning of fall birding, as we begin our **10<sup>th</sup> year of Saturday Birdwalks**. Thanks to Gloria and Jeb for launching this local tradition! October offers the dozen or so regular residents, some migrants like waxwings, Yellow-Rumped Warblers and rare pipits; hawks are on the move; there are arrivals from the north like grebes, and always a few surprises. 8 am at Rinehart parking lot; Jeb and Gloria Baldi lead.

**8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> ~ Saturday-Sunday ~ Samish Flats and Skagit Delta ~** Tidal flats and wetlands of eastern Puget Sound attract migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors, beginning in early fall. Let's see what we can see in a weekend overnight. Time permitting we could also explore urban trails in Bellingham for passerines. Research on suitable accommodation is in the works. Call Steve & Jan, 509-933-1179.

## November

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park:** Fall color in the cottonwood grove. Ducks, mergansers, and the occasional coot are joining the park regulars. The hawks are hungry, kinglets are arriving from the mountains, and even a Bewick's wren is possible. Robins will be heading south soon. 8 am at Rinehart parking lot; Jeb and Gloria Baldi lead.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Saturday ~ Iron Horse Trail West to Yakima River Bridge:** Half-day easy walk on level ground from Hwy 97; we'll follow the graveled rail grade out to the Yakima River bridge (about 3 miles round-trip). Fall color, brushy habitats, and some river backwater areas. Well-behaved dogs on leash OK for this trip. Meet at 8 am, Super One parking lot; Jan and Steve lead.

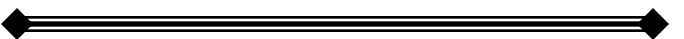
## December

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Saturday ~ First Saturday Birdwalk, Rinehart Park ~** Ducks are on the ponds (up to 5 species in December); eagles are arriving. Careful spotting will turn up kinglets and Brown Creepers finding winter refuge in our park. 8 am at Rinehart parking lot; Jeb and Gloria Baldi lead.

**10<sup>th</sup> Saturday ~ McNary NWR ~** Duck heaven in December on Columbia riverside marshlands south of Tri-Cities, WA. Many thousands of waterfowl use the refuge as a stopover on their way south. Full day trip (cancellation due to weather is a possibility.) Call Steve or Jan, 509-933-1179.

**Date To Be Announced ~ Cle Elum Christmas Bird Count:** Michael Hobbs facilitates this count; call 425-318-2105 to participate

**17<sup>th</sup> Saturday ~ 2011 Christmas Bird Count & Potluck:** Phil Mattocks leads the 33rd annual survey of the 15-mile diameter Ellensburg circle. It's surprising how many birds are out and about on a cold, snowy and/or foggy day. Fabulous Food potluck, report of results, photo-sharing, and good fellowship at the Halls' home afterwards. ***If you have never before participated and would like to - or if you have participated in past years and cannot do it this year, please call Gloria Baldi at 933-1558.***



*Plan your fall around these trips! If you have any suggestions for places that you have always wanted to explore, or a favorite place to share with others, call Steve, 933-1179.*

*The mission of Kittitas Audubon is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds.*



### Columbia River Estuary's Salmon-Eating Tern Colony Produces No Chicks This Year

According to a report from Bird Research Northwest, the Caspian Tern colony, which had almost 9,000 nesting pairs on East Sand Island in the mouth of the Columbia River, will produce no chicks this year.

The colony was "encouraged" to move to this island in 2000 from Rice Island further up the estuary, in the hope that, being closer to the ocean, the terns would shift their diet to more marine fishes, away from the salmon and steelhead that swim down through the estuary on their way to the Pacific from the Columbia-Snake river basin, including 13 listed stocks. This, in fact, has happened, with the estimated



photo by Sara Moculeski

"take" by terns decreased by 52%; however the terns are facing their own problems.

Soon after the terns

began to lay eggs, eagles and falcons would swoop down to snatch adults, causing all the nesting birds to flush. The gulls took advantage of this confusion, pouncing on the unattended eggs.

Since terns are relatively long-lived, starting reproduction at age 4 or 5, they will have more chances to produce young. This gives cause for hope for the future of our Northwest terns.

Updates are posted on Bird Research Northwest's web site: <http://www.birdresearchnw.org/>

Nesting habitat is being prepared in seven alternative sites along the Pacific Northwest coast, including Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (Dungeness Spit). Since terns do not historically nest in such huge colonies, about 6,000 pairs will be relocated to these seven sites, leaving about 2,000 on East Sand Island.



### Vancouver (B.C.) Avian Research Centre

VARC conducts bird monitoring and banding, provides research, demonstration, education, volunteer opportunities, and visitor programs at its main **Colony**

**Farm** field station. ~ VARC's primary objective is to safeguard habitat for breeding and migratory birds to ensure their long term survival by providing scientifically defensible strategies for avian and ecosystem conservation.

<http://birdvancouver.com>

Happy summer birding and banding!

Derek Matthews ~ Vancouver Avian Research

Here's a website where you can see beautiful photos of birds in-the-hand, details of feather and wing structure, data about bird populations. Click on "About Birds" for a great survey of information about the most common birds that are seen and/or banded at VARC. This is a good resource!

### Swifts stopping over for the night!

The Vaux's Swifts are on their fall migration, from their nesting grounds in the higher forests of the Northwest, British Columbia, even southern Alaska, heading south for the winter. Ellensburg is honored by their choice of the brick chimney at the Old Ellensburg Hospital on East Third as one of their night-roosting stops on the way to California, Mexico, and Central America.

You can sit across the street from the hospital on a low brick wall, or park your car along the street and peer out the window to see them circling the just before sunset, then spiraling down into the chimney to cling to the rough brick and sleep for the night. We try to monitor and count the birds as they go into the chimney, then report these numbers to The Vaux's Happening

Do you know about "**BirdKitt**", an online "listserve" for all birders interested in bird sightings in Kittitas County?

If you are not already signed up, here's how to do it: send an email to [subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:subscribe@yahoogroups.com). Reply to the first email about Birdkitt that you receive from "yahoogroups". To unsubscribe: send email to [birdkitt](mailto:birdkitt)

- [unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com). If you have difficulty, email to [kittitasaudubon@inland.net](mailto:kittitasaudubon@inland.net) or Chris Caviezel: [chris.caviezel@gmail.com](mailto:chris.caviezel@gmail.com)

Thanks to Beth Rogers and Cricket Webb for getting this up and running! This is a great resource for finding places to look for birds in the valley.

*"Enraptured with Raptor Migration"*

North central Washington is home to some of the most amazing species of raptors in the northwest, but many people don't know it is also a major pit stop for hawks flying from Alaska to the Southwest and Mexico. This September is a great opportunity to learn about the amazing migration, and get face-to-face with raptors of all shapes and sizes. Join the Methow Valley Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society, North Cascades Basecamp, and Hawk-Watch International for the second Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival!

***This interactive event takes place at Memorial Park in Pateros, Washington, on September 17th, 2011 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.***

This family event combines free activities in Pateros with trips to the Chelan Ridge Raptor Migration Site to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to their winter territories.

More information about the festival and related activities, as well as reservations for field trips and the shuttle to Chelan Ridge can be found on NCW Audubon's website: <http://www.ncwaudubon.org/events.htm>

North Central Washington Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2934, Wenatchee, WA 98807 [www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org)

The following morning, Sunday, September 18th, North Cascades Basecamp, in beautiful Mazama, WA, will host a talk about the Southern Cross Peregrine Project by Bud Anderson, Director and Founder of the Falcon Research Group. After the talk, a guided hike will leave the Basecamp for the heart of the North Cascades at Harts Pass for raptor viewing and migration discussion. RSVP is appreciated for the talk and the free hike is limited registration for up to 30 participants. For Harts Pass field trip registration, call the North Cascades Basecamp at 509-996-2334 or email [info@NorthCascadesBasecamp.com](mailto:info@NorthCascadesBasecamp.com). For more information, visit <http://www.northcascadesbasecamp.com/programs/?p=805>

***Note: See page 4 for details about our own KAS field trip to visit Chelan Ridge and the Hawkwatch Raptor Migration station on the weekend following this event.***



*A student from Oroville High School, releases a young red-tailed hawk. On occasions when students are allowed to release the birds and watch them fly away, the students gain a very memorable experience and a chance to consider the wonder and mystery of migration. (USFS photo)*

**AUDUBON COUNCIL OF WASHINGTON**

The Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) will be meeting, Saturday, October 8th, in Moses Lake. This will be a one day event starting at 9:00 am. All Audubon members are welcome to attend and help determine the future of a state presence of Audubon and what that should look like. Should we have a state office? What should the purpose of that office be? Coordinator, lobbyist, scientist? Who pays? Lots of important questions to consider. We need everyone to provide input. Please call Gloria Lindstrom 925-1807 or Gloria Baldi 933-1558 if you would like to attend. Kittitas Audubon will also furnish a few snacks for the attendees? If you would like to help with this task, please give us a call.



**GET "THE HOOTER" ONLINE**  
*Save paper, printing, postage. If you would prefer to receive the electronic version, send your name, mailing address, & email address to:*  
**info@kittitasaudubon.org**

*At the beginning of each month, we'll send you an email with a quick link to the new Hooter.*

The Hooter is now printed on "Grays Harbor 100" paper ~ 100% post-consumer waste, manufactured in Washington State, using 100% renewable, zero-carbon-footprint energy.



Check out the Grays Harbor Paper website at:  
<http://www.ghplp.com/index.html>

**Your KAS membership dues working for a better environment!**

*Let us know what you think!*

**BECOME A KITTITAS AUDUBON MEMBER!! (Or renew your membership)**

Receive The Hooter ~ help support education and conservation activities and projects!



Darling Bird Studios, ©2007 UNA

Two options are available:

**OPTION 1:** Membership in National Audubon includes a subscription to the magazine, *Audubon*, membership in the local chapter (KAS), and KAS monthly newsletter, *THE HOOTER*

- \_\_\_ Join as a new National Audubon member      \$20      (includes KAS membership)
- \_\_\_ Renew a National Audubon membership      \$35

Make check payable to: National Audubon Society    Include this form and mail to: Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chapter Code COZY220Z

**OPTION 2:** Membership in only the local chapter, KAS, includes the monthly newsletter, *THE HOOTER*

- \_\_\_ Join the local Kittitas Audubon Society (KAS) chapter      \$20
- \_\_\_ Renew your KAS membership      \$20
- \_\_\_ Make a donation to KAS    \$\_\_\_\_\_ (amount)

Make check payable to KAS and mail to: KAS, P.O. Box 1443, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like to receive The Hooter electronically?**

**Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No, prefer paper edition \_\_\_\_\_**

*Kittitas Audubon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational society.  
 All memberships and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.*

**Membership forms are also available on our Web site: Kittitasaudubon.org.**

For membership information contact Membership Chair, Tuck Forsythe ~ forsythe (at) fairpoint.net

**Check out our website ~ see The Hooter in COLOR at www.kittitasaudubon.org**

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## Upcoming KAS Field Trips

### September ~

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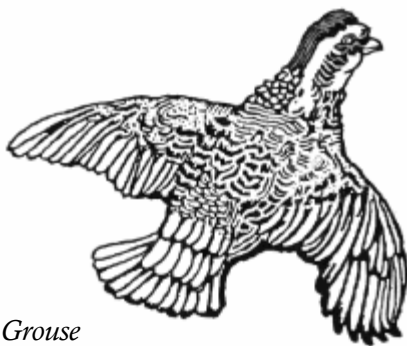
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*Kittitas Audubon*

*P.O. Box 1443*

*Ellensburg WA 98926*



*Grouse*

*Artist: Dugald Stewart Walker (1883 - 1937)*

*From: The Boy Who Knew What The Birds Said*

*Published: 1918*

*The Hooter - September 2011*

*The Newsletter of Kittitas Audubon - <http://www.kittitasaudubon.org>*

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