

# The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society  
Volume 33 No. 1 February & March 2003



## ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

Saturday, February 22, 2003 6:00 PM

Leo's Restaurant (westside) 8001 N. Mesa at the Crossroads

### Awards Recipients to be Honored

This year's *Conservation Award* recipients are the Eagle Scouts of the Yucca Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Eagle Scouts of this Council have devoted over 1100 hours to projects at Rio Bosque, Feather Lake and Keystone Heritage Park. An eagle Scout candidate must plan, develop, and give leadership to a service project helpful to the community. Examples of these service projects have been removal of salt cedar from Feather Lake and the cleaning up of an old dump site at Rio Bosque.

Hugh Jameson is the recipient of the *Meritorious Service Award*. Hugh has served the Chapter in many ways over the years. He has held the position of Treasurer for the past five years, served as Field Trip Chairman, and has raised funds for the Chapter by his participation in Birdathons. Hugh is retiring this year as Treasurer, but we are sure he will continue to be an active participant in many Audubon activities.

The evening speaker will be **Jesse Granthum**, and the subject:  
**"Bird Conservation through Backyard Habitats"**

Jesse Granthum has been with Audubon for 23 years, starting on the California Condor Recovery Program in 1980. In 1986 he moved to Texas to manage all of Audubon's lands along the Texas Coast, and the Sabal Palm Grove on the Rio Grande River. In 1990 he moved back to California with Audubon to manage all of their wetland sanctuaries and expand their sanctuary system. In 1998 he moved with Audubon to Mississippi to become the State Director, where he also managed a 2600 acre plantation. In 2002 he returned to Texas to become Director of Bird Conservation for the state.

The dinner will be a Mexican food plate and tea. Let Betty Fisbeck (581-0174) know by **Feb. 20** if you are coming. Make your check for \$11.00, payable to El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society, and mail to

Nancy Wilson  
B7 Statesburg St.  
Canutillo, TX 79835

The next regular General Meeting will be on Monday, March 17, 2003 7:30 PM at the Memorial Park Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. "Rio Bosque Wetlands Park" by John Sproul

For Details see Page 3.

### Chapter Web Site

<http://www.gbarnett.com/eptpas/eptpashome.html>.

El Paso Audubon Online, features updated graphics and more information for chapter members and visitors to El Paso.

El Paso Audubon Online supplements *The Roadrunner* and includes information about upcoming field trips, a calendar of events, recent bird sightings and an updated list of birding links to the Internet. make bird sighting reports at  
[ElPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com](mailto:ElPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com)

Thank you very much

John Kargas and Karen Talley  
and

John Kiseda  
for the December and January  
meeting presentations

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## New guided tours at the El Paso Zoo

Tours of Asia feature some of the rarest animals in the world  
The Amur leopard is one of the rarest large animals in the world

Education staff and volunteers at the El Paso Zoo now offer guided tours every Saturday morning at 10am. The first in a series of new educational programs being planned for the coming year, features some of the rarest animals in the world including endangered Asian elephants, Sumatran orangutans, hooded cranes, Amur leopards and Indochinese tigers.

Tour tickets are available from the El Paso Zoological Society office located in the Administration building inside the zoo's entrance. The cost for the tour is \$3 for adults, \$2 for senior citizens and \$1 for children under 12 (free for children under 2). Zoo admission tickets are extra and cost \$4 for adults, \$3 for senior citizens and \$2 for children under 12 (free for children under 2).

Other new zoo programs being planned for the coming year include a series of lecture and tour luncheon programs presented by Curator of Education Rick LoBello in cooperation with the El Paso Zoological Society and Service Systems and Associates. Tickets for the program will be \$15 (\$11 for Zoological Society Members) and include the price of Admission. The programs will be presented in the Cisneros Paraje and followed by an optional short tour of the zoo. Reservations at least 72 hours in advance, 915-521-1871. More information, 521-1881.

Saturday, January 11 - Mammals of the Chihuahuan Desert

Friday, February 7 - The El Paso Zoo Dreams of Africa

Saturday, March 8 - The Big Four: Pachyderms of the World

Friday, April 11 - The World of Birds

Saturday May 10 - Large Mammals of North America

Friday, June 13 - Reptiles of the Chihuahuan Desert

To learn more about the zoo and other special programs visit the Zoo website [www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org) <<http://www.elpasozoo.org/>> or call Rick LoBello 521-1881.

Saturday and Sunday March 15 and 16 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM  
Habitat for Wildlife Weekend

A weekend of special presentation including the zoo's new family fun game show, animal demonstrations, guided tours and more. Please call if you can participate & help out!

Sunday April 20 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM "Easter at the Zoo"

Saturday May 10 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM

The World of Birds and International Migratory Bird Day

A day of special presentation including the zoo's new family fun game show, animal demonstrations, guided tours and more. Please call if you can participate & help out!

Saturday May 17 6:30 AM to 11:00 PM

"Safari Nights Gala at the Zoo"

Spectacular fundraiser including gourmet food and great entertainment. \$1,000 for a table for 10 or \$100 for individuals. Call (915) 532-8156 for reservations.

## El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

### Officers:

President, Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
V-President, John Kiseda	533-4615
Secretary, Roxanne Schroeder	534-7019
Treasurer, Hugh Jameson	751-7952

### Directors:

Saul Acosta	849-9284
Lois Balin	774-9603
Matthew Briones	541-4292
Elizabeth Chase	539-1191
Cliff Edison	
Jane Fowler	598-2448
Vince Giordano	
Mike Ross	858-6407
Kathleen Whelen	751-2408

The Roadrunner is published six times a year. Contributions are welcome. Please e-mail to [whelenk@aol.com](mailto:whelenk@aol.com) or mail to 6120 Quail Av. El Paso, TX 79924 (915) 751-2408

## Mexican Wolf Symposium

A 2 day Mexican Grey Wolf Forum will be held at NMSU, Feb 7 & 8, 2003. The forum will have many people from different backgrounds and experiences, discussing the Mexican grey wolf reintroduction project. These viewpoints and experiences will vary from those people actively involved in managing the reintroduction program, to those that ranch in the release area.

The forum is free, but meals are not. Contact Marsha Weisiger @ 505-646-4037 for more information & reservations.

## Wildlife Conservation Organizations

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue  
www.whc.net/cdwr

El Paso Zoo  
www.elpasozoo.org

Keystone Heritage Park  
keystonepark.com or keystonepark.org

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park  
www.cdn.org

Friends of Rio Bosque  
747-8663

Friends of Hueco Tanks  
857-1135

Southwest Environmental Center  
severn.swec@zianet.com

Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition  
www.iloveparks.com/fmw/

## **Birdathon 2003**

As the cold of winter begins to fade and many people's thoughts are wistfully dreaming of Spring, the season of rebirth, my thoughts begin to turn to the next Birdathon, which is just around the corner. Please help us to prepare, put together and plan for our next Birdathon!

Anyone that wants to help us to once again make this a successful event, is more than welcome, but we are especially in need of someone who has some experience in coordinating fundraising opportunities/partnerships with local businesses.

Please contact Betty Fisbeck (581-0174) or John Kiseda (533-4615), to offer your help, with this, our primary fundraising event of the year.

## **Wyler Tramway Hawkwatch**

John Kiseda plans to continue with his bird migration observations at the Ranger Peak tramway platform, which will resume around the middle of this month.

Come enjoy the spectacular views & hopefully sight more than a few, interesting birds. I hope to expand my observation efforts, but need help to accomplish this.

Please contact John at the zoo, at 521-1850 during the day, or at night at 533-4615.

### **GENERAL MEETING**

*Monday, March 17, 2003*  
*Memorial Park Garden Center*  
*3105 Grant Street*

### **"RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK"**

At El Paso's Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, the landscape has changed dramatically since the wetlands were built there in 1997. So have the Park's birds. At our March meeting, John Sproul will give us a closer look at the Rio Bosque project the management philosophy, the changes in the Park's ecosystems, lessons the project has to offer, and the Park's fascinating birdlife.

John has been visiting Rio Bosque and studying its birds since 1980. Since 1999, he has managed the site as a Program Coordinator/Manager in the Center for Environmental Resource Management at UTEP.

John is also well-known to Audubon members for his work at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. Many of the restoration methods now in use at Rio Bosque have been applied for years at Feather Lake.

## At Feather Lake

by John Sproul

Our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. It is open 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays and 2 p.m. to dusk on Sundays. Admission is free. Fall brought two new bird species -- Steller's Jay and Rock Wren -- and raised the species total for our sanctuary to 195. When will the 200th species be seen and what will it be?

Many thanks to Lupe Barrera, Ed Dominguez, Betty Fisbeck, Jane Fowler, Bob Johnson, Roxanne Schroeder and John Sproul, the participants in our bimonthly workdays at Feather Lake in 2002. Our next workday is Sat., March 22, starting at 2 p.m.

Volunteers staff Feather Lake when it is open to the public. We still have several dates needing volunteers between now and the end of the visitor season on April 27. Want to help? Contact John Sproul: 545-5157.

## RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK DAY AT THE BOSQUE 2003

The annual community open house at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in El Paso's Mission Valley takes place Sat., February 8 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Educational displays will introduce the flora and fauna of the 372-acre park. Visitors can explore Rio Bosque at their own pace by walking an easy 1.5-mile nature trail. Knowledgeable guides will be stationed along the trail to point out details and answer questions. Longer (2.4-mile) guided tours are planned to begin at 10 a.m. and 12 Noon. Tents with tables and chairs will be available for picnicking, and restroom facilities will be provided. There will be a number of activities especially for kids, so bring the whole family!

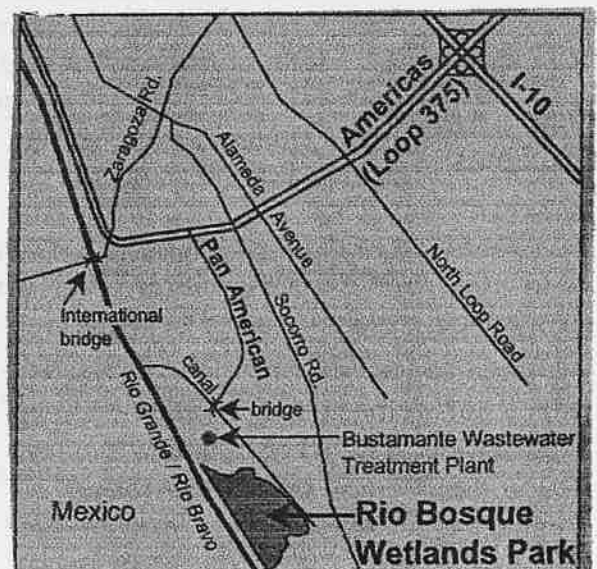
Parking is in the open field next to the Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant. From there, shuttle vans will take visitors to the Park.

Directions: from I-10, take Americas Ave. (Loop 375) to Pan American Dr., turn left onto Pan American and travel 1.5 miles to a concrete bridge over the Riverside Canal. Cross the bridge to the parking area.

Meanwhile, the regular schedule of walking tours and community workdays at the Park continues:

- \* 3 p.m. Sun., February 2 (Introductory Tour)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., February 15 (Workday)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., February 22 (Birds)
  
- \* 3 p.m. Sun., March 2 (Birds)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., March 8 (Introductory)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., March 15 (Workday)

The meeting place is the Riverside Canal bridge (see above).  
Information: 747-8663.



# On The Trail

The following field trips will be held jointly with the class from the UTEP Center for Lifelong Learning, that the chapter is presenting. Call Bob 757-1876, or e-mail at bobwildbirderj@cs.com.

## ZOO / KEYSTONE

The first stop will be at the America's Aviary, located in the El Paso Zoo. This will allow close up looks that will help in understanding identification features. Then on to the Keystone Marsh to get close views of the birds located there, *Ring-billed Gulls, Mallards, Pied-billed Grebes, Common Moorhens, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs and Least Sandpiper.*

**DATE:** Saturday, March 1st.  
**TIME:** **8:04 AM**(Please be on time, as we are going in as a group before regular opening time.)  
**PLACE:** **El Paso Zoo, 4001 E. Paisano.**

## BACKYARD BIRDS

A stop in a members backyard to learn something about the birds, feeders and feeding. *Phainopepla, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and House Finch.*

**DATE:** Saturday, March 8th.  
**TIME:** **7:27 AM**  
**PLACE:** **Mary Lou Alcorns Wildbird Sanctuary at 4331 Emory, (near Doniphan)**

## BIRDS OF HUECO TANKS

The class will tour the rocks and desert scrub of HTSHS for the birds that inhabit the area. *Gambel's Quail, Black-throated Sparrow, Verdin, Rock Wren, Canyon Towhee, Say's Phoebe* and many more.

**DATE:** Sunday, March 16th.  
**TIME:** **8:02 AM**  
**PLACE:** **Hueco Tanks SHS, 20 miles east of the Airport on US 62/180, take FM 2775 north.**

## MOUNTAIN BIRDS

Up to Dripping Springs, located on the west side of the Organ Mountains, this area is operated by the BLM. We should get a number of higher elevation birds not found in the open desert. *White-throated Swift, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Canyon and Bewick's Wren, Spotted Towhee, and Rufus-crowned Sparrow.*

**DATE:** Sunday, March 30.  
**TIME:** **7:07 AM.**  
**PLACE:** **I-10 & Trans Mt.(across from Texaco Station)**

## WATER and WADING BIRD

Take in the sights of Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, then over to Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. *Herons, Egrets, White-faced Ibis, Gadwalls, Green-winged Teal, and Northern Shoveler.*

**DATE:** Sunday, April 6th.  
**TIME:** **7:24 AM**  
**PLACE:** **Feather Lake WS at 9500 North Loop**

## DESERT BIRDS / BIRDS of PREY

A chance to see some of the birds that inhabit the desert scrub, *Cactus Wren, Pyrrhuloxia, Scaled Quail, and Curve-billed Thrasher.* Then out along Hawk Alley for *Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, American Kestrel and Turkey Vulture.* If time permits it will be on to the Fort Bliss Ponds.

**DATE:** Saturday, April 12th.  
**TIME:** **7:47 AM**  
**PLACE:** **Wilderness Park Museum 4301 Trans-Mountain Road.**

Continued on page 7

# OBSERVATIONS

## RARE AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Nov. 16, 2002 to Jan. 15, 2003

Listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 8th Edition January 2003. Leave sightings at Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson (757-1876), or E-mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com.

**Bold print - Rare;**

Light highlighting - Casual;

Dark highlighting - Very Rare

-y seen in or from their yard. -f field trip leader.

On 12/11 Barry Zimmer had a Long-tailed Weasel at McNary.

**Observers:** Dan Allen; JaneFowler; Hugh Jameson; Bob Johnson; John Kiseda; Estela Levy; Mary Lou Alcorn; Jim Paton; Flora Pittard; Risner Place; Patricia Russell; John Sproul; Jimmy Zabriskie; Barry Zimmer.

### Loons to Mergansers

Pacific Loon	11/30	JP	Tor
Clark's Grebe (new hatch)	11/17	JP	McN
White-faced Ibis (5 - 40)	all period	JS	RBq
Ross's Goose	12/7	FP	Hor
Eurasian Wigeon	1/7-end of period	BZ	Tor
Common Goldeneye	1/6	JS	RBq
	1/7	BZ	McN
Hooded Merganser	12/11	BZ	McN
Common Merganser	11/17	JP	McN
(1000+)	1/7	BZ	McN
Red-breast Merganser	12/11	BZ	McN

### Hawks thru Avocet

Ferruginous Hawk	11/30	JP	GSc
Merlin	1/9	BZ-y	Ton
Prairie Falcon	11/28	JK	KnJ
	1/7	BZ	RBq
Sandhill Crane (300+)	11/17	JP	McN
American Avocet	all period	JS	RBq

### Gulls thru Hummingbirds

Bonapart's Gull	11/17	JP	McN
California Gull	12/11	BZ	McN
	1/9	BZ	Key
Eurasian Collard-Dove	11/17	JP	McN
Common-ground Dove	11/17	JP	McN
	1/10	BZ	Own
Broad-billed Hummer	12/15	MLA	Emy
Anna's Hummer	12/31	EL	Lai
Broad-tailed Hummer	12/10	BZ	Ton
	12/25	RP	HmG
Rufous Hummingbird	all period	BZ-y	Ton

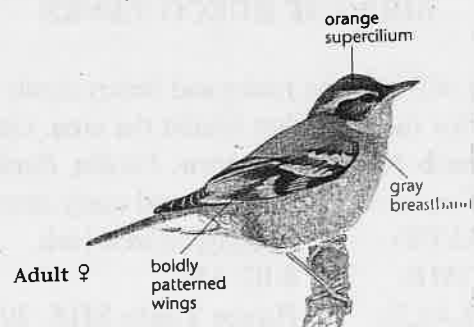
### Woodpecker thru Wren

Acorn Woodpecker	11/29	JP	SSt
Plumbeous Vireo	11/24	JP	Gad
Hutton's Vireo	1/8	BZ-y	Ton
Steller's Jay	unusually large numbers, all period, by many observers, all over the county		
Western Scrub-Jay	same as above.		
Mexican Jay	1/11	FP	Hor
American Crow (500+)	11/24	JP	Gad
Cave Swallow	all period	JS	RBq
Mountain Chickadee	12/15	BJ-f	HTk
Carolina Wren	11/20	JZ	Can

### Thrush's thru Tanager

Western Bluebird	11/17	BJ-f	HTk
	11/17	JP	Tor
Mountain Bluebird	1/1	PR	Art
Townsend's Solitaire	11/17	BJ-f	HTk
Varied Thrush	11/19	JP	S/M

3d El Paso County Record  
4th County Record 12/6 HJ BBd



Varied Thrush

Continued on page 7

**FRIENDS of HUECO TANKS**

**Admission:** Hueco Tanks Historical Park - \$4.  
\$2 for Seniors 65 and older. Children under 12 FREE

**Bird Identification Tours**

Sunday February 16	8 AM
Sunday March 16	8 AM
Sunday April 20	8 AM

**Check in at the Headquarters.** Leader Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson. 757-1876

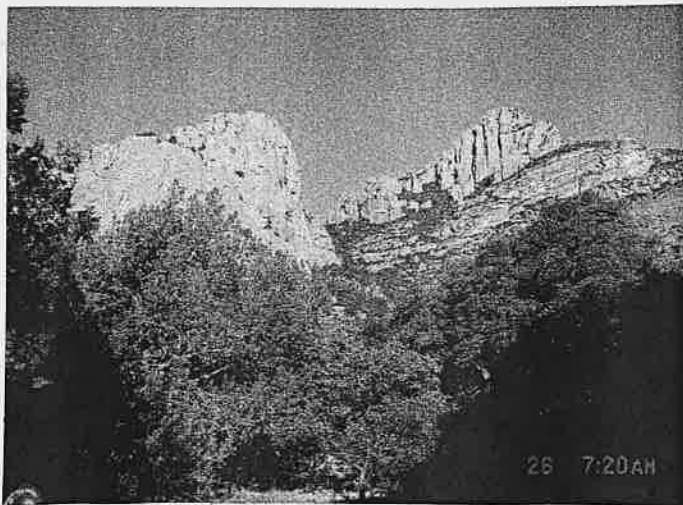
**PLANNING AHEAD**

**BIRDATHON:** Sat. / Sun. May 3/4.

**IMBD Count:** Sat. May 10.

**B.I.T. Hueco Tanks.** Sun. May 18.

**CAVE CREEK at Portal Arizona.** Fri., Sat., Sun., Mon., May 23, 24, 25, 26. Make your reservations early.



**Looking into Cave Creek Canyon**

**Thrasher to Junco**

Brown Thrasher	11/30	BZ-y	Ton
Cedar Waxwing	12/23	DA	Mon
Palm Warbler	12/9	JS	RBq
Summer Tanager	11/30	JK	MLk
Clay-colored Sparrow	11/17	DA	Key
	11/17	JP	McN
Fox Sparrow	11/16	JP	ByS
Swamp Sparrow	12/1	JS	RBq
Dark-eye Junco (slate-color)	11/17	MLA	Emy
	11/17	BJ-f	HTk
Common Grackle	11/27	JF-y	Kil

**Blackbirds & Finches**

Bullock's Oriole	1/8	BZ-y	Ton
	2d Jan record for El Paso		
Red Crossbill	11/22	MLA	Emy
	11/28	JK	KJy
Pine Siskin	11/29	DA	Haw
Lawrence's Goldfinch	12/5	MLA	Emy

**Locations:** Art-Artcraft Road Area; BSc-Boy Scout; Emy-Emory; Gad-Gadsden HighArea; GSc-Girl Scout; Haw-Hawkins; Hor-Horizon City; HTk-Hueco Tanks SHS; HmG-Hummingbird Gardens; KnJ-Kenyon Joyce; Key-Keystone Marsh; Kil-Kilkenny; Lai-Lait; McN-McNary Resv. area; Own-Owens on Gardener; RBq-Rio Bosque Wetlands Park; SSt-Sunset; S/M-Sunset Montoya area; Ton-Tonto; Tor-Tornillo area.

**Sally Spofford, 1914 - 2002**

The Spoffords moved to Portal, Arizona in 1972, and shortly thereafter opened their yard to birders from all over. After her husband Walters death in 1995 Sally still kept the birds coming and welcomed the birders. Any of our members who have been to Cave Creek have stopped at Spoffords house to enjoy the birds and probably meeting for the first time other birders from many places around the world.

El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
 Audubon Society  
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 El Paso, Texas 79997

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**National Audubon Society**  
 Chapter Membership Application

**Yes, I'd like to join.**  
 Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society*

National Audubon Society  
 Chapter Membership Data Center  
 P.O. Box 51001  
 Boulder, Colorado 80322-1001  
 EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

W10  
 Local Chapter Code  
 7XCHA

**Dates to Remember**  
 Call Bob Johnson for details 757-1876

February	March	April
Board Meeting Monday, 10th	El Paso Zoo/Keystone Saturday, 1st	Feather Lake/Rio Bosque Sunday, 6th
Hueco Tanks Sunday, 16th	Backyard Birds Saturday, 8th	Desert Birds Saturday, 12th
Awards Dinner Saturday, 22nd	Board Meeting Monday, 10th	Board Meeting Monday, 14th
No General Meeting (Awards Dinner)	Hueco Tanks Sunday, 16th	Hueco Tanks Sunday, 20th
	General Meeting Monday, 17th	General Meeting Monday, 21th
	Feather Lake Workday Saturday, 22nd	
	Dripping Springs, NM Sunday, 30th	

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