

Chip Notes

Winter
2025
No. 434



Days Cove Landfill Public Hearing 9/16/25

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CONSERVATION CORNER

The Power of Advocacy and Why We Need Your Help

Kathy Lambrow, Conservation Committee Chair

Environmental challenges and funding shortages are creating stress on vital programs and spaces supporting the birding pastime that we love. We bird for many different reasons, all of which may provide pleasure, fulfill a physical or psychological need and strengthen our connection to nature. **Now, more than ever, we need to express our support for these programs and spaces that need our help.**

The Conservation Committee, along with our individual members, have at different times, taken all the actions below to outline our positions and recommendations regarding environmental issues. Often-times, we hear nothing, but **sometimes** we do, and those wins are satisfying. We rely on our partner organizations to notify us of important issues — The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), Audubon, American Bird Conservancy and the many local nonprofit

and community organizations in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Most importantly, we rely on you, our members, to notify us of relevant issues in your area that you think are important.

Nothing will happen unless we act. I challenge everyone to take just a few minutes or more a month to let someone know how you feel — to champion a cause. It can be as simple as clicking on a link provided

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“Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.”

—Jane Goodall



by advocacy groups such as Audubon or American Bird Conservancy that adds your name to a letter sent to your federal representatives, or even more impactful, one of the following forms:

- Personal letter writing
- Telephone calls
- Attendance at public hearings
- Testimony at public hearings
- Attendance at demonstrations
- Individual meetings with legislators and State and County agency personnel
- Social media — following organizations and posting important issues
- Networking

One of the most important things you can include in your communication is your personal connection to the issue. You simply need to state your position and why it's important to you. You don't necessarily need a lot of facts or science, oftentimes, less is more!



A banded Ring-billed Gull in Cambridge, Maryland (by Bill Hubick)

A current high priority for Audubon and MOS is the effort to restore funding for the Bird Banding Lab and the Breeding Bird Survey. Funding for these vital programs under the U.S. Geological Survey has been completely eliminated in the current Federal budget. Both programs provide such important scientific statistics used to monitor populations, study bird behavior and inform conservation decisions. An easy

way to make your opinion known to your House and Senate Representatives is to complete the form at [Audubon.org/ProtectBirdScience](https://www.audubon.org/ProtectBirdScience).

Please contact Kathy Lambrow (KLambrow@comcast.net) if you have any questions on how to get involved or if you have any issues that you wish to bring to the attention of the Baltimore Bird Club Conservation Committee.

WELCOME, PAULA!



Please welcome Paula Cary McLean as the co-chair with Mirat Shah of the Baltimore Bird Club Trip Committee.

Over the past 45 years Paula has enjoyed meeting and birding with so many great people who are members of the BBC. She is very happy to be working with Mirat and all the trip leaders to make sure that all details of each trip are properly addressed.

Paula remarks how much new energy the Baltimore Bird Club has with such a great influx of young birders. This infusion of youth greatly complements the existing long-time members of the BBC.



Birding Baltimore Harbor from Rash Field Park



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Bird Baltimore City - Urban Birding at Its Finest

Joe Corcoran, BBC President

The Baltimore Bird Club is scheduling more and more birding walks and events within the limits of Baltimore City. The club conducts over 200 events each year in the Baltimore County/Baltimore City area (our chapter territory) and more and more (over 60% now) are in the city. And the more we bird Baltimore, the more special birding places we find.

We've developed a great partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library where we lead at least three walks each spring and three walks each fall migration

season, all which start and end at any one of the 21 local community branches or even



↑ American Goldfinch attracted to newly planted Thistle at Rash Field Park (photo courtesy of Liz Varga)

the Main Central Library. We've birded from the Cherry Hill, Roland Park, Walbrook, Brooklyn branches, and more. No matter where the branch is, there are patches of grass, trees, woods, and brush that hold a good variety of birds, and we find them. These are great opportunities for local community folk to experience birds in their neighborhoods, maybe for the first time. We provide experienced leaders and the library provides binoculars for those that don't have them.

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Some of my favorite Baltimore City birding areas:

Patterson Park • an urban oasis, that migrating birds going north in spring and south in fall find, within the concrete and asphalt city area next to the harbor, and stop to rest and feed before continuing on their journey. The National Audubon Society and Friends of Patterson Park maintain the boat lake and surrounding areas specifically for birds and birding habitat.

Masonville Cove • the nation's first Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, and home to a green building nature center and beautiful waterfront public trails. It's great for waterbirds and migrants.



Mike Hudson conducting bird banding at Masonville Cove

Gwynn's Falls/Leakin Park • over 1200 acres of beautiful nature, and the walk from the Winan's Meadow parking area to the Orianda Mansion is fabulous for Spring migrants.

Herring Run Park • a 375 acre peaceful outdoor space nestled in the heart of Baltimore City, and a birding gem in the spring.

Baltimore Harbor • including Rash Field Park, Federal Hill Park, the National Aquarium Wetlands, and the harbor itself. Rash Field Park is being developed with all native natural plants and trees, many specifically planted to attract birds. Federal Hill is awesome in fall

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NEW FOR BALTIMORE!

The Baltimore City Audubon Christmas Bird Count

New for Baltimore City, we are participating in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count with a count circle that includes all of the city! The way the count works is that each year, within two weeks of Christmas, on a single day, teams of birders count all the species, and the number of birds of each species, within a fixed 15 mile diameter circle. The data that is collected from these counts is used for bird research purposes, but it also a good birding community event

that brings birders together. And beginners are welcome!

It's all day long on Saturday, December 20th. Contact Libby Errickson (elizabeth.errickson@gmail.com) and Tim Carney (timcarney83@gmail.com) to be assigned to an area within the circle. Birders of all levels are welcome, just let us know your level and experience, and we will assign you to an appropriate location. Beginners will be teamed with an experienced sector leader.



Enoch Pratt/BBC walk participants at Cherry Hill Branch

and spring, the new Aquarium wetlands are already attracting new species to the harbor, and the harbor itself is a year-round home to waterbirds like ducks, geese, herons, cormorants, and different species of gulls and terns.

Planned Enoch Pratt Walks Spring 2026

Check the Baltimore Bird Club website, <https://baltimorebirdclub.org>, as spring approaches, or check with the local library branch to get the information about any of these walks.

- 1) Light Street Branch (Baltimore Harbor)
- 2) Edmondson Avenue Branch (Gwynns Falls nearby)
- 3) Patterson Park Branch
- 4) Johnston Square Branch (Greenmount Cemetery nearby)

NEW MEMBERS

- | | |
|--|---|
| Keegan Beard • Baltimore | Philip Aaron • Catonsville |
| Amaya Brown • Baltimore | Howard Patterson • Catonsville |
| Jennifer Cantrell • Baltimore | Lilian Saul • Columbia |
| Elizabeth and Bradley DeRoos • Baltimore | Samantha Levy and Travis Crane • Ellicott City |
| Carl Engstrom • Baltimore | Caleb Norton • Freeland |
| Amy Forsberg and James Reaves • Baltimore | Allison Phillips and Anthony Borruso • Glen Burnie |
| Fernando Guillen • Baltimore | Rameen Molavi • Lutherville |
| Taylor Gulotta and Hannah Palmatary • Baltimore | Sarah Sheckells • Phoenix |
| Michael Jonnes • Baltimore | Tamara Todd • Reisterstown |
| Phillip Kiley • Baltimore | Elizabeth Freiday • Shady Side |
| Nancy Morris • Baltimore | Kara Koppanyi • Timonium |
| Regina Shock and Frederick Frey • Baltimore | Sharon Bottcher and Joan Peddicord • Towson |
| Sam Slottow • Baltimore | Bradley Grier • Towson |
| Daniel Stevenson • Baltimore | Mary Holmead • Towson |
| Margaret Trombly • Baltimore | Nick Downs • Washington, DC |
| | Megan Lisk • Manasquan, NJ |



IN MEMORIAM

Gail Adaire Frantz *November 15, 1934–March 22, 2025*

By Marcia Watson with assistance from Jim Speicher and Terry Ross

Former Baltimore Bird Club member Gail Frantz passed away on March 22, 2025, at the age of 90. She was a member of our club for 35 years, from 1979 through 2014. Gail and her husband Harry and their children lived on Old Hanover Road north of Reisterstown.

Gail is remembered by those who knew her as a cheery soul, always smiling, and always willing to chip in to keep club activities running smoothly. She was said to always “work at warp speed” and took on many roles in the club. She served as a Baltimore chapter representative to the Maryland Ornithological Society Board of Directors in the late 1990s. Also for a time in the 1990s, she was in charge of organizing field trips for the club, and served herself as a field trip leader for many years.

One of Gail’s major contributions was organizing a daylong event at Cylburn Arboretum called “Cylburn Is for the Birds—a Celebration of Urban Birds,” held on May 1, 2011. The impetus for the Cylburn event was the

unveiling of the “trail tracker” eBird kiosk that had been recently purchased by the Baltimore Bird Club and installed at Cylburn. The day featured an official ribbon-cutting at the kiosk, a morning bird walk led by Bill Hubick, a breakfast after the bird walk, brief speeches by dignitaries, an appearance by the Orioles’ mascot, a day-long Big Sit, a Scales and Tales presentation, a native plant sale, education stations for all ages, and an entire day of activities for children, including building bird houses, bird art, food and other vendors. The event drew an estimated crowd of 250 to 300 people, and brought the Baltimore Bird Club an official commendation for holding the event, from Baltimore City Council member Sharon C. Middleton (6th District).

[See *Chip Notes Spring 2011*](#) for Gail’s article calling for volunteers to help run the event, and Joan Cwi’s follow-up article reporting on the successful event in [Chip Notes Summer 2011](#).

Gail became editor of *Chip Notes* in fall 2003, when Steve Sanford stepped down; Gail was succeeded as editor a year later by Carolyn Webb. But Gail is probably best remembered as

the author of the *Chip Notes* column “Backyard Birds,” a recurring feature from 1995 through 2005. Through her column and her other activities, Gail kept her finger on the pulse of birding activity in the club.

For “Backyard Birding,” Gail compiled sightings sent to her by people from all parts of Baltimore City and County. Remember that in 1995, the internet was just getting started, and eBird wasn’t established until 2002. Although Gail herself had email in 1995, many people didn’t have email outside of work, and other forms of social media didn’t yet exist. So in the early days of Gail’s column, sighting reports came to her the old-fashioned way: by written letter through US mail or perhaps by a phone call to her landline (no cell phones, no text messages!). Gail put in a lot of work to pass on the news of notable birds appearing in yards around the county and city.

Soon, though, birders began sending Gail news not just of yard birds, but also good birds in the city’s and county’s parks. Consequently, in 2001, Gail expanded her column to

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“Backyard Birding and Beyond,” and reports from Cromwell Valley Park, Lake Roland, Prettyboy, Fort McHenry, Oregon Ridge, and other favorite birding spots began to grace the pages of the column. Every once in a while, “Beyond” was extended even further: to neighboring counties or maybe even someone’s out-of-state or out-of-country birding travel.

Gail also covered other news for *Chip Notes*. Over the years, she wrote about the planning for Hart-Miller Island; summarized the club’s evening lectures at Cylburn; did a special feature on the Summer Tanagers at Soldiers Delight (first noticed in 1995 by Keith Eric Costley’s eight-year-old daughter Lauren!), and introduced naturalists working at the local parks. One of her last articles, in December 2005, was about attracting butterflies to one’s yard by providing a puddle of mashed bananas soaked in beer. In all, she provided 70 columns for *Chip Notes* over the ten years of 1995–2005, with a few articles in the years afterward.

Gail had a notable backyard bird herself, when a Rufous Hummingbird visited her yard in Reisterstown. The hummer was first reported on eBird by the late Bob Ringler on November 12, 2013; no doubt Gail called Bob to confirm her identification. Bob’s note for the sighting, and later eBird notes by others, indicate that the bird was banded by David Holmes and Bruce Peterjohn. The Rufous remained around Gail’s yard at least until December 13, 2013, when it was photographed and reported on eBird one last time, by Kurt Schwarz.

Gail was interviewed by the *Baltimore Sun* for an article published on April 10, 2005 called “Springtime States of Mind,” in which an assortment of Baltimore-area residents were asked what springtime means to them. Gail replied, “It’s all about the birds. Are they leaving? Are they coming? Are they breeding? ... This morning I went out in the back yard and there were a surplus of 400 migrating tundra swans... I heard them first and then I

saw them come over.... They were just spectacular.” The article continued: “Earlier, Frantz had been watching a junco that ‘had learned how to eat out of the suet container.’ She anticipates the imminent arrival of other beloved species: ‘The great crested flycatcher, the house wrens and the bluebirds. Then I love when the swallows come, the tree swallows and the barn swallows.’”

Gail’s friend Jim Speicher, a member of the Frederick Bird Club, remembers that Gail had interests apart from birding: Jim knew her through their shared love of American Stoneware and Redware pottery. Jim remembers that Gail was always entertaining and that she loved birds and dogs. Jim also remembers Gail saying that she and Harry moved to Maryland from Ohio and were shocked to find that racial segregation was still a reality in Maryland when they arrived. Gail was retired from teaching music, a profession shared by her husband Harry. She is survived by Harry and their children.

Many thanks to Jim Speicher for notifying us of Gail’s passing, and for helping to find information about Gail. Also thanks to Terry Ross, who provided a link to an [online index of Gail’s Chip Notes contributions](#). The best way to learn about Gail is through her writings, so please visit the link and read a few of her articles.



TRIP REPORTS

August - October 2025

August 24, 2025: Loch Raven-Paper Mill and Ashland Flats

Sam Tillman

Our annual hunt for inland shorebirds was fun and productive, turning up seven species between our two destinations, Ashland and Paper Mill flats. While our first stop at Ashland flats looked ideal, with wide expanses of exposed mud, there were few birds to be found there. We were treated to fabulous eye-level looks of a preening Green Heron, which is always welcome. Our second stop at Paper Mill flats was more fruitful, providing good views of four sandpiper species (Least, Spotted, Solitary, and Semipalmated), Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, and Killdeer. Overall a good haul, and nice to see that Paper Mill flats is still providing excellent opportunities to observe shorebirds at close range and that the trail is being well maintained by the Baltimore birding community.

August 29, 2025: Hart-Miller Island

Tim Carney

Birding tours at Hart-Miller Island are hosted by the Maryland

Environmental Service (MES) on behalf of the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). August 29 offered great weather and a great assortment of birds. Particularly notable was the spectacular collection of shorebirds, including uncommon to rare species like American Avocet (120), Black-bellied Plover (1), Hudsonian Godwit (1), Marbled Godwit (4), Wilson's Phalarope (2), Red-necked Phalarope (1), White-rumped Sandpiper (15), and Western Sandpiper (2). The group also picked out 3 Common Terns in a group of 200+ Caspian Terns, and found an unusually high number of Blackburnian Warblers (6+) and a Wilson's Warbler



↑ American Avocet (by [Rhododendrites](#), own work, CC BY-SA 4.0)

along the State Park nature trail. 80 species, 19 birders including MES driver

September 2, 2025: Cromwell Valley Park

Tim Carney

The first Tuesday CVP walk of the season occurred on another perfect "fall" day. The park was very birdy. Warbler diversity was unfortunately low (only 10 species) but the group managed to score excellent views of a Mourning Warbler and a Nashville Warbler next to the lime kiln. We also heard and briefly saw a Veery above the kiln, followed by great views of a Yellow-throated Vireo in the same area. On the walk out, we heard a Common Raven over the Greenhouse Path. This turned into views of one, then two, then FIVE ravens interacting in mid-air over us! 51 species, 36+ birders

September 12, 2025: Hart-Miller Island

Tim Carney

Another great trip to HMI hosted by MES on behalf of MPA. The

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long-staying Black Swan at Bombay Hook in Delaware somehow found its way to HMI in early September and provided great views today. There was an obvious influx of waterfowl since the last trip, with double-digit numbers of Blue-winged Teal (50), Northern Shoveler (90), Gadwall (30), American Wigeon (10), Mallard (90), Green-winged Teal (20), distant/unidentified dabblers (120), and Ruddy Duck (10) all being present. As expected, the shorebirds stole the show. American Avocets were still present in huge numbers (we estimated 160). Other uncommon to rare species included Marbled Godwit (4), Wilson's Phalarope (5), Red-necked Phalarope (1), Red Knot (3), White-rumped Sandpiper (26, carefully counted by Carl Engstrom), and Western Sandpiper (2). Carl also spotted a Merlin that we watched fly in front of the bus and out over the bay. Migration! Joe Hanfman expertly discovered a late Prothonotary Warbler on the State Park nature trail which is one of <10 records for the island. (Joe also found an almost-as-rare pair of House Sparrows in the same area.) The Prothonotary was one of 16 warblers which also included Tennessee, Cape May, Blackburnian, and Pine. 96 (!!!!!) species, 19 birders including MES driver



↑ A Philadelphia Vireo in Howard Co.
(by Bill Hubick)

September 20, 2025: BBC Picnic at Oregon Ridge Park

Tim Carney

Several of us ventured down to Oregon Branch to look for Philadelphia Vireos which were unusually common this season. (The stretch of Oregon Branch west of the main road is one of the best spots in the county to find this species.) Mirat Shah quickly spotted the first one, which turned into 2, which turned into 4 (!) in the same tree. We actually tallied 6 in this area but conservatively counted 4. We checked the stream on the east side of the road and found at least 2, possibly 4 more Philadelphias over here. So—at least 6, possibly 10 total along the stream today! Other highlights included a flyby Merlin, a flyover Common Nighthawk, 6 Swainson's Thrushes, and 1

Tennessee Warbler. 46 species, 27+ birders out looking (and probably many more present at the picnic)

September 23, 2025: Hart-Miller Island

Tim Carney

Cal Liddell (MES) led the tour today. Tim Carney was onsite for his bird census and checked the shorebirds after the birding tour left that general area. The birds shuffled a bit and Tim found a RUFF in the mix. He quickly called Cal and excitedly told the group to come back. They made it in time to see the Ruff fairly close to the road. Alex Pellegrini swore the bird wasn't there when the club parsed through the shorebirds, which is totally believable considering how much turnover there is in that area! Frank Marengi spotted the island's second Clay-colored Sparrow at the entrance to the State Park nature trail, and the tour also found the island's second Barred Owl in a small copse of trees along the north cell—a definite migrant! Other highlights included the continuing Black Swan, American Avocet (120), Black-bellied Plover (8), American Golden Plover (2), Marbled Godwit (1), Wilson's

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Phalarope (2), Baird's Sandpiper (1), White-rumped Sandpiper (30), Lesser Black-backed Gull (4), and Cape May Warbler (1). 89 species, 21 birders including MES driver

October 10, 2025:
Hart-Miller Island

Tim Carney

Another great tour. The group started on the crossdike, surveying a nearly overwhelming



↑ A Black-bellied Plover on Assateague Island, Maryland (by Bill Hubick)

amount of waterfowl in the south cell. They estimated 250 American Wigeons alone! There were still 90 American Avocets in the north cell, along with some other uncommon shore-birds like Black-bellied Plover and American Golden Plover (1 each) and White-rumped Sandpiper (5). Ruby-crowned Kinglets were everywhere—the group estimated 30, 15 of which were

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WINTER BIRDS WORD SEARCH

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 Y M F G Q F R V N O C A R O L I N A W R E N J O O

Find these birds across, down and diagonally, (but not backwards):

- Eastern Towhee
- Dark-eyed Junco
- American Goldfinch
- House Finch
- Purple Finch
- Chipping Sparrow
- House Sparrow
- Carolina Chickadee
- Carolina Wren
- Eastern Bluebird
- Northern Cardinal
- Tufted Titmouse
- Mourning Dove
- European Starling
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Blue Jay
- Common Grackle



on the State Park nature trail. Other unusual species included Eastern Bluebird (1), Common Raven (1), American Pipit (2), White-crowned Sparrow (4), Nashville Warbler (1). Tim Carney also found a Lincoln's Sparrow earlier in the morning during scouting. 93 species (!!!), 22 birders including MES driver/guide

October 19, 2025: Hydes Road Park

Tim Carney

A perfect fall morning greeted the group on the annual sparrow walk at HRP. We tallied 9 species of sparrows including White-crowned Sparrow (5, all immatures) and Lincoln's Sparrow (3). Both of these uncommon spe-



Common Ravens in Garrett Co. (by Bill Hubick)

cies provided excellent views in the old beaver pond, which dried up over the summer and is now almost fully vegetated—and full of birds! Two of the best species were unfortunately only seen by a few participants: Mirat Shah

spotted a Blue-headed Vireo and Tim Carney watched a pair of Common Ravens fly over the road after the walk. Otherwise, it was a very birdy and pleasant walk with “fall” written all over it. 51 species, 20 birders



Immature Eastern White-crowned Sparrow in Kent Co. (by Bill Hubick)

Reports from the BBC Youth/Family Program

Daisy Sudano

The BBC Youth/Family Program has been limited since Ms. Daisy Sudano, the Director, has been recuperating from a couple surgeries but was able to do a couple outings this Fall with the help of her fellow birder, Ray.

In September the BBC Youth/Family Program was represented at the Annual Fairwood Forest Hawk event held on Sept. 20th.

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We had bird activities, free giveaways and of course the “Hawk Match” game for prizes.

Our President Joe stopped by before the picnic and we both got to see (meet) a lifer...the Baltimore Nighthawks, which is a women’s tackle football league. GO NIGHTHAWKS!

The highlight of the day is when falconer William Dieng brought out his Goshawk and one of his apprentices had his Kestrel.

On Oct. 11th we were at the 1st Annual Baltimore Birding Bash held at Masonville Cove. We had lots of fun activities, the Eagle head made an appearance, and of course the ever so popular “Hawk Match” game for prizes.

The highlight of the day was the bird banding thanks to Mike Hudson, Program Manager for Birds of Urban Baltimore (B.Ur.B). Every time he’d come back from checking the nets, they’d have several bags of birds to be banded. A “lifer” for the Masonville Cove site was a Scarlet Tanager. To our amazement it was already in its winter plumage which is green so it looked like someone’s escaped parrot! I got the thrill of letting go one of the banded Catbirds.

We also had some successful bird walks thanks to our very own Tim, who managed to ID over 10 species within just a 10 foot radius. A thrill to some new birders.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The BBC’s annual January Dinner will be held on Sunday, January 18 at Cylburn Arboretum (time TBD).

Stay tuned for more details!



On Oct. 19th the BBC Youth/Family Program was represented at the Hawks Hollow Farm for their Annual Fall Festival. Of course I had the “Hawk Match” game which was a huge hit with the 100s of kids who walked by. Free lollipops always bring them in :)

Chip Notes, newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club, is published quarterly.

Current issue: **Winter 2025**

Editor: JoAnn Bochmann

Designer: Kristen Argenio, [Ideal Design](#)

Submit materials to: JoAnn Bochmann at jlbochmann@gmail.com

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is **Saturday, January 24.**

Moving or email change? Send update to Terry Ross at trosstva@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The membership year is September 1—August 30. Only new members joining after March 1 will be members for the upcoming year as well as the remainder of the year that they enroll.



The most convenient way to join is at the [Maryland Ornithological Society website](#) where you may pay your dues using PayPal.



Or, you may join by mail. Make check payable to “MOS” and mail with completed application, which can be found at https://baltimorebirdclub.org/MembershipApplication_website.pdf

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