



Nest Box News

www.southcarolinabluebirds.org



South Carolina Bluebird Society

An Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

Volume 5, Issue 4

Winter 2017

Inside This Issue

Presidents' Message	2
Save The Date, SCBS Directory	3
Insider News	4
Opportunities Abound to Establish Bluebird Trails	5 6
Will You Help?	7
Ask Dr. Ron	8
Splash, Splash	9 10
Nature Series	11 12
Backyard & Beyond	13 14



Attention Trail Monitors!

If it's broke, *please* fix it! You can call Ron Brenneman or Glen Hendry if a nest box on your trail needs a new roof, front door or total replacement. By now the majority of the trails should be winterized, repaired and made ready for roosting and occupation come late February/early March. We will be holding two trail monitor meetings in January, one in the evening of **January 16th at 6:30 pm** and the other on **January 21st at 10:00 am**. You *must* attend one of the meetings if you wish to be (or continue to be) a trail monitor. Each new nesting season brings new questions (from the monitors, not the birds!) These two monitoring classes will answer any questions you have and get everyone on the same page so all the hard work we do can be properly compiled. As I always say *"no nest box is better than an unmonitored nest box!"* Keep your eyes open for more info coming to an inbox near you!

Terry McGrath

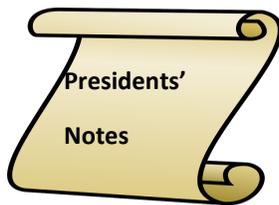
Carols of gladness ring from every tree.

Francis Anne Kemble



Happy New Year!





PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE... MIKE DeBRUHL

HAPPY NEW YEAR !! 2017 is underway and promises to be another great year for our **SCBS**.

By the time you read this, we will have already embarked on several projects and plans. For example, thanks to our great members and volunteers who:

- Stained 20 new poles and baffles in preparation for a new trail installation on February 7 at the SC State Gopher Tortoise Preserve. Our SCDNR partners again assisted in obtaining nest boxes for this trail.
- Our trail monitor buckets are again being readied, thanks to **Roger Brock**.
Assembled the Trail Monitor notebooks (thanks to **Ron Brenneman, Linda Burgess, Terry McGrath and Kitty Yundt**) and have Trail Monitor Training scheduled for January 16 at 6:30 PM and again on January 21 at 10 AM.
- Accepted an invitation to provide a booth at 2017 Aiken Earth Day event.
- Set the annual "Help a kid build a nest box" day for Saturday, Feb 25 at Birds & Butterflies. Always fun for the kids and SCBS helpers.
- Made final preparations for installing 20 Nest boxes at the Reserve Nicklaus Course and 10 at the Reserve Hollow Creek Course. These will be great additions to our trail system and are ideal habitats
- Have 10 educational presentations to outside organizations scheduled.

And our list goes on with more to follow.

But remember, none of this could have been successfully accomplished without the hard work of dedicated members and volunteers. **THANK YOU !!** We can always use such assistance, and it is fun...and I encourage you to let us know whenever you can help.

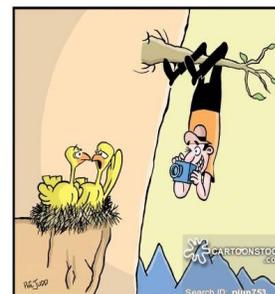
We are rapidly approaching the 2017 season and, with new trails and habitat, hope to exceed the **3,826 cavity dweller** fledglings (**3,090** Bluebirds, **289** Carolina Chickadees and **178** Wood Ducks...plus **278** others). This promises to be an exciting, educational and fun filled year for us all.

On behalf of your Board of Directors, I thank each of you for your interest, assistance, and dedication to our SCBS mission. We are truly making a difference.

Be sure to keep those feeders filled during the chilly weather.

Cheers....**and see you on the Trails !**

Mike



"Pretend you don't notice him."

Save The Date

PLANNED PRESENTATIONS – 2017

Member Meetings* 7:00 pm

January 23, 2017

February 27, 2017

March 27, 2017

April 24, 2017

May 22, 2017

June / July / August -SUMMER
BREAK— No Meetings

September 25, 2017

October 23, 2017

November 13, 2017

December 2017– No Meeting

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Feb. 7 Masters Garden Club, Orangeburg, SC

Mar 7 Cherokee Rose Garden, Augusta, GA

Mar 9 Hilton Head Island Audubon Society, HHI, SC

March 14 Pine Needle Garden Club, Augusta, GA

April 11 Harbor Heights Garden Club, Ninety Six, SC

May 19-20 Aiken Council Garden clubs Tour & Show

Board of Directors Meetings* 5:00pm

February 13, 2017

May 8, 2017

August 14, 2017

November 14, 2017



* all meetings at Birds & Butterflies



SCBS DIRECTORY

Director Emeritus: Jim Burke

President: Mike DeBruhl/cmdebruhl@atlanticbb.net

Vice President: Maggi Howard/mhoward@golflady.us

Secretary: Debbie Reed/reeddebbie@bfusa.com

Treasurer: Tim Bendle/tim.bendle@gmail.com

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Kitty Yundt/kitty.yundt@outlook.com

Bluebird Trail Committee: Ron Brenneman/birdbflies@aol.com

Roger Brock/rwbrock@mac.com



Insider News...

By: Terry McGrath



“Bluebirds like suet bits or pieces. Most insect eating birds will eat suet. The spreadable type is easier for insect eating bills.”



Contributed by Chuck James,
President of The Tennessee Bluebird Society
tnsialia@gmail.com

THANKS, CHUCK!

SCBS now offers **Lifetime Memberships**. If you'd like to subscribe, email Mary Shultz, Membership Director for info at:

shultzim@att.net



Did you know...

...Goldfinches are among the strictest vegetarians in the bird world, selecting an entirely vegetable diet and only inadvertently swallowing an occasional insect?



*Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Deadlines for submissions to [The Nest Box News](#) are: **January 15th, April 15th, July 15th, October 15th** Send your ideas, pictures, comments or articles to: mcgrathjtl@atlanticbb.net



A Neat Way to Donate to SCBS

When shopping at Amazon.com, you can now list the SCBS as a charitable beneficiary by choosing their Amazon Smiles program.

When you shop, designate SCBS as one of the non-profits you support and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to SCBS! That's one penny for every \$2.00 spent! Hey, it all adds up!!

Your unique charity link

This link will take people directly to smile.amazon.com in support of your organization so they won't have to search for your charity among almost a million other organizations. Use this link in all your AmazonSmile marketing promotions. It's the easiest way for customers to find and support your charity.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/45-2984342>

For information on joining NABS, see <http://nabluebirdsociety.org/>. For information on joining the SCBS and other great information, see:

Attention!

<http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org>



Opportunities Abound To Establish Bluebird Trails

When the South Carolina Bluebird Society (SCBS) established our first bluebird trail in 2010, we could not have predicted the potential trail sites that would become available to us. What started out as a few trails with a couple dozen nest boxes has grown to approximately 76 trails and 981 nest boxes. As people became more aware of what our organization was doing and the success of our trails, (**2,853 birds fledged in 2015**), they began contacting us to establish new trails. While we still initiate some contacts for potential new trails, many requests for trails are coming to us.

Recently, the owner of a horse training facility (where Olympic caliber equestrians train) contacted us about establishing a bluebird trail on their 1,000 acre property. After surveying the property we recommended installing twelve bluebird and five Eastern screech owl nest boxes in the spring of 2016. The landowners have members of their staff monitor the boxes. The results from the first nesting season were very encouraging with more than 75 bluebirds fledged.

The costs of establishing some trails are being subsidized by SCBS, particularly if they are on public land or facilities like schools, nursing/retirement homes and not-for-profit areas. With trails on private lands, we try to get the landowners to cover the costs of the nest boxes, poles and baffles and SCBS provides the manpower to install the boxes. Some private landowners do their own monitoring after training from SCBS, and provide the nest data to us. On other trails, SCBS members monitor the trails.

Some of the trails are quite large, 75+ boxes, and many are small, 3 or 4 boxes.

Some of the areas where we have established trails include:

County Parks	City Parks/Museums
Schools (private & public)	Universities
Manufacturing Plants	Subdivisions
Private Lands	Retirement/Senior Facilities
Horse Farms/Stables	Golf Courses
Banks	Not-For-Profit Entities
Urban Forests	Churches
Businesses	

If your NABS affiliate is looking to expand bluebird trails in your area, consider some of the entities mentioned in this article. Opportunities to establish new trails may surprise you. Once



Continued...

If your NABS affiliate is looking to expand bluebird trails in your area, consider some of the entities mentioned in this article. Opportunities to establish new trails may surprise you. Once people learn about what NABS and its affiliates are doing, it's easy to get people excited and involved.

Submitted by: **Ron Brenneman and Terry McGrath**



A trail in a neighborhood



Bridgestone Tire



The trail at Aiken Equine Rescue

This article appeared in the Fall 2016 issue of Bluebird, Journal of the North American Bluebird Society



Seeking *new trail monitors* for the following trails:

Aiken County Govt. Complex– 6 boxes on University Parkway, easy walking on mowed lawn

Aiken County Museum– 4 boxes, easy walking in the City

Aiken Middle School– 8 boxes off Wire Rd. Monitor on weekends when school is in session.

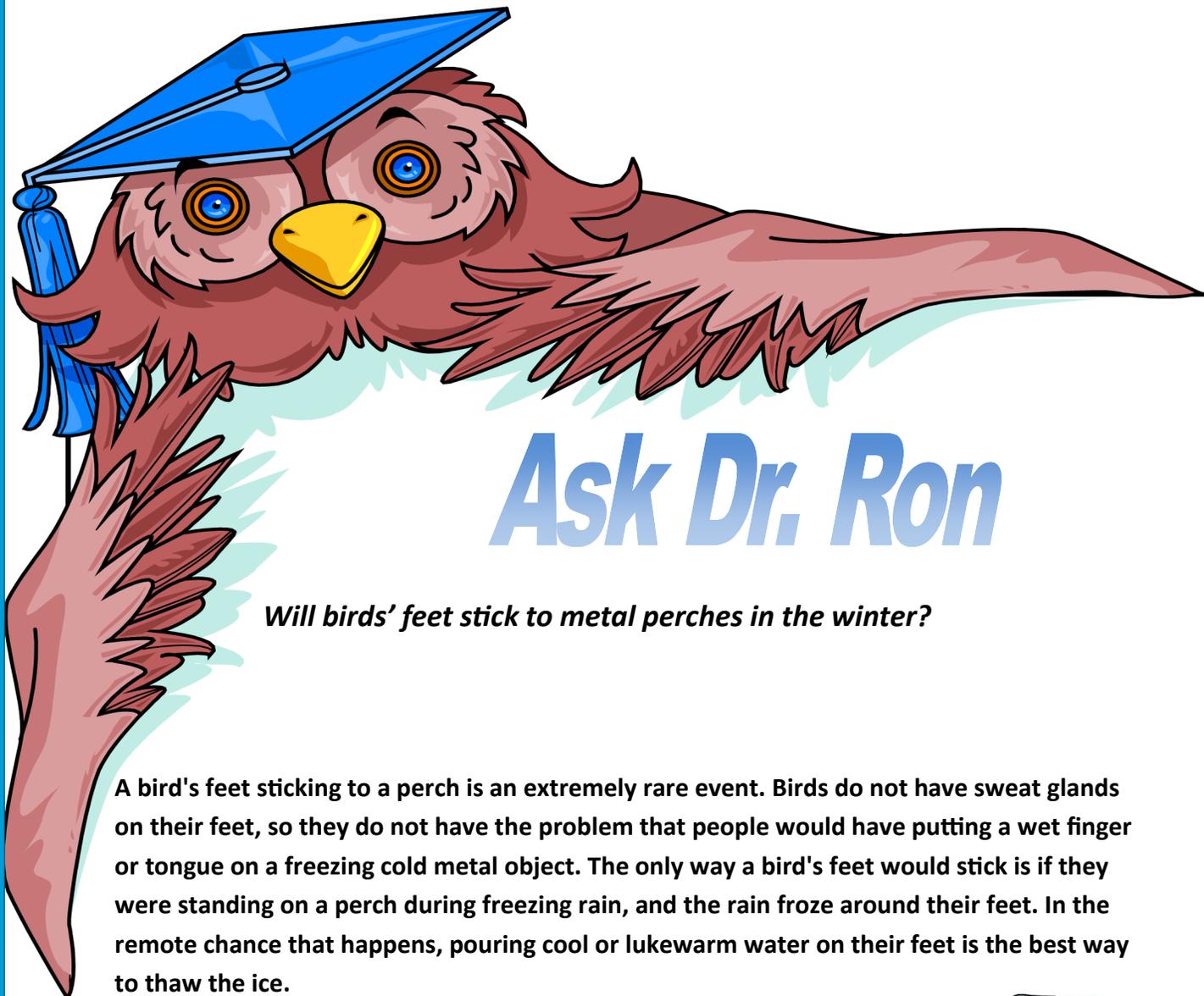
Blackberry Hill Farm– 16 boxes, can drive the trail

Chukker Creek Elem. School– 7 boxes on Chukker Creek Dr. Easy walking.

LBC Middle School– 5 boxes in the Valley. Monitor needed late May thru August. Students monitor the early part of the season.

Stable On The Woods– 12 boxes off Dibble Rd. Some walking required, a few gentle hills. On dirt roads and mowed grass.

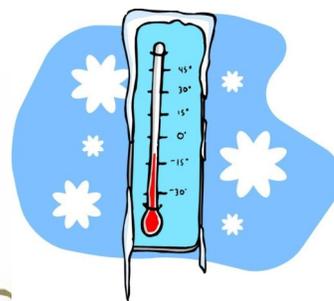




Ask Dr. Ron

Will birds' feet stick to metal perches in the winter?

A bird's feet sticking to a perch is an extremely rare event. Birds do not have sweat glands on their feet, so they do not have the problem that people would have putting a wet finger or tongue on a freezing cold metal object. The only way a bird's feet would stick is if they were standing on a perch during freezing rain, and the rain froze around their feet. In the remote chance that happens, pouring cool or lukewarm water on their feet is the best way to thaw the ice.



<http://www.audubon.org/birds/faq>

BRRRRR!



Photo by [Warren Price Photography](#)

Birds need fresh, clean water for drinking and bathing. Most birds drink water every day. They also seem to enjoy bathing to clean their plumage and remove parasites. Providing water improves habitat for birds and other animals, and increases your chances of observing their fun behaviors up close! You can attract more birds to your balcony, roof patio, or yard by including a birdbath, and few things are more attractive to them than a clean, well-maintained one.



Urban pigeon bathing in a puddle

photo © [Maxim Blinkov](#)

SPLISH, SPLASH



Good birdbaths are similar to shallow puddles, the natural birdbaths in the wild for birds. Choose a shallow container that is easy to clean, such as an old frying pan, shallow baking pan, or plastic lids of large containers. If you have a yard, you could dig a shallow hole and line it with plastic or some other waterproof material. Although birds prefer water basins that are on the ground, consider if cats are a danger. If you think that a birdbath on the ground might be too tempting to cats, put the birdbath three or four feet off the ground. Place some sand in the bottom of the bath and arrange a few branches or stones in the container, so birds can stand on them and drink without getting wet. This is especially important in the winter when keeping body heat is essential for survival in the cold.



American Goldfinch sits on a heated birdbath.

photo © [Al Mueller](#)

You can try an immersion heater for keeping the water from freezing in a birdbath. These heaters are safe and cost pennies a day to operate or you could try putting a light bulb in a plant pot and place the water basin on top. The light bulb will keep the water from freezing.

To keep the water fresh, remember to change the water in the birdbath and clean it every couple of days. Try to clean the birdbath before the water becomes stale, and clean the bottom and walls immediately if green algae begin to form. Keep the birdbath full of water and then enjoy the feathery visitors having fun at your “puddle!”

A family of Starlings enjoy a water bath

photo © [scooperdigital](#)



JUST TAKING A BATH!



Learn more about [Providing Water for Birds from the Great Backyard Bird Count \(PDF\)](#). Many thanks to *Karen Purcell* and the Celebrate Urban Birds program at: www.celebrateurbanbirds.org



[Birds & Butterflies of Aiken - 2016 Nature Series Schedule](#)

"The purpose of Birds & Butterflies seminars and field trips are to foster the love and appreciation of the natural things God has created for our enjoyment."

February 7 (NEW)

The Least Tern In South Carolina

J.J. Audubon described the least tern as the "happiest of the happy." Yet this smallest of seabirds is listed as threatened in South Carolina. This seminar will explore the biology of the least tern, and its adaptive ability to nest on roofs, bridge supports, and concrete piers! Presented by Mary-Catherine Martin, Wildlife Biologist with the SCDNR.

Tuesday, February 21 **Owl Prowl at Silver Bluff Audubon Center**

Join us after dark as we learn about our native owls and hear (and possibly see) owls in the wild. Led by Paul Koehler, Director of the Silver Bluff Audubon Center, we will meet at the Visitors Center at 6:30PM. Maps are available at Birds & Butterflies. Limited to 25 participants. Rain date February 23.

Saturday, February 25 (FREE) **Build a Bluebird Nest Box**

Kids 12 and under can learn about bluebirds and build a bluebird nest box to take home. The South Carolina Bluebird Society will be a partner in this project. Parents welcome and encouraged. Limited to 20 kids. The program begins at 10:00AM.

Tuesday, March 7 **How to Attract & Enjoy Eastern Bluebirds & Other Cavity Nesters**

Learn how to attract this common and beautiful bird to your yard. We will discuss nest box requirements, installation and placement of boxes, feeding bluebirds and monitoring nests. An information table will be available from the South Carolina Bluebird Society.

Tuesday, March 14 (NEW) **Wintering Golden Eagles in South Carolina**

Golden Eagles are rare winter residents in eastern North America, with most found along the Appalachian Mountains and few reported on the coastal plain of the Carolinas. Remote cameras were used to detect and individually identify Golden Eagles on the Savannah River Site. Over the last three winters we have coordinated a statewide survey effort in South Carolina to better document eagle occurrence during the winter. Results of this statewide effort will be presented along with preliminary results from SRS this past winter. Presented by Mark Vukovich, Biological Science Technician, USDA Forest Service, SRS.



Birds & Butterflies of Aiken - 2016 Nature Series Schedule

"The purpose of Birds & Butterflies seminars and field trips are to foster the love and appreciation of the natural things God has created for our enjoyment."

Tuesday, April 11 Hummingbirds – Nature’s Jewels

Learn interesting facts about the smallest bird in North America. We will discuss feeders, food,

Saturday, April 8 (NEW) Spring Bird Walk at Stable View Farm

Join us for an early morning bird walk at Stable View Farm, a world class equestrian facility on 1,000 acres, 5 minutes from exit 18 off of I-20. Peter Stangel, with the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities will be our trip leader. The walk will last about 3-4 hours. Directions are available at Birds & Butterflies. Limited to 15 people. We will meet at Birds & Butterflies at 7:15AM.

- Space is limited, so reservations are required by calling 649-7999. There is a \$5.00 non-refundable charge for each seminar or field trip when the reservation is made. Children 16 and under are free.

Seminars begin at **7:00PM at Birds & Butterflies, 117 Laurens St. NW in downtown Aiken** unless otherwise noted. Most seminars last 45-60 minutes.

If a particular seminar is full, additional sessions may be scheduled.

Unless otherwise noted, seminars are presented by **Ron Brenneman, Certified Wildlife Biologist and owner of Birds & Butterflies.**



More info and a complete Nature Series schedule for **2017** will be available at **Birds & Butterflies** or by visiting their website at:

www.birdsandbutterfliesaiken.com



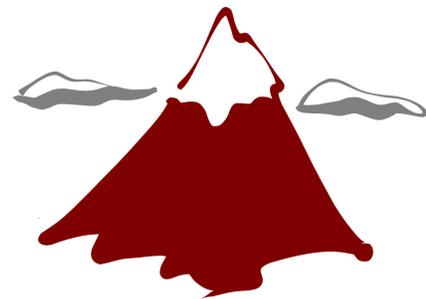
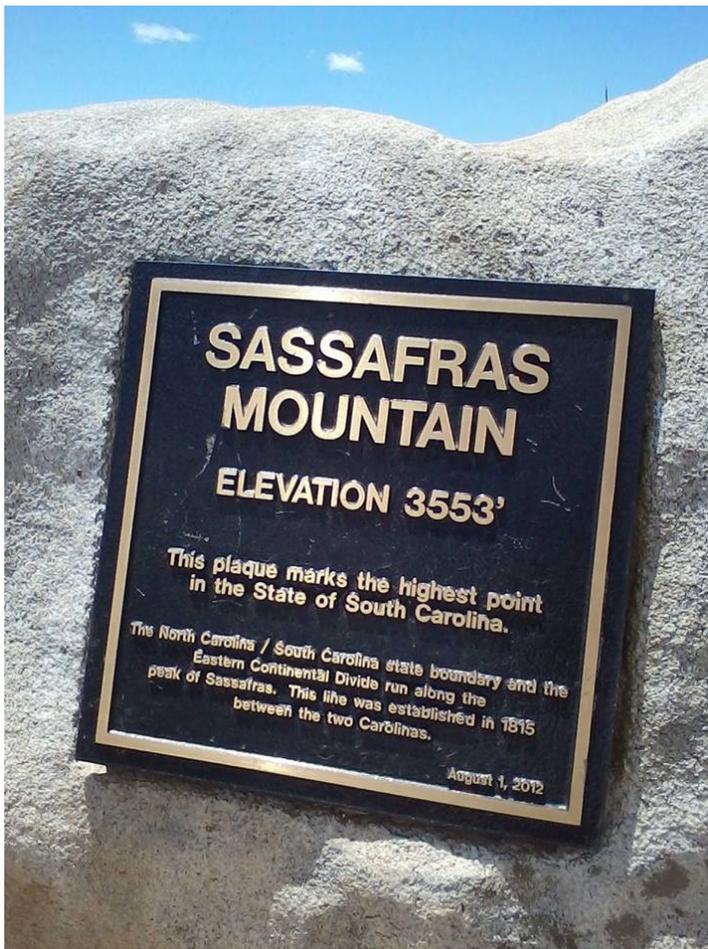
Backyard & Beyond...

Photos by our readers for our readers...

WOW



Jessica Miller of Sassafras Mountain, SC was in a group with the Blue Wall Birding Festival and found what is possibly the HIGHEST bluebird nest in South Carolina in an old electrical box!



Thanks to our “camera ready” photographers for the following captures!



Lee Zak has 3 bluebirds in a “holding pattern” for the meal worm box!



Barbara Ray Spence, of James Island, SC get the most amazing visitors!

Nancy Moseley, of Aiken, SC always gets birds’ with “attitude”! This bluebird gives her best eagle impression!



Like us on Facebook! For answers to your questions and membership information to the South Carolina Bluebird Society and the North American Bluebird Society go to:

<http://www.southcarolinabluebirds.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SouthCarolinaBluebirdSociety>



South Carolina Bluebird Society

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TO:

