Mississippi Ornithological Society



Founded in 1955 to promote scientific research and encourage greater appreciation of native birds.

Volume 58 Number 1

NEWSLETTER

April 2013

2013 MOS SPRING MEETING April 26-28 Holly Springs Marshall County, MS

LOCATION: Holly Springs is located in the hills of north MS in Marshall County. It is located about 25 miles north of Oxford. Several excellent birding areas are located nearby. Strawberry Plains Audubon Center is only a few miles to the north off Hwy 311. Wall Doxey State Park, to the south 5 miles off Hwy 7, is a wonderful birding site with a freshwater lake and walking trails and is home of the elusive Swainson's and Worm-eating Warblers. Hurricane Landing lies farther to the south off Hwy 7 and is a hotspot on the South side of Sardis Lake.

Annie's Restaurant, located in downtown Holly Springs is the site for both nights' activities. The restaurant is a block north of the square on Hwy 7 N in the small Spring Hollow Plaza. The registration fee covers costs for a meal and use of the meeting room on Friday evening. The Saturday evening banquet fee includes a full meal and the use of the meeting room. Please fill out the registration form on the last page and mail it along with your fees to Jan Dubuisson in time to reach her no later than **April 13**.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Econo Lodge, 100 Brooks Rd., 800-521-2121, Room Rates: \$79- \$119; Wall Doxey State Park Cabins, 3946 Hwy 7S, 662-252-4231(call for room rates)

FRIDAY EVENING - APRIL 26

6:00-7:00 p.m. Social Hour at Annie's Restaurant – Sandwiches and other finger foods

7:00-7:30 p.m. Plans for Saturday and Sunday field trips

7:30 p.m. Board Meeting

SATURDAY - APRIL 27

6:30 a.m. Meet in Econo Lodge parking lot for field trips

6:30-7:30 p.m. Banquet at Annie's Restaurant –Roast Beef and vegetable plate will be served 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Stephan Schoech will speak about his research on the Florida Scrub-Jay.

8:00 -8:30p.m. Business Meeting and Species Tally

SUNDAY - APRIL 28

6:30 a.m. Meet in Econo Lodge parking lot for field trips

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Dr. Stephan J. Schoech is a Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Memphis. He received his BS degree in Zoology from Arizona State University in 1988, an MS degree in Zoology from Arizona State University in 1990, and a Ph.D. in Zoology from The University of Washington in 1995. Dr. Schoech was a Post Doctoral Fellow at Indiana University in 1995-1998. His research interests are Behavioral Endocrinology, Physiological Ecology, Stress Biology, and Nutritional Endocrinology. His current research focus is on the stress physiology of the Florida Scrub-Jay and how stress hormones effect multiple aspects of jays' behavior and physiology.

MOS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Tom Pullen

VICE-PRESIDENT: Ken Hackman SECRETARY: Martha Swan TREASURER: Jan Dubuisson PAST PRESIDENT: Nancy Madden MISSISSIPPI KITE EDITORS: Margaret Copeland, Marion Schiefer, and Nick Winstead MOS NEWSLETTER EDITORS: Gene and

Shannon Knight

MOS ON THE WEB

MISSBIRD@freelists.org http://www.mississippiornithologicalsociety.com/

ATTENTION ALL MOS MEMBERS ELECTRONIC MOS NEWSLETTER

In order to cut down on our printing and mailing costs of the Newsletter, we are asking any of you who would be willing to receive your Newsletter by email to please contact us at:

gsknight@hughes.net Thanks for your help.

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The President's Corner Tom Pullen MOS President

Another Fall and Winter Season has come and gone since we last met, on a very rainy September weekend, at Leroy Percy State Park. I hope all of you have had lots of opportunities to get outside and explore the many and varied locations in our part of the world where birds may be found. We are truly blessed with an abundance of habitats, close at hand, to explore in pursuit of birding opportunities. For birds, habitat is the key to survival and a secure future. Our organization and we as individuals can make a significant and lasting contribution to bird habitat protection, enhancement, and preservation in multiple ways. I would like to provide a few thoughts on that topic and some possible ways we can work to help foster habitat security for birds.

Last year, MOS, provided financial support for research into use of coastal pine savanna habitat by Yellow Rails in Jackson County. A clear understanding of habitat use by individual bird species is essential to developing programs for protecting and managing those habitats. As coastal habitats come under increasing pressure from development, we need to clearly understand their importance for both the resident and migratory birds found there. Since encouragement of scientific research is one of the primary purposes of MOS, perhaps we as an organization should consider developing a formal grant program, with dedicated annual funding, to promote additional work of this sort.

A general public understanding of the habitat requirements of various birds helps foster support for conservation actions needed to protect bird habitat for the long haul. Many of us help educate the public by giving talks about birds to civic or student groups, by working as volunteers at places such as the Strawberry Plains or Pascagoula River Audubon Centers, by contacting legislators about pressing conservation matters affecting birds, or by other actions. Perhaps our organization should consider expanding these outreach efforts by developing a more formal program to help educate the public. We could, for example, put a notice on our new website advising parties visiting the site that MOS is available to give informational talks on birds if requested. In other words, we could form a speaker's bureau.

Whether we live on a large parcel of farm or forest land or in an urban or suburban subdivision, there are lots of things we can do, at a personal level, to provide and conserve bird habitats and to make the public more aware of the value of those habitats. If we own acreage, we can educate ourselves on the many ways and opportunities for managing the habitat on our lands for the benefit of birds. According to Mississippi State University, about two-thirds of the 19 million acres of forestland in the state are owned by non-industrial private landowners. Educating ourselves about forest habitat management issues is an essential first step towards becoming a better steward of our lands. Or, if we live on a subdivision lot, we can take steps to improve our small piece of the world. It takes little effort to replace exotic plants with native plants, to pile dead limbs in a corner of our lot to create habitat for white-throated sparrows and Carolina wrens, to leave a non-hazardous dead tree in place for woodpeckers or to let a part of our lawn revert to native grasses and herbs. The websites of various conservation organizations provide us with a wealth of knowhow in this area. Likewise, we can all become more habitat conscious shoppers and advocates for bird habitats. For example, we can make a point of purchasing shade grown coffee or toilet paper made from recycled paper, two simple actions that help maintain bird habitats. We can also, while traveling in pursuit of birding opportunities, make it known to restaurant and motel staff and local shopkeepers that we are visiting their communities because of birds and that we would not be there were it not for the presence of bird habitats nearby.

I look forward to the coming year and to seeing y'all at the spring meeting in Holly Springs in April. If you have any matters you think we should discuss at that meeting, please contact me.

Minutes of the MOS Board and Business Meeting 28-29 September 2012

The MOS Board met at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 28, 2012, at Leroy Percy State Park near Hollandale, MS. Present were Nancy Madden, President; Gene & Shannon Knight, Newsletter Co-editors; Margaret Copeland, MS Kite Co-editor; Sarajane Smith, Past President; and Martha Swan, Secretary.

Under old business, the issue of declining membership and ways to attract new members was discussed. Various reasons for decline were brought up, and ways to improve MOS's appeal and visibility were mentioned. The need to redo MOS's promotional brochure was discussed and a committee will be needed to get cost estimates to revise the information. For more exposure Margaret suggested that we need a representative of MOS to be a guest on the MPB radio program "Creature Comforts" and that MOS should be more involved with monitoring what is going on in public lands, affecting Mississippi's birds and wildlife. This brought up the question of raising membership dues which have not changed in several years. Any increase in dues would have to be voted on by the membership. The Coffey endowment is available specifically to help with publications. The new president and vice-president will be contacted about this.

The disposal of old issues of the Mississippi Kite is ongoing. The archives of MOS Bird Records are now housed securely in the MS Museum of Natural Science, thanks to Gene Knight and Nick Winstead.

The contract changes in the Yellow Rail Research suggested by Dana Swan have been accepted by MS State. The contract has been signed and MOS funding has been received by MS State.

Plans are being made for the Spring 2013 meeting in Holly Springs, April 26-28, with meeting based at Annie's Restaurant. Field trips will include Strawberry Plains Audubon Center and Wall Doxey State Park. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Business meeting Saturday, September 29

The President, Nancy Madden, called the meeting to order following a buffet supper. The latest issues of the Mississippi Kites were distributed. New slate of officers nominated for 2013-2014 are: President, Tom Pullen; Vice-President, Ken Hackman; Secretary, Martha Swan; and Treasurer, Jan Dubuisson. The editors for the Mississippi Kite and the Newsletter will remain the same. Shannon Knight and Martha Swan served as the Nominating Committee. The nominations were accepted by acclamation. Plans for the Spring 2013 meeting were announced, and suggestions for future meetings were solicited. Gene Knight conducted the species tally, which totaled 114 species. Notable species included: Fulvous Whistling-Duck.

Dr. Paul Hamel, a research wildlife biologist for the USDA-Forest Service Office in Stoneville, MS, presented the program, an account of the contributions of Ed Alexander of Greenville to birding in Mississippi. His interesting talk focused on the Washington County Christmas Bird Count, centered at Yazoo NWR, where this morning field trips took place.

Submitted by Martha Swan MOS Secretary

Species List 2012 MOS Fall MEETING September 28-30 Leroy Percy State Park and area

Fulvous Whistling-Duck

Canada Goose Wood Duck Gadwall Mallard Blue-winged Teal

Northern Shoveler Ruddy Duck Northern Bobwhite Pied-billed Grebe Wood Stork

Double-crested Cormorant

Great Blue Heron Great Egret

Snowy Egret

Little Blue Heron Cattle Egret Green Heron Night-Heron sp. White Ibis

Glossy Ibis

White-faced Ibis

Roseate Spoonbill Black Vulture Osprey Bald Eagle Northern Harrier Cooper's Hawk Red-shouldered Hawk Red-tailed Hawk

American Kestrel Merlin Sora

Purple Gallinule Common Gallinule

American Coot Semipalmated Plover

Killdeer

Black-necked Stilt American Avocet

Spotted Sandpiper Solitary Sandpiper Greater Yellowlegs Lesser Yellowlegs

Semipalmated Sandpiper Western Sandpiper Least Sandpiper Pectoral Sandpiper Stilt Sandpiper

Short-billed Dowitcher Long-billed Dowitcher

Wilson's Snipe Forster's Tern Rock Pigeon

Eurasian Collared-Dove

Mourning Dove Yellow-billed Cuckoo Eastern Screech-Owl

Barred Owl Chimney Swift

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker Red-bellied Woodpecker Downy Woodpecker Hairy Woodpecker Northern Flicker Pileated Woodpecker Eastern Wood-Pewee Acadian Flycatcher Eastern Phoebe Loggerhead Shrike White-eyed Vireo Yellow-throated Vireo

Philadelphia Vireo Blue Jay Fish Crow Horned Lark Purple Martin Tree Swallow

N. Rough-winged Swallow

Bank Swallow Cliff Swallow Barn Swallow Carolina Chickadee **Tufted Titmouse** Carolina Wren

Ruby-crowned Kinglet Eastern Bluebird Swainson's Thrush American Robin Gray Catbird

Northern Mockingbird **Brown Thrasher European Starling**

Black-and-white Warbler Common Yellowthroat American Redstart Northern Parula Magnolia Warbler Yellow Warbler

Chestnut-sided Warbler Yellow-throated Warbler

Eastern Towhee Summer Tanager Northern Cardinal Blue Grosbeak **Indigo Bunting** Dickcissel

Red-winged Blackbird Eastern Meadowlark Common Grackle Brown-headed Cowbird

House Sparrow

Species Total: 114

SAD NEWS

Donald Muir Bradburn, M.D. passed away Wednesday, July 4, 2012 at age 87. Dr. Bradburn was a Life Member of MOS for many years but most members haven't heard of him. As you can see below this tribute is deserving of a man who played a major role in photographing the natural history of the MS Gulf Coast. Photography combined with natural history has been a lifelong avocation for Dr. Bradburn, Chief of Pathology at Touro Infirmary in New Orleans from 1974 to 2006. Beginning about age six with a Brownie Box Camera and trips to the Audubon Zoo he learned darkroom techniques in a converted laundry room while still in grammar school. His first "real" camera was a Leica III-F purchased in Japan while he was serving in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. His photographs of the Mississippi barrier islands were the cornerstone of his fifteen year effort to have two small islands, Horn and Petit Bois, included in the National Wilderness system. Now a part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore, wilderness is the ultimate protection available to insure that these island remain preserved untouched for posterity. Using the 35 mm format with Leicas, Nikons and finally digital Canons, his photographs have appeared in Natural History, Smithsonian, Audubon, Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy magazines as well as in National Geographic. His work is represented in the Audubon Encyclopedia of Birds and was featured in an award winning WYES-TV documentary, "the Fragile Barrier". He has had exhibits in the Mississippi Natural History Museum, Jackson, MS, the Eastern Shore Art Museum of Point Clear, AL, Studio 8 in New Orleans, the New Orleans Public Library, the Walter Anderson Museum of Art and more recently at the Garden District Gallery in New Orleans. He was awarded the National Sierra Club's prestigious Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography in 1971. In 1975 the Mississippi Wildlife Federation named Dr. Bradburn Conservation Communicator of the year. In 2011 the University Press of Mississippi published his book, "Last Barriers: Photographs of Wilderness in the Gulf Islands National Seashore".

Jeff R. Wilson passed away Monday, February 11, 2013 at age 74. Jeff was an MOS Member off and on for years and contributed to MS bird records with many first and second state bird findings. He was known far and wide in the birding world as the Ol' Coot. Below is a tribute to Jeff from Gene and Shannon Knight that appeared on the birding list-serves. By now the word is out that "the feathered things have lifted Jeff Wilson (the Ol' Coot) to the heavens". Jeff passed away this past weekend. He used the initials TLBA after his name in his signature which translated as "The Luckiest Birder Around". In my book LUCK is when preparation meets opportunity. To my knowledge there is not and has not been a person in the nearby states that depicts this definition anymore than Jeff. He could gleen more info out of the guides than you could. His artistic eye would catch more detail than any book could illustrate and if you gave him time he would share every diagnostic feature with you----not batting an eye til you saw it. He was out birding everyday giving luck a chance. These are just a mere drop in the bucket when mentioning Jeff's attributes. His old Trooper that we rode in all thru the dust and muck and mire around the Pits back in the mid 80's. He crawled out into the sewage at the "Pits" to resecue a Peregrine Falcon that missed the yellowlegs--- and took it to a rehabber and was able to release it in a few days!!! The old Questar looking at the "Wind Birds"---his love of all the birds. Whatever optics, birding guides, clothes you had Jeff would make sure you knew about the latest and almost challenged you to invest----just so you could be the best birder possible. He could bird all the way and almost to the other side of the tree line no matter how far off it was. And why not he would say. We broke "Big Day" records in 2 states together. He would stay in one spot and see more species than you could in 10 times the area just because he had the patience. He thought like a bird. Then there was the Ivory Gull!!! And many more sightings just like that. Way too many to list here. Between Jeff Wilson and Ben and Lula Coffey the states of AR (eastern), MS (northern), TN (western), AL (northwest)---they wrote the bird checklists. I would say that more species were added to these states by them than any other birders in history!!!!!! Jeff's photography of birds and nature are unprecedented. He would crawl on his belly to photograph a shorebird. This all started when a photo of a bird was unheard of for documentation. Well I could go on and on as all knew and birded with Jeff. No matter if you were a beginner or a famed birder he was the same Ol' Coot. Each and all of us have our great experiences with Jeff. We might miss his posts and photos but he will live forever in our ways and views of the birds. There is a little Jeff in the way we all bird now because he had a way of rubbing it off on you. When the "Windbirds" fly into the "pits" this spring they also will miss the Ol' Coot and the ones that have seen him for several past seasons will acknowledge that fact. They will say "I suppose the Ol' Coot has joined his feathered friends in heaven".

Winter Birds in the Rockies

by Martha and Dana Swan

Dana and I took a winter wildlife tour of the Tetons and Yellowstone in February, a trip we have wanted to make for a long time. While birds were not the primary focus of the tour, we were lucky that both of our guides were expert birders, and appreciated having guests who were also interested in birds. Apparently not everyone is??!! Our trip began in Jackson, WY, continued through the Old Faithful area to Cooke City, MT, near the northeast entrance to the park, then to the Mammoth Hot Springs area, and ended in Bozeman, MT.

The first day, we enjoyed a full day dogsled expedition. Not surprisingly, this was not ideal for birding, but was fun, and we did see Common Ravens, Black-billed Magpies, and Clark's Nutcrackers. The following day, a drive along a river in the National Elk Refuge yielded Trumpeter Swans, Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes, Mallards, Common Mergansers, and Coots. The river here, as elsewhere in the area, is kept ice-free by hot springs. Keeping a watchful eye on the waterfowl was a Rough-legged Hawk. A few miles later, we watched an American Dipper feeding in the fast-moving water. The water was so clear the you could actually see the dipper swimming underwater using its wings. Continuing our drive through the Gros Ventre Valley, we saw Bald Eagles, ravens, and magpies waiting for their chance to clean up a carcass, then got great views of Golden Eagles soaring over a cliff. Horned Larks and Common Redpolls were seen along the roadside.

The next day, we headed for Yellowstone, changing from vans to snow coaches. We stopped at the West Thumb Geyser Basin, encountering an American Three-toed Woodpecker scouring a tree snag just a few yards from the boardwalk. After a night at Old Faithful, we headed north toward Mammoth, stopping at the Fountain Paint Pot trail, also popular with snowmobilers. The guides had incredible stories about ravens' talent in opening coolers and snowmobile storage compartments. We got to see some of them in action.

Near Cooke City, MT, we stopped at the Gallery/home of noted wildlife photographer Dan Hartman. He told a chilling story of being charged by a grizzly while intent on finding the nest of Great Gray Owls. At his bird feeders, we saw Mountain Chickadees, Common Redpolls, Stellar's Jay, and Pine Grosbeaks, but missed a Pygmy Owl which regularly preys on his feeder birds. In the Lamar Valley, we spotted a Ruffed Grouse calmly strutting along the road.

While heading for Bozeman on the last day, we had great views and photo ops of four bald eagles along the Yellowstone River. Townsend's Solitaires were seen at couple of stops along the river.

All in all, it was an amazing trip. Oh, and we also saw moose, mule deer, thousands of elk and bison, coyotes, foxes, wolves, and pronghorn.



From the Field (Fall 2012, Winter 2012-2013) Gene Knight MBRC Chair

Hurricane Isaac slammed the Gulf Coast with 8-10 feet of storm surge in late Aug. depositing several new pelagic species for the state. Dozens of terns of several species, Brown Pelicans, and other coastal species were found either dead or injured. Most were found on the Jackson County islands. Three Great Shearwaters, 1st State Records, were found. The first GRSH was picked up, tired from the storm, in Marion Co. on 30 Aug., moved to a rehabber at the University of Southern MS on 31 Aug., and then released healthy at Pt. Cadet, Harrison Co. on 1 Sep. The 2nd State Record of GRSH was an adult found injured at a Ocean Springs beach on 2 Sep. by the Wildlife Care & Rescue Center (WCRC), Biloxi. After much rehabbing the bird died on 17 Sep. The 3rd State Record of **GRSH** was an adult picked up on Deer Island by the WCRC on 4 Sep., rehabbed and released back into the wild on 7 Sep. at D'Iberville. On 30 Aug. the state's first Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was found on 30 Aug. in Vancleave, Jackson Co. It was very weak and carried to the WCRC and died the same day. The third 1st State Record from Hurricane Isaac was an injured Cory's Shearwater picked up on the beach in Ocean Springs, Jackson Co. on 2 Sep. Rehab at WCRC failed and the bird died on 9 Sep. An incredible 3rd shearwater species, **Audubon's Shearwater**, was found dead on 2 Sep. on Horn Island, Jackson Co. The carcass was photographed and represents the 3rd State Record. All these pelagics were photographed with most ending up as specimens in the MMNS in Jackson. A Bridled Tern was found injured and eventually died on 30 Aug. on a Jackson Co. beach. A Red-necked Phalarope was photographed at a Monroe Co. pond on 1 Sep. Frigatebirds are a rare sight in N MS so an immature Magnificent Frigatebird seen on 1-2 Sep at Enid Lake, Yalobusha Co. and a female Magnificent Frigatebird seen south of Oxford, Lafayette Co. were excellent county records. An immature Yellow-headed Blackbird was at backyard feeder in Brandon, Rankin Co. 20-24 Sep. Several Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were photographed on 30 Sep. in Humphreys Co. east of Belzoni. The first of 3 Clay-colored Sparrows was photographed on 22 Sep. at Hurricane Landing, Sardis Lake, Lafayette Co.; the next was seen on 1 Dec. at Persimmon Hill, Enid Lake, Yalobusha Co.; the last was seen at Sardis Waterfowl Refuge, Lafayette Co. on 22 Dec. One nice find in Oct was an immature Sabine's Gull on 2 Oct. at Arkabutla Dam, DeSoto Co. A Groove-billed Ani and a female Yellow-headed Blackbird were in Hancock Co. at Ansley also on 2 Oct. The state's 2nd record of **Rock Wren** was seen briefly at Grand Bay NERR, Jackson Co. on 3 Oct. Ansley again was the site for Vermilion Flycatcher on 6 Oct., Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Western Kingbird on 15 Oct., and an adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen from 15 Oct-14 Nov. An Ashthroated Flycatcher was photographed on 25 Oct. at the Seaman Rd. Sewage Lagoons in Jackson Co. A very cooperative **Red Phalarope** was photographed at Kelley's Crossing, Arkabutla Lake, Tate Co. on 15-17 Nov. Searching for the REPH a female Long-tailed Duck was seen in DeSoto Co. on Arkabutla Lake on 20 Nov. Still in N MS in Tunica Co. off Buck Island Rd. an immature Ferruginous Hawk was photographed on 22-24 Nov. While searching for the FEHA a single Sprague's Pipit was photographed on 2 Dec. An additional Ash-throated Flycatcher was found on 15 Dec. and photographed on 18 Dec. in Hancock Co. A second Vermilion Flycatcher was present in Dec. through Feb. in Gulfport, Harrison Co. A third Vermilion Flycatcher was present in Hancock Co. on 18 Dec. At the Tunica Co Landfill a 1st winter Thayer's Gull was seen from 2 Dec. through 2 Feb. On 5 Dec. in Marshall Co. a male **Spotted Towhee** was heard and then briefly seen at the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center. White-winged Dove is a rare species in N MS so a single bird was photographed near the Grenada Airport on 19 Dec. The elusive and declining **Bewick's Wren** is now rarely seen in MS but one was heard and seen on 19 Dec. off CR 74 in Yalobusha Co. on Grenada Lake. January 2013 produced rare gull species at the Tunica Co. Landfill. They were: California Gull-1st winter bird 6 Jan.-2 Feb.; Great Black-backed Gull-1st winter bird 6 Jan.; Lesser Black-backed Gull-1st winter bird 6 Jan.-3 Feb. At Bay Springs Lake, Tishomingo Co. a single Pacific Loon and a single Red-throated Loon was seen on 5 Jan. The rare "blue morph" Ross's Goose was found in Tunica Co. where 1 on 6 Jan. and 3 on 8 Jan. were photographed. A 1st winter Glaucous Gull was seen by many and photographed from 12 Jan.-26 Feb. at Pascagoula, Jackson Co. An adult Baltimore Oriole was reported on 15 Jan. at a hummingbird feeder in Jackson, Hinds Co. and has wintered for 4 consecutive years at same site! A good winter for LBBG as an adult was found at Sardis Lake, Panola Co. on 11 Feb. The 1st Purple Martin showed up on the interior of the state in Sunflower Co. on 2 Feb. and the 1st Ruby-throated Hummingbird showed up in the state on 5 Mar. in Jackson Co. Two Swallow-tailed Kites in Pearl River Co. and A. Golden-Plover in Hancock Co. arrived on 12 Mar.

MOS APRIL 2013 MEETING - REGISTRATION FORM

Name:		E-Mail		
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Additional Person (s		- · · · ·		
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