



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Volume 39, Number 2 March/April 2020

WAS Meetings and Happenings

**SPEAKERS WILL START AT
7:00PM, WITH MEETING AND SOCIAL
TO FOLLOW**

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 - 7:00PM

Kim Bowsher, Ogden Farmer's Market, will talk about the city's efforts to create this popular event and its sibling, the Winter Market.

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 - 7:00PM

Christy Bills, Natural History Museum of Utah entomologist, spearheads the Western Firefly Project. She will talk about firefly sightings in Utah and discuss how people can get involved as firefly spotters across the state.

**Meet at the Ogden Nature Center located
at 966 W 12th St., Ogden
PLEASE JOIN US
AND BRING A FRIEND!**

SPEAKERS NEEDED

Do you or someone you know have an interesting topic or trip to share. WAS is always looking for new speakers for its monthly meetings. Please contact program director Susan Snyder with your suggestions. Email naturescall@gmail.com, or call or text 801-388-4201

WASATCH AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

by John Bellmon

Our Christmas Bird Counts went off well this year, although it was cold, snowy and rainy. A big **thank you** to all who participated and made this year's Christmas Bird Counts such a success. All this information and data is very important for the study of population trends of wintering bird species.

On the 40th **OGDEN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** we all had an exciting time. The weather was miserable with rain and snow mixed and cold temperatures. Some of the unusual highlights were Greater White-fronted Goose, Mew Gull, Northern Shrike and American Tree Sparrows. Our totals were 33,058 individuals counted and a total of 91 species. A big thanks to the 28 observers that came out to help in our success, despite the weather.

On the **BEAR RIVER REFUGE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** we had clear weather, but cold with almost no wind. Waterfowl numbers were way down because of the frozen water. The birds that were seen were normal winter birds that are normal for this time of year. Our totals were 3,255 individuals counted and a total of 42 species reported. A big thanks to the 10 observers that helped in this good day of birding, including several that came up from Great Salt Lake Audubon in Salt Lake City.

On the **ANTELOPE ISLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** we had a cold clear day with almost no wind that was forecast to be a winter blizzard. Most of the birds were normal ones for the winter, with some unusual Least Sandpipers and a very nice Peregrine Falcon on the causeway. Our totals were 5,402 individuals counted and a total of 51 species reported. A big thank you to the 6 observers (including a new birder) that braved the "so called blizzard" and made this count such a success. This is always a wonderful way to start the year and get your new year bird list going.

Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: <http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Officers

| | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| President | Dan Johnston | 801-645-8633 |
| Vice President | Jay Stretch | 801-721-9432 |
| Secretary | Sharen Perry | 801-392-9554 |
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| 2020/2021 | Lynn Carroll | 801-392-8216 |
| 2020/2021 | Billy Fenimore | 801-301-3756 |
| 2020/2021 | Jeane Taylor | 801-394-2813 |

Committee Chairpersons

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|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Conservation | Lynn Carroll | 801-392-8216 |
| Conservation | John Bellmon | 801-444-3704 |
| Education | Dennis Collins | 801-393-1115 |
| Feeder Projects | Laura Johnston | 801-458-9558 |
| Field Trips | Vacant | |
| Wed. Bird Walks | Paul Lombardi | 801-678-8065 |
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| Programs | Susan Snyder | 801-388-4201 |
| Publicity | Arnold Smith | 801-829-3383 |
| Website | Patricia Allaire | 801-597-1091 |

About Us:

The **Wasatch Audubon Society** is an association of people who share an interest in birds, all natural things, and Utah's varied habitats. Our goals include: educating ourselves and others about wildlife and the natural environment; enjoying the out-of-doors in fellowship with others who share similar values; fostering an appreciation of wildlife and understanding of ecological principles; promoting opportunities for the public to see and appreciate birds and bird habitats; and influencing public policy toward a conservation ethic. You might also want to visit our website at <http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>.

DON'T MISS THE SWANS ON MARCH 14!!

See Calendar for 3 locations in our area.

Audubon members will be there with scopes and expertise!

Welcome New/Rejoined Members!

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Nancy Behnken | Ellen B. Pace |
| Frank Brown | Bruce & Barbara Perry |
| Sylvia Carter | Beverly Quarles |
| Laverne Etter | Susan A. Raymond |
| Tanner Flinders | Jill Sjoblom |
| Troy Johnson | Susan Skordos |
| R. Douglas Jones | Smith & Wilcox Blue |
| John S. Markham | Skies Foundation |
| Kurt Mebeker | Mrs. Carolyn Somer |
| Mary Noffett | Beverly Wheatley |
| Mr. Brian Nosker | Ms. Gloria Wurst |

President's Pipeline

By Dan Johnston

This month's Corvids are very similar, but live a continent apart. The Island Scrub Jay is found only on an island off the California coast and the Florida Scrub Jay is found only in Florida, almost 3,000 miles away. They have in common a close relation to the Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, but became separated by past environmental changes.

Of the over 500 species of birds that breed in North America, only one, the **Island Scrub Jay** (*Aphelocoma insularis*), occurs on a single island—Santa Cruz Island in Channel Islands National Park off the coast of California. This makes it the only island endemic bird species in North America. It also means it has the smallest range of any



North American bird species. Compared to its mainland cousin, the California Scrub Jay, the Island Scrub Jay is larger, darker blue in color and has a distinctive call. This species is the only scrub jay on the Channel Islands. A genetic analysis indicates that this species diverged from its closest relative, the wide

spread Western scrub-jays about 150,000 years ago. Population size in 2009 was estimated to be about 3,000 individuals, making this one of the rarest songbird species in the United States.

Island Scrub Jays are monogamous and may stay with a mate for their entire lives. Once the chicks fledge, average life expectancy is 4.8 years and can be as long as twenty years. They are also territorial. Breeding habitat appears to be saturated on the island, causing

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young individuals to delay breeding for several years. Until breeding becomes available, unmated individuals use marginal habitats not suitable for breeding. Non-breeders do not defend territories, but rather forage and roost in loose groupings or on their own. Island Scrub Jays seem to be incapable of crossing significant bodies of water. Santa Cruz Island is only 8 mi from the mainland, and the other Channel Islands are even closer.

The Florida Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) is the only species of bird endemic to Florida and one of only 15 species that are endemic to the continental United States. It lives nowhere in the world except Florida and the total population is estimated at about 4,000 pairs. Because of this, it is heavily sought by birders who travel from across the country to observe this unique species.

The **Florida Scrub Jay** has a complicated social system. It breeds in cooperative flocks. Each nesting territory is



occupied by an adult pair and often by one to six "helpers," usually the pair's offspring from previous years. These additional birds assist in defending the territory and feeding the

young. Studies have shown that a pair with "helpers" is likely to be more successful in raising their young than a pair without.

The Florida Scrub Jay has been the subject of very detailed field studies, for it lives only in Florida scrub, areas of short scrubby oaks growing on sandy soil. This habitat occurs mostly as isolated pockets, and the jays rarely wander away from their own little patch of scrub, making them extremely sedentary.

The Florida Scrub Jay is threatened by loss of habitat. Habitat fragmentation is steadily increasing, and in turn, causing populations to become smaller and more isolated. As fragmentation continues, fewer scrub jays are able to travel between the patches of suitable habitat. Rising sea water is also reducing their habitat.

Laura and I are flying to Florida this month. One of our target birds is the Florida Scrub Jay. Wish us luck.

Spring is on the way and so are our feathered friends. You should take any opportunity to get outdoors and enjoy seeing them. A good way is to join us on a field trip or a bird walk.

Good Birding, Dan

SAVE THE DATES!

May 2: Utah Audubon Council Spring Meeting

The Utah Audubon council Spring Meeting will be held on May 2nd at the Logan Library, Bonneville Room, from 10:00am to 2:00pm. The meeting will be hosted by Bridgerland Audubon and they will lead a field trip after the meeting to a birding hot spot in the area. If you have questions about this meeting, please contact John Bellmon (801-444-3704). We hope you will be able to attend.

May 14-17: Great Salt Lake Bird Festival

One of the most unique festivals in the U.S. Keep an eye on the website (daviscountyutah.gov/greatsaltlakebirdfest) for details and registration.

Successful "Gullstravaganza"!

by Billy Fenimore



An incredible turnout on February 1 for the Gull Identification Workshop and celebrating the 10th Annual "Gullstravaganza" at the Eccles Wildlife Education Center. A big thank you to Tim Avery for presenting an educational workshop and pioneering the annual event. Thank you to all our participants, EWEC Volunteers, Utah Birders, Great Salt Lake Audubon, Wasatch Audubon Society, UTAH COUNTY BIRDERS, field trip leaders for such a successful event and to my friends who share my passion for all things wild.

Ditto "Eagle Day"!

In a different kind of success, a dozen WAS members came out on February 8 to help the public spot eagles at Salt Creek and Farmington Bay. Due to unseasonably warm weather and lack of ice, only a few Bald Eagles were sighted. Thanks to all those who came to help and view; they enjoyed just getting out on a winter day.

IN MEMORIAM

by Keith Evans

Wasatch Audubon Society (WAS) and the birds of northern Utah lost a great friend in January. Jack Rensel (1929-2020) played a pivotal role in the formation and continuing operation of Wasatch Audubon Society. Every one of us has a memory of the times when we were fortunate enough to have “crossed paths” with him. I would like to share a few memories and, along the way, highlight a few of Jack’s contributions to WAS. On the “good news, bad news” front, Jack was the Program Committee Chair for most of WAS’s history and scheduled memorable programs for over 30 years. However, I always felt a little anxiety when Jack would say, “Keith, why don’t you talk to WAS on _____” and then fill in some topic we had recently been discussing. Actually, I was happy that the programs met Jack’s high standards.

WAS has a long tradition of “Wednesday Bird Walks.” Early on in these walks, a “home schooled” family joined us for their conservation curriculum. Jack loved teaching and provided well-balanced and accurate information. I remember one time when Jack was explaining, in detail, to the “mother/teacher” why he could tell the feather she had found was a Mallard feather. About that time, the youngest child ran by and the mother attempted to interrupt the run to ask “what is this?” Without slowing down, the youngster replied, “Mallard feather.” I suggested an “A” for the lesson. As the children got older, they started teaching us about nature.

Jack always carried his spotting scope and tripod so he became the center of any observation involving a distant sighting. On one occasion, we had a lively conversation going about whether a distant bird was a Sharp-shinned or a Cooper’s Hawk. The scope was deployed and the confusion soon ended – it was a Cooper’s Hawk. He was always willing to set up his scope and give everyone an opportunity to get a real close-up view of whatever bird was sitting in the tree, on the ground, or on a wire.



Jack was an enthusiastic participant in the Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) supported by WAS. He participated in every Ogden CBC from 1981 through 2019. As WAS added the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Antelope Island, and Morgan CBCs, he took his trusty spotting scope to help identify birds on each of those Counts. The birders really missed the views when he quit carrying his scope on every trip. Many of you also will remember Jack lowering his scope at Eagle Day events so the children could get a good view of a Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane, or the ducks in the open water.

Many of us remember Jack’s dedication to feeding the birds in the Ogden area. Probably only a few of us remember when the feeding project started and Jack drove his pickup north to the Tremonton area and “hand sacked” the bags of seed. Jack weighed each bag and marked a price based on the weight. WOW, how the process changed throughout the years. When WAS reached the point of distributing over 800 50-pound bags of black oil sunflower seeds each year, many suggested we raise the price to make the effort more of a fund

raiser for the club. Jack always vetoed the effort. He wanted to stay competitive with local feed stores and wanted to maximize our volume of seeds for the birds. When you see a group of juncos or chickadees at your feeder, think of Jack and the many generations of birds he was instrumental in feeding.

Jack and I spent a lot of time on a project that became the “Utah’s Featured Birds and Viewing Sites” book. As part of this project, we took many trips

to various points in Utah to “scope out” possible bird-viewing sites. Jack’s knowledge of the birds, habitat, and history of the area took us on many adventures throughout the State -- to areas such as Leidy Peak, in search of White-tailed Ptarmigan; southeast Utah to find a Gunnison Sage Grouse lek; and the Monte Cristo area to search for Purple Martins. Jack never tired of sharing his experience with others and creating memories along the way.

Thanks for the memories, Jack!

CALENDAR**MARCH**

4 Wednesday 8:30/9:30am Bird Walk East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville: Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Drive, South Ogden) for breakfast at 8:30 or at the trailhead at 9:30.

11 Wednesday 8:30/9:30am Bird Walk North Arm Pineview Reservoir: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 8:30 for breakfast or at Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison) to carpool at 9:30. Depending on the weather conditions, we may alter the location.

14 Saturday 9:00am Bird Walk Ogden Nature Center: Meet in the Visitor Center at the Ogden Nature Center at 9:00.

14 Swan Day 3 locations:

Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area 9:00am-2:00pm: The Area is 4 miles west of Corinne on UT-83. Take 6800 West and follow signs to the landfill.

Farmington Bay 9:00am-2:00pm: Located at the Eccles Wildlife Education Center and Farmington Bay WMA. 1700 W. Glover's Lane in Farmington.

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge 11:00am-3:00pm: Take exit 363 off I-15, go west about 1/4 mile to the Refuge entrance.

17 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting at Ogden Nature Center: Kim Bowsher, Ogden Farmer's Market, will talk about the city's efforts to create this popular event and its sibling, the Winter Market.

18 Wednesday 8:30/9:30am Bird Walk Two River's trail: Meet at Denny's Restaurant (Flying J Plaza, 21st Street and I-15) at 8:30 for breakfast or at the trailhead under the 21st overpass at 9:30.

21 Saturday 7:30am Field Trip Ogden Bay North: Meet at the Pilot gas station on 12th St. in Ogden (just west of I-15) at 7:30 to carpool. Look

forward to many species of shorebirds, raptors and waterfowl. Contact Mike Hearell with any questions (utmarshrat@yahoo.com).

25 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Fort Buenaventura: Meet at 8:00 at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 S Wall Ave, Ogden) for breakfast or at 9:00 at the parking lot at the entrance to the Fort. To reach the Fort, take Ave A off 24th street. Turn left at first street and head down towards the ball fields.

APRIL

1 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk West Extension (West of 1900 W) of West Haven Hiking and Biking trail: Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (2400 S 1900 W), West Haven, for breakfast. We'll then drive to the West Haven Cemetery (West on 1800 S off 1900 W. Make a right at 2350 West and proceed north into the Cemetery.) We'll park on the NW corner of the cemetery.

7 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Board Meeting Ogden Nature Center: All members are welcome.

8 Wednesday 8:00/9:15am Bird Walk Little Mountain Railroad Trail: Meet at Jeremiah's Restaurant (1307 W 12th street) for breakfast at 8:00am or at the trailhead at 9:15. Trailhead is west from Smith and Edward's on 4000 N.

11 Saturday 9:00am Bird Walk Ogden Nature Center: Meet in the Visitor Center at the Ogden Nature Center at 9:00.

15 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Ogden City Cemetery: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the NE corner of the Cemetery at 9:00.

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CALENDAR



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21 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting at Ogden Nature Center: Christy Bills, Natural History Museum of Utah entomologist, will talk about firefly sightings in Utah and how people can get involved as firefly spotters across the state.

22 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am South Ogden Nature Park Bird Walk: Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Drive, South Ogden) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the parking lot at the Nature Park at 9:00am.

25 Saturday 5:00am Field Trip to Greater Sage Grouse Lek: Meet at DWR office (515 E. 5300 S. Adams Ave. S. in South Ogden) to carpool to Spring Chicken Inn in Morgan.

29 Wednesday 8:00/9:15am Bird Walk Willard Bay State Park: Meet at Rusted Spoon (2445 US 89, Perry) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 9:15 at the pond and canal on the north side of the Park. We'll then proceed into the Park. Remember this is a fee area.

May

2 Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm Utah Audubon Council Spring Meeting: Held in Logan at the Library in the Bonneville Room. There will be a birding field trip afterward.

6 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am Bird Walk Canal Walk: On North Mountain Rd. at 2450 N., North Ogden. Meet at McDonald's (Washington & 2600 N., North Ogden) for breakfast at 8:00 or at 8:30 to carpool. To reach the parking lot, take 2450 N off Mountain Rd, over canal into the small parking lot.

CONTACTS FOR WALKS AND TRIPS

Wednesday Walks - Paul Lombardi
pslombard@gmail.com

2nd Saturday ONC Walks - Dan Johnston
801-645-8633

Field Trips on the Saturday after the WAS meeting -
Dan Johnston
801-645-8633

Conservation Corner: Transportation Decisions

by Lynn Carroll

The tide of public opinion is turning toward understanding the danger of climate change and the necessity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Although the current U.S. administration has undone some of the progress that was being made, electrical utilities are being pushed by cities and states to transition away from fossil fuels faster. That's a hopeful sign. Getting away from fossil fuels for transportation is going to be complicated, because it's not centralized. On the other hand, it's something we can all work on as individuals and see immediate benefits in our communities in the form of cleaner air to breathe. Here are some suggestions.

A baby step, Tier 3 gas. If you drive, buy your gas at a station that supplies this lesser-polluting gasoline in its blend. According to www.tier3gas.org, the following chains currently do: Sinclair, Speedway, Exxon, Chevron, Texaco, Shell. "When used with newer vehicles [2017], Tier 3 gas will be able to reduce harmful emissions up to 80%, and up to 12% in older cars," because of its lower sulfur.

Avoid idling. Waiting for a train to pass, talking to the driver of another vehicle, waiting for a passenger to make a quick purchase, getting a good look at a bird—if it takes more than 10 seconds, it will pay to turn off your engine. Not much, but it adds up. Dress for the outdoor temperature and keep a blanket handy, so you don't miss the heater or A/C.

Walk or ride a bike for short trips. If you are able, it's good exercise :)

Car pool. Get to know the other people at work, church, school, or in other groups. Plan ahead. Ask
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Conservation Corner continued from pg. 6

fellow Audubon members where they live, and whether they are going on the same field trip. Be flexible.

Public Transportation. Investigate how close local buses come to your home and typical destinations. Would you be able to walk the rest of the way? Use scooters or circulating shuttle downtown? The Frontrunner plus Trax or a bus can get you to lots of SLC destinations. Get a pass if it makes sense; seniors get a deal. Relax, read a book, knit, or play games.

Vacations. Go ahead and take your dream trip, but for more routine vacations, drive instead of flying, and consider exploring nearby destinations.

Your next vehicle. A carbon tax or other method of pricing pollution will, I hope, be passed in the next couple of years. Look into electric vehicles for your next auto purchase, especially if it's more than a year away. They require less maintenance, thus probably saving money. If no electric vehicle suits your needs, at least go for a hybrid. This will make a tremendous difference.

We must each decide what we can do and what we are willing to pay in money, inconvenience, and lost opportunities. When making these choices, remember that each additional ton of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere adds to the suffering of the next generations of people and birds.

Call For Volunteers

Ogden Nature Center needs expert birders to help with their annual Bioblitz! Birders will assist participants in identifying birds found around the Center, and enter them into iNaturalist for the City Nature Challenge. There will be a quick tutorial on the iNaturalist app at the blitz. No registration, just show up at the ONC at 9:00am, Saturday, April 25!

WAVE YOUR HAND

by Jay Hudson

It's a simple gesture! I had just entered the restaurant and looked around for my fellow birders. I didn't know any of them until that morning when we came together from distant places around the world. We had different names, different languages, different religions and different colors. Would we be like starlings and flock together or like the albatross spending our time alone and only coming together on rare occasions? Then the group leader waved.

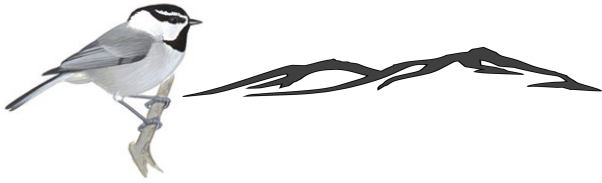
When my wife joined the Audubon society I was busy with my own interests and saw no reason to stand in the cold to see a bird. As the months came and went, I heard stories from Barbara about her new and interesting friends. She regaled me with stories about a world I only knew from my youth when I shot birds for what we called "sport". I heard about habits, camouflage, territorial imperative, migrations and mimic. I slowly began to become a bit jealous of her traveling to new places and shopping for new clothing and specialized "bins". It became oblivious my sedan was inadequate to get to the sweet locations where the exotic creatures of nature lived. I became aware that there were birds called "LBJs" (little brown jobs) that captured my attention, ubiquitous and had secrets. I began to become a voyeur, fascinated with the open rituals of the social life of birds. I began to feel guilty. I shouldn't be looking into the bedrooms of birds or how they greeted each other and groomed one another. But why not: birding is the second most popular pastime just behind gardening and nothing to feel guilty about.

As Barbara's new pastime included colors, shapes, inquisitiveness, feeding choices and ways of choosing a mate, I got tired of being reminded of my new jealousy. I joined the Audubon society. Now I was one! I had to go shopping! Now I found that becoming a part of a conversation with birders was not easy. They have traveled, learned, polished their observation skills and are story tellers. Birders have libraries. Birders have friends in high places. But I'm learning!

And all this brings me to hand waving. Back in the restaurant, when the group leader saw me and waved, the raised hand spoke to me. It was a simple gesture. It was a gesture that said, "Hello friend, come join us and tell us what you saw today".

CORRECTION -- The author of the article entitled "Bird Sanctuary - Bear River Refuge" which appeared in the January/February 2020 issue of this newsletter is Jay Hudson. We apologize for this error.





Wasatch Audubon Society

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Ogden Utah, 84409

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

Go to www.wasatchaudubon.org
and click on the FACEBOOK logo.

AUDUBON
Membership Application

Membership in **Audubon** automatically enrolls you as a member of **Wasatch Audubon**. When you join, you will receive four issues of **Audubon** magazine and six issues of our chapter newsletter, **The Mountain Chickadee**, each year. To join as a new member with an introductory fee of **\$20**, please go to the following website:

<http://action.audubon.org/donate/chapter-membership?chapter=W54>

(By using this special page, you give our chapter credit toward a monetary reward)

Local Chapter: Wasatch Audubon Society – W54



**WASATCH AUDUBON SOCIETY
MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE SUBSCRIPTION**

You can receive the Mountain Chickadee (6 issues) for just \$12, without joining National Audubon. If you would like to support Wasatch Audubon's education and conservation efforts, please indicate the amount of your contribution and include it in your check. Thank you.

___ 1-YEAR MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE SUBSCRIPTION: \$12.00

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