An exciting start to the New Year!

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) held over Presidents’ Day weekend, February 12-15, was a fabulous success to kick off Sequoia Audubon Society events for this year. We detected a remarkable 197 species on the count, including a Black-headed Grosbeak. Almost all of the regularly occurring species for this time of year in the county were found - the only notable exceptions being Golden Eagle and Northern Saw-whet Owl. All three sapsuckers were located and all six regularly occurring woodpecker species: Acorn, Downy, Nuttall’s, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers, and Northern Flicker.

With the American Birding Association (ABA) naming the Pileated Woodpecker its 2021 Bird of the Year, it was an opportune time for Sequoia Audubon to partner with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) and San Mateo County Parks (SMCP) to sponsor a webinar about Woodpeckers. Especially since our very own Jennifer Rycenga wrote an article about the Pileated Woodpecker (PIWO, in bander’s code) for ABA’S January issue of Birding magazine, accompanied by excellent PIWO photos by Donna Pomeroy. The webinar, led by Alvaro Jaramillo, was held on Saturday, Feb. 13, and was a huge success with over 150 participants. If you missed the presentation, or would like to view it again, you can view it here: https://youtu.be/D5KP2IQpo-E_

The Distributed Big Day in the middle of the GBBC, on Sunday February 14th, found at least 170 bird species. This shows the remarkable depth of knowledge, enthusiasm, and habitats we have in San Mateo County. It was a great display of good birding and cooperation!

We are looking forward to this collaboration with MROSD and SMCP again, this time in June with the emphasis on Hummingbirds, following a talk by hummingbird expert, Sheri Williamson at the June 10 Monthly Meeting. Stay tuned for your chance to participate.

Most importantly, with vaccines in arms, schools reopening, and life ever so slowly returning to normal, we look forward to seeing you in the field or possibly on a field trip before the year ends!
April 8

Gender Equity and Public Access on the California Coast - Sabrina Brennan, San Mateo County Harbor Commissioner

Sabrina Brennan will speak with us about her efforts to improve gender equity, and in the process improve access to Mavericks and Pillar Point Harbor. She served two 4-year terms on the San Mateo County Harbor Commission. As a countywide elected Harbor Commissioner she successfully advocated to develop a living shoreline at the West Trail located near Pillar Point Marsh; the project will be complete in early 2022. She also advocated for the construction of a new visitor facility near Surfer’s Beach that will include a public restroom, coastal trail improvements, recycling and trash bins, outdoor shower facility, benches, ADA parking, van loading space for surf school students and landscaping that will maximize ocean views.

In 2015, Sabrina Brennan advocated for the inclusion of women in the Mavericks big wave surf competition and persuaded the California Coastal Commission to require that women athletes be included. Building on her success at Mavericks, she co-founded the Committee for Equity in Women’s Surfing and led the charge for global equal pay in professional surfing. She has made numerous remarks, written letters, and given presentations at Coastal Commission hearings and State Lands Commission meetings.

In 2018, she successfully advocated for global equal pay in professional surfing. Her work is the subject of two documentary films, and hundreds of news stories including the New York Times Magazine feature published in February 2019, “The Fight for Gender Equality In One of the Most Dangerous Sports on Earth.”

Brennan is founder of Sport Equity and Surf Equity. In addition to surfing she’s also an advocate for inclusion and equal pay in pro cycling. Her work in California and Hawaii is focused on bringing an end to gender discrimination in professional athletic competitions held on public land, public roadways and in public facilities.

May 13

Community Science: Long-Term Lessons: Perspectives from Three Years of Mushroom Monitoring in the Santa Cruz Mountains – Christian Schwarz, Research Associate at the Norris Center for Natural History (UCSC) and the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, co-author of Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast

Mushroom hunters enjoy travelling far and wide, bouncing from place to place and following the rains to stay with the season. But what happens when we focus on revisiting the same small areas whether there has been rain or not? And what if one takes it a step further, and rather than just harvesting chanterelles or photographing the flashiest species, takes the time to pay attention to everything, counting individual fruitbodies and keeping track of changes from year to year? Christian has been undertaking just such an effort for the past three years, supported by a grant from the Save the Redwoods League – and this year, some of his survey transects were burned in the CZU Fire. Join us to hear what discoveries, lessons, and patterns have emerged from this ambitious project.

Christian Schwarz studied Ecology and Evolution at UC Santa Cruz, where his interest in the world of fungi became irrevocable – their seemingly endless forms (from the grotesque to the bizarre to the sublime) feed his curiosity. He spends his time seeking, photographing, collecting, teaching about, and publishing research on the macrofungi of California and Arizona. His work is currently focused on assembling a mycoflora for the California Channel Islands. At large, he works primarily on the taxonomy of macrofungi, as well as documenting patterns of phenology and biogeography through long-term monitoring efforts. He is passionate about biodiversity in general, and in community science (especially iNaturalist!).
Hummingbirds: Small Wonders – Sheri Williamson, Director and Naturalist of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory and co-manager of Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary

Tiny they may be, but hummingbirds know how to live large. Dazzling colors, fearless personalities, voracious appetites, continent-spanning migrations, “singing” feathers, and sometimes scandalous personal lives are just a few of the qualities that have earned these miniature marvels a devoted following far beyond the birding community. Yet as adaptable as they are, hummingbirds are vulnerable to many of the same environmental crises as other migratory birds, including loss of habitat and food resources, pollution, and the effects of climate change. The good news is that almost anyone in North America can help build a brighter future for hummingbirds with just a few simple actions. This presentation will include a sneak peek at the forthcoming revised edition of her book in the Peterson Field Guides series, *Hummingbirds of North America*.

Sheri L. Williamson is a lifelong naturalist, birder, and conservationist known internationally for her hummingbird research. After more than 20 years of general birding and hawk-watching, Sheri’s life got hijacked by hummingbirds when she and her husband and colleague Tom Wood moved to Arizona to manage The Nature Conservancy’s Ramsey Canyon Preserve. A quarter century later, Sheri is still obsessed with these rainbow-hued warriors, feeding them year round, maintaining a hummingbird garden, writing about them in her blog, and banding hundreds of them each year. She currently serves as Director/Naturalist of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory and co-manager of Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.

Sequoia Audubon’s Cavity Nesters Recovery Program Continues to Grow!

An exciting new opportunity has started in San Mateo County for nest box monitoring! We are now part of a program that is a collaboration between Wild Farm Alliance, the California Bluebird Recovery Program and Sequoia Audubon’s Cavity Nesters Recovery Program. Nest boxes have been set up on farms in Half Moon Bay, Pescadero and San Gregorio. Wild Farm Alliance is a non-profit whose mission is to “promote a healthy, viable agriculture that helps to protect and restore wild nature.” One of their strategies is to encourage farmers to install nest boxes to increase the number of birds on their farms, providing important benefits such as pest control, pollination and seed dispersal. Nest Box monitors will not only have fun and help to increase the number of cavity nesting birds but they will also be helping farmers decrease their use of pesticides! As of now there are ten counties across California that will be participating in this new program. Do you, our members, know a farm in our county that currently has nest boxes, or a farm that would benefit in learning more about this new nest box program? If so, please contact Beverly at CNRP@sequoia-audubon.org.

Nesting season is officially underway and our nest box monitors are making their way to their nest box trails. Some birds have already started building nests in their nest box! Every trail is unique and boxes are placed in a variety of locations: county parks, open space areas, golf courses and farms to name a few. The Barn Owl nest boxes we are installing will reduce the need for rodenticide on farms and in vineyards in the county, and the nest boxes, in turn, provide owls with a safe shelter to raise their family.

Information on how you can take part can be found on the Sequoia Audubon Society website. We now have a Cavity Nesters Recovery Program section on the website under the “conservation” tab where you can learn all about our program. It can be found here: [http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/conservation-CNRP.html](http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/conservation-CNRP.html). It includes an introduction to our program, links to the programs we work with as well as monitoring and nest box construction plans. Check the website, as new programs and opportunities will be posted there.

(continued on page 4)
Cavity Nesters Recovery Program  *(continued from page 3)*

There are other volunteer opportunities in our program. Currently we are experimenting with designing an affordable camera system (attached to a pole) that will allow us to monitor the owl nest boxes. This is a fun opportunity for those members with video or engineering skills. As the program grows so does our need for more nest boxes. If you or someone you know is interested in woodworking we’d love to hear from you. This is also a fun project for scouting and school programs. If you are interested in monitoring a nest box trail or volunteering in any other way, email us at CNRP@sequoia-audubon.org for more information.

*Beverly Cronin*

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**Good legal news for birds - John Epperson, Board Member**

Two recent legal developments are encouraging for birds (and birders). On the national level, the Biden administration withdrew the government’s appeal of a Federal trial court’s decision that rejected the Trump administration’s restrictive interpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. That cramped interpretation said that the Act only intended to apply to intention killing of birds, not incidental deaths that result from acts not intended to kill birds. That was inconsistent with many years of precedent and would have severely reduced the impact of the Act because most bird kills are incidentally caused, such as open waste pits or improperly sited wind turbines. Despite the court ruling against its interpretation, the Trump administration went ahead with issuing a final rule based on that interpretation without addressing the court’s ruling. When combined with the Biden administration’s decision to delay the effective date of the rule and re-open public comment on it, it seems clear that the new administration intends to reject that effort to restrict the Act and return to the more protective rule that was in effect previously.

On the local level, the US Environmental Protection Agency dropped an appeal of a Federal court’s decision holding that the Cargill salt pond property in Redwood City is subject to the Clean Water Act. During the Trump administration, EPA decided that the property was not subject to the Clean Water Act’s jurisdiction because it had been diked and converted for salt-making prior to the Clean Water Act. The Federal judge had rejected that decision and sent it back to EPA for further consideration in light of his decision. The Trump administration appealed but the new administration has reversed course and will withdraw that appeal. Cargill had joined lawsuit and said it wants to continue its appeal, but since the lawsuit was originally filed against EPA, it remains to be seen whether Cargill is allowed to continue its appeal after the original defendant drops out.

*View of the Salt Ponds from Bedwell Bayfront Park*
Friends of Redwood City: Ferry Expansion Plans Could Impact Bay Habitats and Wildlife

Reprinted with permission - excerpt from the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge Fall 2020 Annual Newsletter, Save Wetlands

We have been following two project feasibility studies and a pending administrative action that could greatly increase the number of public and private ferries operating throughout the bay.

• The San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) will be completing a Hovercraft Feasibility Study by the end of this year to determine whether the agency will pursue plans to use hovercraft ferries to access shallow-draft areas of the Bay. Some of the routes and landings currently being studied include the west end of the Dumbarton Bridge, Foster City, the San Leandro marina area, and three sites in the Hercules/Pittsburg area. Hovercraft only carry 80 passengers per trip, generate significantly greater diesel emissions than catamaran ferries, and any new terminals require a half-acre cement pad for the landing.

CCR is a member of WETA’s “Hovercraft Stakeholder Committee”, and in a recent letter, we outlined potential problems with noise and disturbance impacting harbor seals, endangered species in nearby Refuge and other protected tidal marsh areas, foraging shorebirds on intertidal mudflats, and offshore diving ducks and other waterbirds. Possible vessel impacts to eelgrass beds in the North Bay is another concern. The potential for serious environmental impacts needs to be clearly identified in the study so WETA decision-makers can make an informed decision.

• In November, Redwood City completed the Redwood City Ferry Financial Feasibility Study and Cost-Benefit & Economic Impact Analysis. This is a joint project with WETA and the Port for the construction and operation of a proposed WETA public ferry terminal on Port land near the confluence of Redwood Creek and Westpoint Slough. At a May stakeholder meeting, CCCR voiced concerns about ferry wake impacts to endangered species in tidal marsh habitat on adjacent Refuge lands at Bair and Greco Islands.

The study factored in longer travel times to allow for reduced-wake speed restrictions, but several recommendations in the report have raised additional concerns. The report suggests allowing private commercial ferry operators to also use the terminal to help generate project funding, which would substantially increase ferry vessel traffic in Redwood Creek. The report also encourages the City to consider land use and zoning changes in the terminal vicinity to identify opportunities for “Transit Oriented Development”. This creates a serious growth-inducing impact from the terminal, putting increased pressure for sprawl into undeveloped open space lands on the nearby Cargill salt ponds.

The study found that the terminal is economically feasible; however, a formal Business Plan must be developed before a final decision is made to move the terminal project forward. Environmental review would follow.

• CA Public Utilities Commission Proceeding A1909011 – This CPUC Proceeding involves an application from a private commercial ferry operator to amend an existing “Vessel Common Carrier Authorization”. The amendment would allow for unscheduled, prearranged ferry service to undisclosed locations, essentially anywhere in the bay – basically, a “ride-hailing” ferry service. In a letter to the assigned Administrative Law Judge, CCCR echoed a concern WETA had raised earlier - that environmental review is required under CEQA prior to approval of the application due to potential direct and indirect environmental impacts, including cumulative impacts from the increasing number of CPUC-authorized private ferry operations. After the judge issues a Proposed Decision, the Commissioners at the CPUC make a final decision to adopt or modify his recommendation.

Our concerns about impacts are not speculative. CCCR has documented significant wake wash hitting adjacent Refuge tidal marshes from private high-speed catamaran ferries operating in Redwood Creek. Approval of this application would also authorize increased numbers of ferry trips into the San Leandro Marina, traversing an offshore site designated as the S. F. Bay -Southern Marine Global Priority Important Bird Area (IBA). This area regularly hosts more than 5,000 waterfowl on a given day, including Surf Scoters, a species in decline. Boat disturbance has been identified as the clearest threat to this IBA.

Friends of Redwood City Gail Raabe and Matt Leddy, cccrrefuge@gmail.com

Note from Sequoia Audubon Conservation Committee

If you’re concerned about projects like this, we invite your participation in our Committee. We’re in need of “armchair activists” who can help us communicate with local City Council and Planning Departments and write letters-to-editors.

Please email Marshall2003@comcast.net

Private ferry causing large waves (wake wash) in Redwood Creek adjacent to sensitive tidal marsh habitat 2018, photo by Matt Leddy

SAS Newsletter January - March 2021 5
Proposed Changes to the Bylaws of
Sequoia Audubon Society, Inc.
(A California Public Benefit Corporation)

Voting to occur at the June 10, 2021 Monthly Meeting via Zoom. Changes have been italicized.

ARTICLE I – NAME
1. This organization shall be known as the SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. (“Sequoia Audubon”).

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE
1. Sequoia Audubon shall function as a chapter of the National Audubon Society (“National Audubon”) with an emphasis on San Mateo County, California.
2. The mission of Sequoia Audubon is to participate actively in environmental education and observation, and in the restoration, preservation, protection and enjoyment of our native natural resources with emphasis on birds and their habitats.
3. Sequoia Audubon is a non-profit California Public Benefit Corporation and a 501(c) charity.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP
1. Members designated as “National Members” shall enjoy all of the rights and privileges pertaining to National Audubon as determined by National Audubon. National Members are also entitled to those rights and privileges of membership in Sequoia Audubon as determined by the Sequoia Audubon Board of Directors.
2. Members designated as “Local Audubon Members” shall enjoy all the rights and privileges pertaining to Sequoia Audubon as determined by the Sequoia Audubon Board of Directors. Membership determinations (National or Local Audubon) shall be made by the Sequoia Audubon Board of Directors. A member may be considered both a National Member and a Local Audubon Member as determined by the Sequoia Audubon Board of Directors.
3. Dues of membership shall be paid initially with application for membership, and annually thereafter upon receipt of written notice. Should renewal of membership dues not be paid within one (1) month after the time they are payable, a member so in default may be dropped from the rolls.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS
Deleted reference to an Annual meeting of members
1. Regular meetings of members will be held monthly unless determined otherwise by the Board of Directors.
2. Special meetings of members may be called by the President, or in their absence or disability, by the Vice-President, or by resolution of the Board of Directors.
3. Notice of special or regular meetings of members shall be given in the Sequoia Audubon’s publication.
4. Five (5) members in good standing shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of members duly called and noticed.

ARTICLE V – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1. The control and conduct of the property and business of Sequoia Audubon shall be vested in a Board of Directors. The Board shall determine the policies of Sequoia Audubon.
2. The Board shall include the elected or designated officers and six (6) other members in good standing; and shall also include the immediate Past-President.
3. Directors, other than the immediate Past-President, shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present or represented by proxy at a Regular or Special meeting of the members.
4. Terms of service of each Director shall be three (3) years. Terms of office shall be staggered so that an equal number of such terms shall expire each year. Vacancies occurring if a Director is unable to complete their terms may be filled by the remaining members of the Board or a quorum thereof.
5. Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at least quarterly. Meetings will normally be held in person but may be held by conference call or other means that allows Directors to communicate during the meeting.
6. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President, or by any two (2) members of the Board. The Special meeting shall be limited to the purpose stated on a written notice mailed to each Board member fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting date, at their last known postal address or email address.
7. Five (5) directors shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS
1. The officers of the Sequoia Audubon shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers as the Board of Directors may designate. The officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of one (1) year, or until a successor shall be selected. Vacancies occurring shall be filled for the remainder of the term by the Board of Directors.

(continued on page 7)
1. The PRESIDENT shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors. They shall direct and administer the affairs of Sequoia Audubon as its executive head, and shall supervise all phases of its work, subject to instructions of the Board. The PRESIDENT shall appoint committees of Sequoia Audubon and shall be a member ex-officio of all such committees with full voting powers, with the exception of the Audit and the Nominating committees.

2. The VICE-PRESIDENT shall assist the President in carrying out the latter’s duties. The Vice-President shall act for the President in his or her absence.

3. The SECRETARY shall keep a record of the proceedings of Sequoia Audubon, of the Board of Directors, and of all committees. The SECRETARY shall send notices of special meetings of Sequoia Audubon, fifteen (15) or more days prior to the meeting dates, as duly directed. All correspondence of Sequoia Audubon shall be conducted by and be preserved by the SECRETARY. The SECRETARY shall attest to contracts or agreements representing Sequoia Audubon. Other duties of the SECRETARY may be re-directed by the Board.

4. The TREASURER shall have custody of Sequoia Audubon’s funds and securities. They shall deposit funds or securities received to the credit of Sequoia Audubon in a depository as designated be the Board of Directors. The TREASURER shall disburse the funds of Sequoia Audubon as directed by the Board and shall keep appropriate records of all such transactions. At regular Board meetings the TREASURER shall report on the financial condition of Sequoia Audubon and on their transactions since the last prior meeting. The TREASURER shall keep a register of the members of Sequoia Audubon. Checks or Drafts of Sequoia Audubon shall be signed as prescribed by a resolution of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII – AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. The President shall appoint a special committee on Audit, consisting of two (2) members of the Board, who shall report to the Board of Directors on the scope, character and accuracy of the Treasurer’s records and financial report. However, at its discretion, the Board may designate that Sequoia Audubon’s records be examined by a certified public accountant.

Deleted articles regarding a nominating committee and a membership committee

ARTICLE VIII – CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

1. The President shall appoint a CONSERVATION COMMITTEE, of at least three (3) members, to keep informed on local and national issues affecting conservation of natural resources and wildlife. The Committee shall advise the Board of Directors with recommendations for action by Sequoia Audubon on current conservation matters. Policies will be coordinated with National Audubon.

ARTICLE IX – OTHER COMMITTEES

1. The President and the Board of Directors shall each have the power to appoint additional committees, either as special committees or standing committees, as shall be considered useful to Sequoia Audubon.

ARTICLE X – PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

1. The President may appoint a Publicity Director to disseminate public information about the purposes and the programs of Sequoia Audubon. Information or news items about National Audubon shall be subject to clearance by National Audubon prior to publication.

ARTICLE XI – COMMITMENTS

1. Sequoia Audubon shall not enter into any commitments binding upon National Audubon without written authorization by National Audubon, nor shall Sequoia Audubon be bound by any commitments entered into by National Audubon, without written authorization by Sequoia Audubon.

ARTICLE XII – DISCONTINUANCE

1. Sequoia Audubon may terminate its status as a Chapter of National Audubon, and National Audubon may terminate the status of Sequoia Audubon as a Chapter of National Audubon, pursuant to procedures set forth in the National Audubon Society Chapter Policy adopted by National Audubon’s Board of Directors dated May 17, 2014.

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

1. The Bylaws of Sequoia Audubon may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present or present by proxy at a regular meeting or a special meeting of members duly scheduled. Notice in writing summarizing the proposed amendment(s), shall be sent fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting date, to members at their last known postal address or email address.
Sequoia Audubon Society
P.O. Box 620292
Woodside, CA
94062-0292

Officers
Acting President: Jennifer Rycenga
Vice President: Open
Secretary: Susan Stratton
Treasurer: Julie Dull
At Large: Doug Brown, Marshall Dinowitz, John Epperson, Barbara Kossy, Nelle Lyons, Chris MacIntosh, Doug Pomeroy
Consulting Biologist
Alvaro Jaramillo

Committees
Bluebird Recovery
Beverly Cronin beverly.cronin@gmail.com
Christmas Bird Count (CBC)
Al Demartini al_demar@yahoo.com
Leslie Flint lflint@earthlink.net
Speakers Programs
Jennifer Rycenga smcbeditor@earthlink.net
Conservation
Marshall Dinowitz marshall2003@comcast.net
Education
Nelle Lyons tigger1nl@gmail.com
Field Trips
Casey Girard casey.girard@gmail.com
Hospitality
Laurie Graham greylag64@gmail.com
Membership Database
Susan Stratton needles@sequoia-audubon.org
Newsletter Editor
Davena Gentry office@sequoia-audubon.org
Administrative Assistant
Davena Gentry davena@sequoia-audubon.org

Mission Statement
Sequoia Audubon Society protects native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems in San Mateo County by engaging people of all ages in conservation, education, advocacy and enjoyment.

Sequoia Audubon Society Membership Form
Senior or Student membership $15.00
Individual membership $20.00
Family membership $25.00
Supporter $100.00
Donation to SAS $_____

Total $_____

Yes, I am interested in volunteering _________
Newsletter Preference: ________ Mail and / or ________ E-mail
E-mail address ____________________________

Seeking Newsletter Contributions – Articles and Photography!
Do you enjoy reading articles by “just regular birders”? How about writing a short article for this newsletter? Sequoia’s newsletter is for you, so why not by you? You don’t have to be an expert birder. If you can write about how you got into birding/what enthralls you about it/ a good day out/rarities conservation, and other areas of interest, please email Davena at office@sequoia-audubon.org. High quality resolution photos, from San Mateo County, are especially appreciated.

Support our Chapter’s Work – Donate
Please consider a donation during our 2020 Annual Appeal in support of the work we do providing monthly programs, conservation, education and nest box monitoring programs. Thank you!

Shopping online more? Support SAS through Amazon Smile!
A percentage of your purchase is donated to SAS whenever you shop on Amazon using their Amazon Smile site. You get the same products, prices, and service while at the same time supporting our work! Sign up here: http://smile-amazon.com.

We’re looking for volunteers – Get Involved
Want to have fun while making a difference? We’re looking for help with publicity, website and video support. Have other skills that you’d like to offer, contact us at office@sequoia-audubon.org.

P.O. Box 620292, Woodside, CA 94062-0292
Contact us: 650.529.1454
or
office@sequoia-audubon.org
Visit our website: www.sequoia-audubon.org

Check out our Online Birding Guide:
www.birding.sequoia-audubon.org

Join our Discussion Group:
http://sequoia-audubon@groups.io

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