



THE PELICAN

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008

NEWSLETTER OF GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON

www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org

DO IT FOR THE BIRDS!

By Pomera M. Fronce

The **Audubon Christmas Bird Count** is the oldest and largest citizen science event in the world. For over a hundred years, people have gathered together during the winter holiday season to count birds. This is an annual tradition for many people that has passed from one generation to the next. A vast pool of bird data, the most comprehensive available for mid-December to early January, has been created in the process. It is a fertile source of information on the status and distribution of early winter bird populations and is studied by scientists and others the world over.

The primary objective of the Christmas Bird Count is to monitor the status and distribution of bird populations. The count period in North America, December 14th to January 5th, is referred to as “early winter” because many birds are still in the late stages of their southward migration at this time and so it is not true winter. When data are combined with other seasonal surveys, we begin to see a clearer picture of how the continent’s bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

The information is also vital for conservation. For example, local trends in bird populations can indicate habitat fragmentation or signal an immediate environmental threat, such as groundwater contamination or poisoning from improper use of pesticides.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition. And with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

The 2007 count was highly successful! Over 80 participants logged 106 species. **Our rallying cry this year is 109 in 109 – that’s 109 species in the 109th annual Christmas Bird Count.** But, we can’t do it without you. Whether you are a beginning or experienced birder, we need your help. If you can’t participate in the field and your home is in the count circle, you can stay home and report the birds that visit your feeder.

This year’s count will be held on Saturday, December 20th. Our potluck social with team reports and count tally will begin at 6PM at the Chase Mill in the Tracy Aviary in Liberty Park. Contact Pomera Fronce at 272-2755 or pinkstring@xmission.com if you plan to participate or to obtain further information. Join us, won’t you?

November 18: General Meeting: MERCURY IN GREAT SALT LAKE with *Nathan Darnall*

The Great Salt Lake has been recognized as a site of hemispheric importance for shorebirds, and each of its five bays has been designated as a globally important bird area. As valuable as the Lake is to millions of breeding birds, it is also under assault and faces many threats, both seen and unseen. The drying lakebed is one obvious sign of the threat posed by continued drought. Unseen threats include the emergence of mercury as a contaminant of concern. While we generally cannot see mercury, its effects are seen through health advisories warning people to limit their consumption of certain waterfowl from the Great Salt Lake and through effects on wildlife. Join Nathan Darnall, an ecologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to explore facets of the mercury story, including recent data and ongoing studies to determine the sources of mercury in the lake, its effects and possible solutions.



Eared Grebes, Great Salt Lake

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NEWSLETTER OF GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON

Printed on recycled paper.

Mission Statement: Great Salt Lake Audubon is dedicated to protecting and enhancing habitat for wild birds, animals and plants, and to maintaining healthy and diverse environments for wildlife and people throughout the state.

GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON DIRECTORY
www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org

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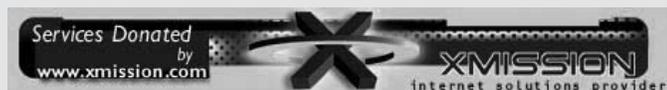
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Submission Guidelines: Original articles and photos are welcomed. The editor reserves the right to choose and edit as needed. E-mail articles to newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org. The Pelican is published 6 times a year. Submission deadline for the January/February issue is December 10, 2008.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jen Hajj, GSLA President

Dear Feathered Friends,

If you had the opportunity to attend this year's fundraising dinner, you know that it was a fun evening. We gathered, caught up with old friends, appreciated the efforts of a host of volunteers and agency partners, honored Sandy Bassett for his efforts in the Sunflower Seed Sale, thanked Nathan Darnall for his efforts as board president, celebrated the Jordan River Restoration, enjoyed some wine and beer, ate yummy food, heard Frank Howe's very interesting program on Bird Conservation, and spent a lot of money on silent auction items. We also learned that the book by Keith Evans and Wayne Martinson, *Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites: A Conservation Platform for IBAs and BHCAs* is currently being printed. The book is fantastic and Great Salt Lake Audubon will have copies available for purchase soon.

For all who contributed to the success of the GALA, including silent auction item donors, volunteers, sponsors (like Corporate Edge Printing, IHI Environmental, Tom Neuman and Nathan Darnall) diners, bidders, and well-wishers, we are grateful. The event reached its fundraising and friend-raising goals.

But the party isn't over yet. There's still a lot to do with Great Salt Lake Audubon. Open your newsletter up to the fieldtrips "centerfold" and you'll see. From the frequent field trips to the monthly general meetings, there's something for everyone. If you have not yet seen what we're talking about, sign up for an upcoming field trip. You'll agree that our leaders are knowledgeable, friendly and caring individuals, who want nothing more than for you to be a better birder!

And speaking of better birding, the Christmas Bird Counts are just around the corner. This citizen science event involves birders from across the country, to get a snapshot view of the state of birds. No experience is necessary, and it is a great way to get out with other people who care about the status of birds. There will be several counts going on throughout Utah.

Keep on counting!

Jen

***Check the calendar page for upcoming
Christmas Bird Counts.***

***You will meet wonderful people and
have a great time!!!!***

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2008

By Arne Hultquist, Secretary

The last two months have been an exceptional time for the Great Salt Lake Audubon. Our new Executive Director has his hands full with our restoration project and conservation issues. To protect the property in the future the Board is considering having the entire property surveyed and staked. The funding for the current work plan, the long term management, and development of the long term management plan were discussed at length in the last two board meetings. Our cooperative agreement with the USFWS has expired and the Board is partnering with them to develop a new one. Bruce has also agreed to replace me as GSLA's representative to Friends of the Great Salt Lake on the GSL Minerals expansion issue.

On the conservation front, the committee has sent two comment letters. In September, we commented on the State of Utah Division of Water Quality's proposed Great Salt Lake selenium standard. The letter encouraged them to pursue a no effect standard as opposed to the 10% kill standard they are proposing. The committee also sent a comment to the USFWS on the proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act. In the comment letter the committee basically requested the biological review of Environmental Assessments and Impact Statements continue to reside with the USFWS and not be delegated to agencies proposing the action.

The Board was thrilled with this year's Gala. GSLA did receive a fair amount of income from the event and everyone enjoyed the event. The Board appreciated the efforts of Tiffin Brough and the committee. Thank you all who attended and made it a success!

GSLA would like thank our corporate sponsors, IHI ENVIRONMENTAL and CORPORATE EDGE, for their generous support of our Gala.

List of donors to the Gala.....

A Gift of Touch, Allen Travis Unique Photos, Ann Petersen, Corporate Edge, Cyberflora, Deedee O'Brien, Dirty Johnson's Dog Wash, Eddy and Pamla Kinder, Flow Yoga, Heather Dove, Heather Trecker, IHI Environmental, Jeanne LeBer and Ray Smith, Jen Hajj, Jennifer Speers, Joan and Keith Johnson, Marjorie Chan, Nancy Sakahara Nathan Darnall, Patagonia Outlet, SLC, Rita Baden, R.E.I, Results Health and Fitness, Second Long Photography, Solitude Resort, Steve Chindgren, Tom Neuman, Tracy Aviary, Utah Grizzly's, Utah Jazz, Water to Go, Wild Bird Center, Layton, Wild Bird Center, Salt Lake Wildlife Reflections, Yuppie Puppie

BRUCE'S BLOG: *BIRD'S EYE VIEW*

By Bruce Heath, Executive Director

While attending the festivities at the grand opening of the Legacy Parkway, I watched three turkey vultures circling overhead and wondered what they saw from way up there and what they thought of the whole celebration. Maybe just waiting for the new food source of road kill raccoons? I did listen to the self-congratulatory speeches and noticed that several of the speakers alluded to how difficult it had been and how many compromises they had to make to get it built. After the Governor opened the road by roaring off on his big motorcycle, the rest of us also drove on it. The current alignment of the road is right along the edge of developed or farm land on the east and wide open space on the west, instead of out in the middle of wetlands. Which suggests to me that participating in the political process (along with the threat of lawsuits on occasion) can in fact sometimes influence decisions of competing interests.

Prior to attending the Utah Audubon Council retreat in Logan, Jason Pietrzak from Bridgerland took me around to various sites, birding and discussing some of the difficult conservation issues they are facing up there, including the Sandhill crane hunt and the possible availability of thousands of acres of prime Bear River habitat now owned by the power company. But, the most memorable event that day was when we saw a gull by the side of the road in obvious difficulty. Jason captured it easily and since it was alive the next day but with labored breathing, sent it down with Lynn Carroll to Ogden for rehab. It occurred to me that we weren't at all concerned about what species it was, or counting how many others of that species there were – just with the life of that one individual. That's what this all comes down to, the lives of individual birds. So, my suggestion is this: find a bird that won't immediately fly away, and try to connect with it. Personally. Don't name or label it, or look for field marks. Just become acquainted and try to see the world from that individual bird's eye view.

GALA FUNDRAISING DINNER



Calendar of Events including Field Trips for November/December 2008

Great Salt Lake Audubon, www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org

BEGINNING BIRDERS AND NEW MEMBERS ARE ESPECIALLY WELCOME

We encourage carpooling on our field trips. Contribution towards gas money is always appreciated. We suggest 20 cents/mile for all carpool members, including the driver.

Be sure to call the field trip leader to confirm that arrangements are still as published. Expect field trips to leave on time so arrive 5-10 minutes early to arrange carpools.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 10AM – 2PM

SUNFLOWER SEED PICK-UP
Central Office Plaza, 2880 S. Main St. SLC

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 9AM

MOUNTAIN DELL RECREATION
AREA, PARLEY'S CANYON
Leaders: Jack Clark and Sylvia Gray

We are not sure what the weather will be like, so check the forecast and come prepared. We'll meet by 9AM in the **parking lot just west of the REI on 33rd South and 3285 East** for a morning of birding. Call Jack (255-7989) or Sylvia (532-3486) if you plan to attend.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 7:30AM - 2:30PM

COMPTON'S KNOLL in SALT CREEK WMA
plus other birding spots in BRIGHAM CITY AREA
Leader: Deedee O'Brien

Our target bird is the Tundra Swan. This time of year large numbers often use the Rest Area in Salt Creek WMA where they are easy to see and no hunting is allowed. We'll also check out the wetlands at the Bear River Education Center and, time permitting, Mayor's Pond and others in Brigham City area. Meet in the SE corner of the ShopKo Parking lot in Sugarhouse by 7:30AM. Call Deedee(272-8060) for updated trip information and if you plan to attend.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 7PM

GSLA MONTHLY MEETING
Sugarhouse Garden Center

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 8:45/9AM

BOUNTIFUL POND
Leader: Paul Lombardi

Paul will lead us to a new (for us) birding spot that is close by. Bountiful Pond is a lovely spot just west of the Legacy Parkway near 5th South in Bountiful. It is part of open uplands near the south side of Farmington Bay. It has trees, shrubs, osprey nesting platforms, benches, and a paved path. Meet in the SE corner of the ShopKo Parking lot in Sugarhouse by 8:45 or 9AM at the McDonalds at 500 South in Bountiful to meet Paul. Call Deedee (272-8060) for updated trip information and if you plan to attend.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 8:30AM/9AM

FARMINGTON BAY AND NEARBY AREA
Leaders: Bob Huntington and Deedee O'Brien

This monthly visit to Farmington Bay is fun for all because of our comraderie over breakfast; the easy drive & bird-near-car experience; the great scenery in every season, and the GOOD BIRDS ! We share our spotting scopes for good views of even distant birds. As long as the Kaysville Ponds are not frozen, we will include them in this field trip. Meet at 8:30AM for breakfast at the McDonalds's in Centerville (exit 319 from I-15) or by 9AM to carpool. Call Deedee (272-8060) if you plan to attend.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 9AM

MOUNTAIN DELL RECREATION
AREA, PARLEY'S CANYON
Leaders: Jack Clark and Sylvia Gray

Who knows what the weather will be like, so come prepared. Most likely we'll be walking a more restricted area. We'll meet by 9AM in the **parking lot just west of the REI on 33rd South and 3285 East** for a morning of birding. Call Jack (255-7989) or Sylvia (532-3486) if you plan to attend.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 9AM

SALT LAKE CITY CEMETERY
Leader: Sylvia Gray

This trip is especially planned with BEGINNING BIRDERS in mind and to encourage anyone possibly interested in the CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. We will stroll the cemetery counting and identifying all the birds that we see, just like on the CBC. Meet by 9AM at the south-west corner of the cemetery (4th Avenue/ "N" Street). Call Sylvia (532-3486) if you plan to attend.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 9AM-12PM

DECKER LAKE & LEE KAY PONDS

Leader: Roberta Wherritt

Join us for a half day of birding at these local ponds that attract interesting birds, even in winter. Meet in the SE corner of the ShopKo Parking lot in Sugarhouse in time to arrange carpools and leave by 9AM. Please call Roberta (274-3058) for updated trip information and to attend.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 7:30AM

OURAY NWR CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

For more information: Diane Penttila at (435)545-2522, ext. 12 or diane_penttila@fws.gov.

Meet at the Refuge Office at 7:30 am. Our challenge with Fish Springs will continue. We have now won two years in a row with last years total 45 species to 40. We've lost some staff at Ouray and will need some extra counters. Some space may be available at the bunkhouse.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, starting times to be determined by team leaders

SALT LAKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Join us in celebrating the 109th anniversary of the longest running citizen science project in the world. Experience the beauty of nature and help scientists understand how birds are faring amid unprecedented environmental challenges.

Our potluck social with team reports and count tally

will begin at 6PM at the Chase Mill in the Tracy Aviary in Liberty Park. Contact Pomera Fronce(272-2755) or pinkstring@xmission.com to obtain further information if you plan or want to participate.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 8:30AM/9AM

FARMINGTON BAY AND NEARBY AREA

Leaders: Bob Huntington and Deedee O'Brien

This monthly visit to Farmington Bay is fun for all because of our comraderie over breakfast; the easy drive & bird-near-car experience; the great scenery in every season, and the GOOD BIRDS ! We share our spotting scopes for good views of even distant birds. As long as the Kaysville Ponds are not frozen, we will include them in this field trip. Meet at 8:30AM for breakfast at the McDonalds's in Centerville (exit 319 from I-15) or by 9AM to carpool. Call Deedee (272-8060) if you plan to attend.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 7AM

AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT II, JORDAN RIVER in SALT LAKE & UTAH COUNTIES

Leaders: Jeanne Le Ber and Ray Smith

Meet at 7AM at Johanna's Kitchen, 9725 South State Street, Sandy (801-566-1762). Assignments will be distributed and groups will start birding at 8AM. To sign up, or for more information, call Jeanne or Ray at 801-532-7384, evenings.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 9:30AM

FISH SPRINGS NWR CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

For more information: Jay Banta. (435)831-5353, ext. 1 or jay_banta@fws.gov

As is tradition now, pre-registered participants will be permitted to stay the night before and the night of the count in our Refuge bunkhouse if they wish. And as always, the group count collation/ wine fest/ Jay's famous chili feed will happen after we finish counting about 5 pm or so.

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 7PM

UTAH BIRDING SERIES:

12 MONTHS AND 300 BIRDS

Speaker: Tim Avery

This will be the first of a series of talks Tim will be giving during the year. His topic for January will be Winter Gulls, Sea Ducks and Southern Utah. Cost: \$5/person

Meetings will be at the Sugarhouse Garden Center

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 9AM

MOUNTAIN DELL RECREATION AREA, PARLEY'S CANYON

Leaders: Jack Clark and Sylvia Gray

We are not sure what the weather will be like, so check the weather forecast and come prepared. We have been surveying this area for the past 4 ½ years and have seen over 100 species! What new birds will we see this year? We'll meet by 9:00AM in the **parking lot just west of the REI on 33rd South and 3285 East** for a morning of birding. Call Jack (255-7989) or Sylvia (532-3486) if you plan to attend.

TIM AVERY BIRDING CLASSES FOR 2009

**The Utah Birding Series: 12 months and 300 birds! When: 1st Monday of every month; 7-9pm
Where: Sugarhouse Garden Center Cost: \$5.00/person/class**

It may be hard to believe, but Utah currently boasts a checklist of more than 440 species of birds. Most years around 350 species are recorded in Utah by various observers, from all over the state. But Utah has never really gotten the attention it deserves on the map for the unique and diverse birding location it truly is. The Great Salt Lake is the centerpiece that is often the hot topic on birding in Utah. For most birders around the United States, that is what people think of when they hear Utah and birding. The mountains are often an overlooked feature, 2nd to the Rockies in Colorado. Our deserts are barren and isolated, lacking much of the tropical flair that Texas and southern Arizona offer. And even our centerpiece, doesn't get the attention it deserves. Most people can't imagine this big, salty, stinky lake hosting millions of shorebirds during fall migration, a truly unique spectacle that is, well hard to imagine.

But Utah is something of an untapped birding gem. Being such a large state, with isolated pockets of urban sprawl, there is a wealth of diverse habitats, and places to bird as far as the eye can see. From the highest peaks in the Uinta Mountains reaching just over 13,000 feet, to the oasis in the Beaver Dam Wash on the northern edge of the Mojave Desert just under 2200 feet, Utah is truly incredible.

Over the next twelve months (2009), I will be giving a guided tour of Utah birds and birding, through photos and my personal experiences. I have been birdwatching in Utah for 14 years, and have spent time in all 29 counties. In 2007 I took most of the year off from work to pursue a goal of seeing 333 species of birds in Utah, traveling to every corner of the state, putting more than 40,000 miles of road time in, and scrutinizing records, and information on Utah birds to maximize the number of species I would see on a month to month basis to reach my goal.

Each month I will offer a two hour class on birding Utah. Each class will cover a list of Utah specialty birds that can be seen in that specific month, with information on where, when, and why these birds are here and how come they are special. I will also cover numerous birding locations, both popular, and some practically unknown to help give coverage to the entire state. In the 12 months, we will cover a list of birds that could be compiled in a given year, as well as try to talk about vagrant birds that have been recorded in the past, including information on when to look for certain types of strays that tend to be more regular than others. By the end of 2009, anyone having come to all 12 classes could see up to 300 species of bird in Utah during the year with the information provided, a little spare time and some gas money.

First Class: January 5 - Winter Gulls, Sea Ducks, and Southern Utah.

Project FeederWatch Benefits Birds and People

Connection with nature promotes wellness

Contact: David Bonter, Project leader Cornell Lab of Ornithology (607) 254-2457, dnb23@cornell.edu
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The 2008-09 season of **Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8** and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges—a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment. “Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and helps generate the world’s largest database on feeder-bird populations,” says project leader David Bonter. “We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows.”

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, *Winter Bird Highlights*.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a membership institution dedicated to interpreting and conserving the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds. Visit the Lab's web site at www.birds.cornell.edu.

January 20: General Meeting

BRAZIL'S PANTANAL - JABIRU TO JAGUAR

with James McIntyre

Brazil's Pantanal is one of the world's largest wetlands. It lies in the heart of South America, south of the Amazon, in the vast lowland basin of the Rio Paraguay and its tributaries. Most of this ~70,000 square mile area (similar in size to the State of Utah, 10x the size of the Everglades) lies in Brazil, but also overlaps portions of Paraguay and Bolivia.

The Pantanal nurtures one of the world's most biologically diverse collections of flora and fauna. It is estimated there are more than 700 bird species, including the endangered Hyacinth Macaw, Harpy Eagle, King Vulture and Jabiru. The ~90 mammal species include Capybara, Giant River Otter, Tapir, Maned Wolf, Armadillo, Anteater, Ocelot and Jaguar. Reptiles include Caiman and Anaconda. In this presentation, we will journey out on three different game drives: on river, over wetlands and at night.

Over 80% of the floodplains are submerged during the rainy season (Oct-May), with water levels rising 2-5 meters. During the dry season, the waters gradually recede and wildlife congregates near ponds and lagoons to find water and food.

Dr. James McIntyre is a former research scientist who has worked in industry, academia and government. He now devotes much of his time to nature and wildlife photography and promoting nature-related science, education, and conservation programs. Some of his pictures may be viewed on the website: www.naturescape.net

GENERAL MEETINGS

By Jennifer Hajj

Have you joined us for a General Meeting yet? If so, you had the chance to learn about all sorts of interesting things. Our mission is to protect and enhance habitat for wild plants and animals, and to maintain healthy ecosystems for wildlife and people. The general meetings feature great guest speakers. GSLA programs are held at the Sugarhouse Garden Center, NE corner of Sugarhouse Park (enter from 2100 South, just west of Highland High.) Doors open at 6:45 PM and the program runs from 7:00 to approximately 8:00 PM. We have refreshments, it's FREE, and everyone is invited! So mark your calendars! General meetings are on the third Tuesday in every month from September through May (excluding December). We'd love to see you at the next General Meeting.



NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS:

by Heather Dove and Melanie Loucks

We welcome you and encourage you to join us at our meetings, field trips and other events and lend your talents as a volunteer on our many projects.

NATIONAL: Ronald Younger, Barbara Whitecar, Theresa Jckowski, Bonnie Clayton, Joan Reid, F Barking, Jennifer Wolff Wood

GSLA: Peter Corroon, Karen Burns, Victor & Renate Westfall, Sue Eyerly, Maxine Garwood, John Houser, Lester Aoki & Ann Kelsey, Sarah Uhle, David Harter, Bob Huntington, Carol & Gene Ertmann



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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Please enroll me as a member of National Audubon Society. Please send Audubon Magazine and my membership card to the address below:

- ___ My check for \$20.00 is enclosed. (Introductory price only)
- ___ My check for \$35.00 is enclosed for membership renewal.

Please clip and send your application and check to:

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BOULDER, CO 80322-1001

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