



Conservation Society of Sierra Leone

Report on the Migratory Waterbirds Training at Tasso Island



Group photo MWB Training at Tasso Island

Coordinated by Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL)

Introduction

The training was planned and conducted by CSSL in collaboration with MAFs and NPAA with funding from the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) as the need to increase the number of bird counters/monitors in Sierra Leone. The capacity of the trainees was built and strengthened to participate effectively in the conservation of migratory birds in the PRCM region.

The Programme, Strengthening Networks for the Conservation of Migratory Birds and Their Habitats along the West Coast of Africa requires strong capacity in the coastal zone of West Africa (Sierra Leone) for migratory bird research, conservation and management. This can be accomplished mainly through a strong network of environmental NGOs in the PRCM region with capacity to contribute actively to migratory bird conservation. There are obviously significant differences within and between countries in their knowledge, skills and experiences to meet the challenges involved in this work. Therefore the need for training at various levels is most essential. For this reason a comprehensive series of targeted training events have been detailed as one of the core activities of this Programme. This being so, a national training programme was conducted for Sierra Leone at Tasso Island Ecotourism Centre in January 2020.

Objective

The objective of this training was to build and strengthen capacity of target beneficiaries and stakeholders including CBOs/NGOs, government institutions, research and training institutions and decision makers in migratory bird conservation in Sierra Leone.

Training Report

The Training targeted thirty-one participants from different institutions, staff from National Protected Area Authority (NPAA), CSSL, Fourah Bay College-USL, Njala University, students and community representatives from Bonthe, Shengi, Konakrydee, Rogbangban, Mambolo, River No.2 and Tasso Island participated.

During the Training, trainees learnt about waterbird species and their seasonal migratory patterns across the flyway (East Atlantic Flyway). For the first bird learners it was a great opportunity to have known within the shortest possible time to learn about the different types of waterbird species, wetlands and their breeding patterns. Also, among participants over thirty percent (30%) were women which inspired them about the training.

Since the training was made up of staff, students and experts it was deliberated at the end of the training to evaluate students based on performance, as not everyone who participated in the training was able to take part in the January 2020 waterbird counts. Moses Lusanie and Jesse S. Kanu were selected and then participated in the January 2020 Waterbird count based on their extraordinary performance and passion demonstrated during the course.

The facilitators and training content was fantastic for this training. The international experts were supported by two national counterparts, who conducted the training making extensive use of the WOW Flyways Training Kit and other existing resources. Furthermore, participants not only learnt about the different waterbird species, but also learnt about the different field equipment that is needed in carrying out bird surveys, such as binoculars, telescope & tripod, cameras, tally counter, GPS receiver and Field guides.



Photos: Training equipment, demonstration and identification of field equipment

The training was not only limited to Tasso Island, but also other places such as Tar-Green, Pepel and Bunce Island were visited on different occasions using the Gladi Gladi boat, where participants further learnt about the hazards of environmental pollution and its effects on both human, birds and aquatic lives.

On day five of the training, a quiz competition was held to understand how much trainees have learnt about wetlands, flyways, waterbirds and some terrestrial bird species. The quiz questions were prepared around what was done during the training. The CEO of Tasso Ecotourism center, Mr. Peter Nelson, one of the organizers of the quiz competition dramatized the behavior of a bird species when approached by humans or other objects and the way it reacted upon flying. He described the bird at that moment as making a very scary sound while flying in the air, calling 'Keh-keh-keh'. He continued saying any group that is able to identify this bird will be awarded with the sum of one hundred thousand Leones (Le 100,000).

Other quiz questions includes stating the number of waterbird species that participants have learnt, the number of flyways, type of wetlands, importance of wetlands, number of wetlands in Sierra Leone, migratory patterns, breeding season and changes in sea level (rise and fall of tides) etc. The quiz competition was won by group five who successfully identified Mr. Nelson's bird which was the Double-spurred Francolin and also scored the highest marks in the competition.



Photos: showing the process of the quiz competition, organizers, announcement of the result and the winners

In addition, the training was organized in a unique natural setting devoid of overcrowding, environmental degradation, large scale fishing and mining activities, and overall the setting was good for the training. The training center provides opportunities for trainees to learn about the importance of wetlands and its contributions to the environment. Tasso Island is a wetland environment, made up of fresh and salt water with different species of plants, animals, birds and fishes etc. At the end of the training it was suggested that the Island provides good natural setting for subsequent trainings of this nature.

Evaluation of the course

Evaluation of any training workshop is important because it helps to determine how successful is the training and also the challenges experienced so that they could be addressed in subsequent time.

Evaluation was done by individual trainees present for the training. An evaluation form was printed out containing a few parameters based on the satisfaction and expectation of trainees to evaluate:

1. The training facilitators
2. Content of the workshop
3. Venue
4. Food
5. Field work

The data was then processed and analysed in excel worksheets, and bar charts generated to show the individual scores for each parameter.

Chart: 1. The level of satisfaction of participants

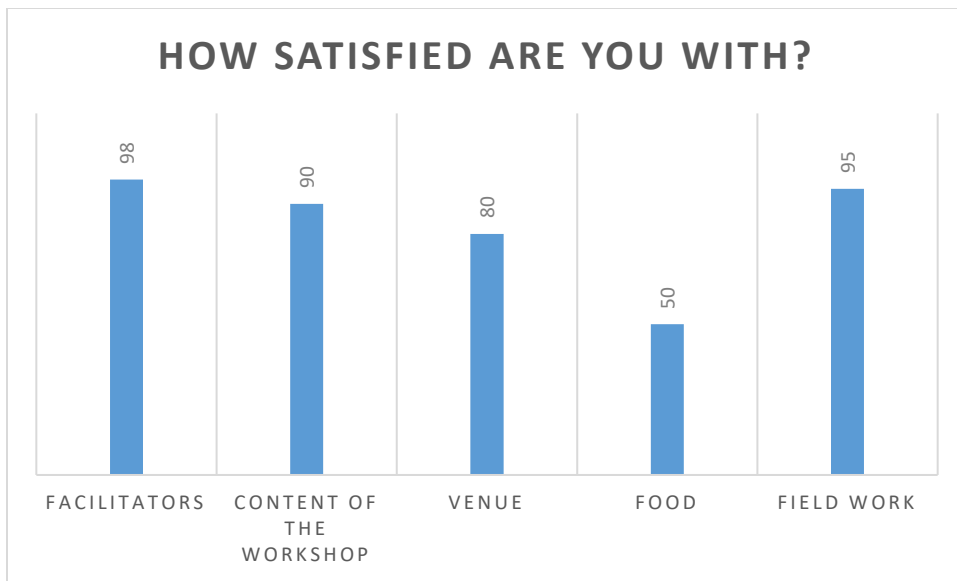
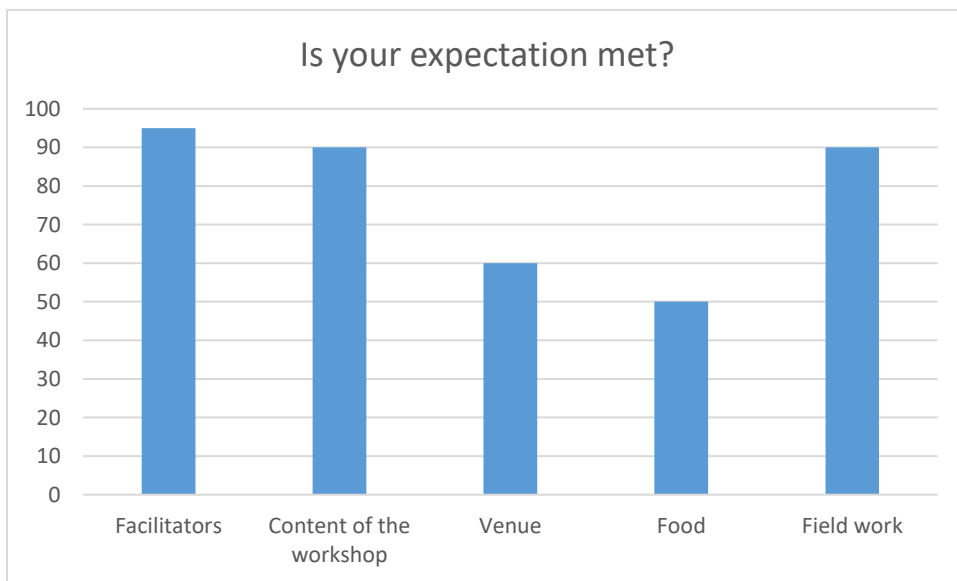


Chart: 2. The level of expectation of participants



For both satisfaction and expectation, training facilitators scored the highest, followed by field work and content of the workshop, while venue and food are rank fourth and fifth.

Lessons Learnt

- i. Trainees for the first time were able to identify and understand the different types of waterbirds and their migratory patterns
- ii. The training venue was ideal for such training but improvement is needed in terms of food, rooms, beddings and training centre
- iii. The boat used for the field trips was large enough to carry many people at a time but too slow for survey purpose
- iv. Even though Tasso is an Island, deforestation was evidence and other environmental degradations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion participants appreciated and were satisfied how the training was done. The following recommendations were made:

- i. To organize follow up training for the same participants for better understanding of the course
- ii. The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative should provide a boat for CSSL, which participants can use for future training and practice purposes
- iii. Participants should be able to participate in IWC counts in subsequent programmes, which will enable them to strengthen their identification skills and join the network
- iv. Funds should be transferred earlier for proper planning and hiring of boats and vehicles
- v. WSFI should provide special funds to ensure the participation of trainees in subsequent waterbird censuses.

Annex 1: Overview of the Training

The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) through funds from the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) held training on waterbird and wetland management for bird watchers and learners at Tasso Island Ecotourism Centre. The training targeted 31 members from various environmental institutions; MDAs, agencies, Universities and community representatives along fishing estuaries in Sierra Leone all participated.

Day 1: The Coordinator of the training, Mr. Papanie Bai Sesay welcomed all participants and donor partners from WSFI for honoring CSSL's invitation to attend this important symposium. He maintained that the objective of the training is to strengthen the network for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats along the coast of Sierra Leone. The CSSL Board President made a brief statement on behalf of CSSL. Mr. Charles Showers welcomed

donor partners and participants by asserting his acknowledgement and blessed the workshop to proceed. He said involving community people will help them to take good records of migratory birds and also knowing more birds in their various communities.

Mr. Marc Van Roomen, representative of WSFI, introduced bird monitoring. He said it is important for people to understand the value and importance of bird species in their country, and WSFI in partnership with CSSL is undertaking this drive for Sierra Leone. He reiterated that for Sierra Leone the country has reunited coastal wetlands which are very important for this case. Four case studies, namely (i) Ecotourism (ii) Fishery Management (iii) Estuary Management/ Pollution were developed and assigned to the five groups and each group did their presentation on their various topic of discussion. The importance of monitoring waterbirds in the management of fisheries was also discussed, as waterbird monitoring can show general indications of fish stocks.

Day 2: Mr. Sesay appreciated participants for giving sound recaps from what they learned in day one. A presentation on bird watching equipment was facilitated by Mr. Showers, who showed some equipment such as binoculars, telescope & tripod, cameras, tally counter, GPS Receiver, Note Pad, Pen/Pencils and Field guides to participants and identified their importance on bird watching. These tools are very necessary for accurate scientific research, and bird watching equipment should always be taken care of. He advised that bird watchers and learners should take cognizance of the use of tissue or lens wipes to clean up lenses and protect them from heavy shock, which can damage the lenses. Safety measures in bird watching were also discussed.

A further presentation on the importance of birds and bird monitoring was facilitated by Mr. Marc Van Roomen. He said wetland birds are very important in any coastline/ society, and they must be properly monitored, as is recommended by wetland bird convention policies. Bird monitoring survey reports can help people to carry out their research; e.g. some data can indicate locations for fish. He deliberated on the strategies involved in monitoring coastal wetlands and birds in Sierra Leone. Strategies involve different habitats and different methods that encompasses the following components: mudflats with visible low tide roosts; mudflats with mangroves, mangrove areas, rice fields, fresh water marshes etc. The materials needed for bird monitoring include cars, boats, binoculars & telescopes, GPS, Photo equipment, Identification guides, note books, Laptop for data entry and material for camping. Introduction to site management in Sierra Leone was presented by Mr. Showers, who said it is very important to have a site management in doing conservation work. He outlined the following as consideration in carrying out site management activities such as; human activities (negative), Surveys+ Mapping, resources, different site users/ Stakeholders/ Partners, Zoning activities, site management plan, cooperation for the benefit of all and biodiversity, Support needed, capacity building, equipment, site support group and National resources.

Mr. Richard Hearn, a Wetland Bird Watching Expert representing Wetlands Wildfowl Trust (WWT) made a presentation on the Introduction to wetlands. The term wetland is used in

different ways by different disciplines but the most acceptable definition is the globally adopted definition by the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention), which defines “wetlands as areas of marsh, fen peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters”

Mr. Hearn continued by naming the types of wetlands, including inland natural wetlands, Marine/ Coastal natural wetlands and Human made wetlands.

The benefits that Wetlands provide to people include:

- Food: fish, wild game
- Storage & provision of fresh water
- Climate regulation
- Water storage; groundwater recharge
- Flood control
- Spiritual& recreational

The Importance of wetlands to waterbirds include:

- Habitat
- Food
- Breeding ground
- Roost sites
- Water
- Space

Wetlands Management action plans should address the following issues:

- Site identification
- Zonation of activities
- Resources
- Cooperation for the benefit of all and for biodiversity
- Support needed
- Training people
- Equipment
- National resources
- By-laws

Discussion and feedback were made and we went out on a short field trip around the Tasso Island ecotourism camp.

Day 3: Recap of day two activities was done, and results of the quiz on wetland management was announced. The declared group winner was group 5, and they were given Le 100,000 by the managing director, Tasso Island Ecotourism center. Mr. Marc Van Roomen presented the

topic of the East Atlantic Flyway; there are several flyways for migrants birds in the world, but he limited his presentation on the East Atlantic Flyway, which Sierra Leone and the rest of West Africa are a part of. Every year, thousands of birds use this flyway during their migration periods; flyways are very important and birds have been using them for many thousands of years, including waterbirds.

During his presentation about the identification of waders, Mr. Richard Hearn drew participants' attentions to certain features such as colour of the bird, shape, bill formation and size. Every birder needs to know these features in order to be able to identify different bird species. Every bird belongs to a Kingdom, phylum, class, family, genus and species. Larger waterbirds include the Cranes, Herons, Storks, Ibises, Spoonbills, Hamerkop and Flamingoes. Knowing such bird families helps people to identify birds and become experts in the field. After a Q &A session, we went out on a field trip on the Gladi gladi boat.

Day 4: Field trip to Tar green. At 9:44am, we went on a bird watching and identification trip to the Island on the Gladi-gladi boat. This trip lasted for 4 hours; we returned at 1: 00pm for lunch and continued with presentations of the previous field trip around Tasso and the outcome of the Tar green trip. Mr. Sesay asked every group to come out and present their findings to the facilitators. Evaluation forms were also given to each group to be filled about the outcome of days 1, 2, 3 and 4 training activities. A group report was then given about the outcome of the visits to Tasso Island and Tar green, the bird species found on their trips and the negative human activities in the area.

List of bird species found in both trips for all groups around Tasso Island and Tar green.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Common Ringed Plover | 15. Grey Heron |
| 2. Common Sandpiper | 16. Little Egret |
| 3. African Fish Eagle | 17. Palmnut Vulture |
| 4. Pied Kingfisher | 18. Shining-blue kingfisher |
| 5. Whimbrel | 19. Blue-cheeked Bee-eater |
| 6. Western Reef Egret | 20. Osprey |
| 7. Common Wattle eye | 21. Common Greenshank |
| 8. Yellow-billed Kite | 22. Long-tailed Cormorant |
| 9. Bar-tailed Godwit | 23. Little Tern |
| 10. Hamerkop | 24. Royal Tern |
| 11. African Harrier Hawk | 25. Sandwich Tern |
| 12. Common Redshank | 26. Ruddy Turnstone |
| 13. Great Egret | 27. Curlew Sandpiper |
| 14. Grey Plover | |

In summary about 1,005 Birds of 33 Species was recorded.

During the tour, the following human activities which have adverse effects on the general vegetation in the Island were recorded:

- Fuel wood collection
- Establishment of permanent crops
- Forest clearing for the construction of dwelling houses
- Pollution wastes especially plastics along the banks of Tasso Island and Tagrin.

Day 5: Mr. Alhaji Sheka facilitated the recap of the training/ workshop; he started by appreciating the good facilitation of CSSL and the funding partners WSFI for staging such a wonderful training, which he described as a way of learning new skills and gaining more experience in wetland birds. He said this comes at the right time, more especially for Bird Watchers and Learners. He went further to ask participants about what they have learnt from the training. Responding, participants gave positive contributions towards the recap process and recommendations were made for subsequent programs and pled for more participants to be invited in upcoming events for our country Sierra Leone. Mr. Papanie Bai Sesay thanked Mr. Alhaji Sheka for making such a great facilitation. He continued to the next stage of the programme which was the evaluation process. Mr. Sesay distributed evaluation forms to participants and asked them to do their evaluation about the training. Administrative arrangements were made by Mrs. Fatmata Sansui Ball. The event climaxed with a vote of thanks which was done by Mrs. Mariama Kamara, Environmental Education Officer CSSL, who extended special thanks and appreciation on behalf of CSSL to participants and the funders of the training, the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, for giving such a wonderful supports to CSSL and prayed for more funding for subsequent programs.

Annex: II Program

Conservation Society of Sierra Leone

Training workshop on waterbird and wetland management training for Sierra Leone 15th to 19th December 2019

No	TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Day 1 Sunday 15th December 2019			
	12:30 – 13:30	Arrival of participants through the Gladi Gladi boat (from Kissy Terminal to Tasso)	
	14:30 – 14:40	Registration	All participants
	14:40 – 14: 45	Prayers	All participants
	14:45 – 15:15	Introductions	Papanie Bai Sesay
	15:15 – 15:25	Welcome address	Charles Showers
	15:25 – 15:45	Objective/s of the workshop	Papanie
	15:45 – 16:15	Introduction to bird monitoring	Marc van Roomen
Day 2 Monday 16 December 2, 2019			
1	9:00 – 9:30	Registration	All participants
	9:30 – 9: 35	Prayers	All participants
	9:35 – 10:00	Recap of Day 1	Papanie
	10:00 – 10:15	Birdwatching equipment	Charles Showers
	10:15-10:30	TEA BREAK	
	10:30 – 11:00	The importance of birds & bird monitoring	Marc
	11:01 – 11:55	Introduction to site management in SL	Charles Showers
	11:55 – 12:15	Introduction to wetlands	Richard Hearn
	12:16 – 13:00	Preparation for field work	Dr. Okoni Williams
	13: 00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
	14:01 – 17:00	Bird watching around Tasso Island	Kenneth Baimba/ Momoh B Sesay/ Alhaji Sheka
	16:30 – 1: 30		Richard
	15:30 -16:00	Coastal Site Management In SL	Alhaji Sheka
	16:00 – 16:15	TEA BREAK	
	16: 15 – 16:50	Discussion and feedback	Alhaji Sheka
	16:50 – 17:00	Vote of thanks	
Day 3 Tuesday 17th December 2019			
	9:00 – 9:30	Registration	All participants
	9:30 – 9: 35	Prayers	All participants
	9:35 – 10:00	Recap of day 1	All participants/ Abdul Dumbuya

	10:00 – 10:15	Wetland management	Richard
	10:15 – 10: 30	TEA BREAK	
	10:30 -11:30	Migration and migratory water birds	Charles Showers
	11:30 -12:00	Discussion on migratory birds	Richard
	12:00 – 13:00	The flyway (the East Atlantic flyway)	Marc
	13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
	14:00 -15:00	Identifying waders	Marc
	15:00 – 16: 00	Identifying other groups of birds	Dr. Okoni
	16:00 – 16:15	TEA BREAK	
	16:15 – 16:50	Discussion	Alhaji Sheka
	16:15 – 17:00	Vote of thanks	
Day 4 Wednesday 18th December 2019			
	9:00 – 9:30	Registration	All participants
	9:30 – 9: 35	Prayers	All participants
	9:35 – 10:00	Recap of day 1	All participants
	10:00 – 10:15	Discussion bird identification	Kenneth Baimba
	10:15 – 10: 30	TEA BREAK	
	10:30 – 11:45	Counting and survey/census techniques	Richard
	11:45 – 13:00	Discussion on how to count Waterbirds in Sierra Leone	Marc
	13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
	14:00 – 14:30	Field work – dividing the team into two	Papanie
	14:30 – 16:30	Testing bird identification skills out in the field using the gladi gladi boat	Kenneth and Momoh
	16:30 – 16:40	Presentation by the two groups	Participants
	16:40 – 16:50	Discussion	
	16:50 – 18:50	Field work (bird identification) mudflat in front of the Tasso lodge	Optional
Day 5 Thursday 19th December 2019			
	7:30 – 13:00	Field work – water bird census(bird inventory, threat recording) using the gladi gladi boats around the SLRE	Papanie, Kenneth, Alhaji Sheka and Momoh
	13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
	14:00 – 14:30	Group presentation of count result	participants
	14:30 – 15:30	Introduction of the IBA form, Filling the IBA form from the field visit	PBS
	15:30 – 16: 30	Report producing techniques, recommendation, next step	Dr. Okoni
	16:30 – 17:00	Evaluation of workshop	Abdul Dumbuya
	17:00 – 18:00	Administrative arrangement	Fatmata

ANNEX: III Participant List**Conservation Society of Sierra Leone****MWB training for Sierra Leone at Tasso Island on the 15th to the 19th December 2019**

	Name	Institution/community	contact
1	Marc van Roomen	WSFI	
2	Richard Hearn	BTO	
3	Dr. A Okoni Williams	FBC	+232 79 626 154
4	Mr. Charles Showers	CSSL	+232 76 725 152
5	Papanie Bai-Sesay	CSSL	+232 78 233 255
6	Momoh B Sesay	Bird Watcher	+232 76 903 675
7	Kenneth Baimba	Fact Finding Tours	+232 30 517 002
8	Alhaji Sheka	NPAA	
9	Samuel Manson Barlay	Shenge Town	232 76 353 372
10	Samuel Kanu	Banga ground	
11	Idrisa Bendu	Mbaloh	
12	Moses Iuseni	Bonthe	232 79 941 870
13	Senie A Conteh	Island Aid	
14	Santigie G conteh	Island Aid	232 79 698 786
15	Matta koker	Shenge	232 76 328755
16	Fatmata M Kamara	Njala	232 78 799 292
17	Satigie S Conteh	Njala	232 088861382
18	Amara Kallon	Bonthe	232 79 838084
19	Kamara Kalie	Yileboya	232 99 385519
20	Hannah Sheriff	Bonthe	232 78 112064
21	Fatmata Conteh	Tissana	
22	Jessy Kanu	Konakerydee	
23	Osman Jabbie	Rogbangban	232 77 494056
24	Alusine Kamara	NACToG	
25	Lamin Sesay	No 2	
26	Andrian Thompson	NPAA	232 76 191 209
27	Edward Foray	MAF	
28	Vidalyn Folorunsho	FBC	
29	Yirah Koroma	CSSL	232 78 147 242
30	Dauda Abdulai	CSSL	232 77 769 423
31	Mariama Kargbo	CSSL	232 78 758 612
32	Mohamed Sama	Tombo	
33	Samuel M Sheka	Nature Club	078 563534
34	Fatmata S Ball	CSSL	232 79 082 521
35	Alhaji O kamara	CSSL	232 76326282

Those highlighted in yellow failed to attend

ANNEX: IV Evaluation Form

Conservation Society of Sierra Leone

Training workshop on waterbird and wetland management training for Sierra Leone 15th to 19th December 2019

Evaluation of the Workshop

Date: 19th December 2019

Rating: 0 to 5 (where 0=poor and 5=excellence)

	The Facilitators	Content of the workshop	venue	Food	Field work
How satisfied are you with?					
Is your expectations met?					

What more do you think we can improve on?

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Any other comment

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