



WWF® for a living planet

January - February 2007

# Mruthika

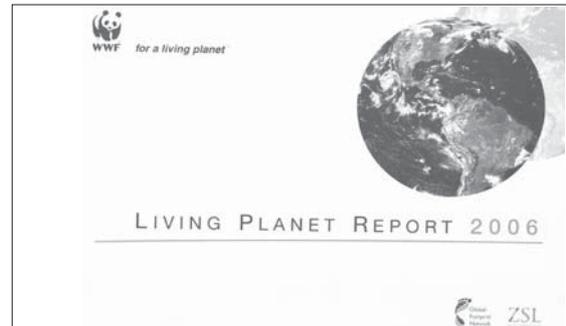
News Letter of WWF - India, Kerala State Office, Thiruvananthapuram 695 035

## FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

We have entered the New Year and as two months have passed, settled on with our lives. But what has happened to the resolutions that we had taken at the end of the last year and beginning of the New Year to protect and conserve our nature and natural resources? As a waking alarm, WWF has come out with the prestigious Living Planet Report 2006. It is a huge compilation of global data on how mankind is using up the natural resources available from Mother Nature. It is a direct indicator of our sustainability. Tremendous effort and manpower has gone into collecting and compiling of the data and the publication of such an invaluable report. We want each and every individual to read it and understand it and take into heart the facts published in the report and initiate a change in our lifestyles towards a more sustainable and nature centric approach. To ensure maximum reader coverage, the publication has been brought out in Hindi for the first time this year. The main highlights of the report is being included in this issue of the newsletter to give maximum coverage in Kerala too. The full report is available on WWF website. We wish that this report will be like the 'Apple in Newton's Life'. We should wake up and critically review our everyday activities and take into account how much of the resources we consume, the quantity of the waste that we dump back into the environment and the direct and indirect effects these wastes bring upon this planet and how other living and non-living things are affected. And we should decide to make a difference and take up small initiatives in this regard. No institution or individual can ensure sustainability of this planet. Only a combined and coordinated effort from every section of society can ensure this.

**Renjan Mathew Varghese**, State Director

## LIVING PLANET REPORT 2006



The Living Planet Report is WWF's periodic update on the state of the world's ecosystems.

It describes the changing state of global biodiversity and the pressure on the biosphere arising from human consumption of natural resources.

It is built around two indicators:

- the **Living Planet Index**, which reflects the health of the planet's ecosystems; and
- the **Ecological Footprint**, which shows the extent of human demand on these ecosystems.

These measures are tracked over several decades to reveal past trends, then three scenarios explore what might lie ahead. The scenarios show how the choices we make might lead to a sustainable society living in harmony with robust ecosystems, or to the collapse of these same ecosystems, resulting in a permanent loss of biodiversity and erosion of the planet's ability to support people.

The **Living Planet Index** measures trends in the Earth's biological diversity. It tracks populations of 1,313 vertebrate species - fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals - from all around the world. Separate indices are produced for terrestrial, marine, and freshwater species, and the three trends are then averaged to create an aggregated index. Although vertebrates represent only a fraction of known species, it is assumed that trends in their populations are typical of biodiversity overall. By tracking wild species, the Living Planet Index is also monitoring the health of ecosystems. Between 1970 and 2003,

the index fell by about 30%. This global trend suggests that we are degrading natural ecosystems at a rate unprecedented in human history.

Biodiversity suffers when the planet's biocapacity



cannot keep pace with human consumption and waste generation. The **Ecological Footprint** tracks this in terms of the area of biologically productive land and water needed to provide ecological resources and services – food, fibre, and timber, land on which to build, and land to absorb carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) released by burning fossil fuels. The Earth's biocapacity is the amount of biologically productive area – cropland, pasture, forest, and fisheries – that is available to meet humanity's needs. Since the late 1980s, we have been in overshoot – the Ecological Footprint has exceeded the Earth's biocapacity – as of 2003 by about 25%. Effectively, the Earth's regenerative capacity can no longer keep up with demand – people are turning resources into waste faster than nature can turn waste back into resources. Humanity is no longer living off nature's interest, but drawing down its capital. This growing pressure on ecosystems is causing habitat destruction or degradation and permanent loss of productivity, threatening both biodiversity and human well-being.

**What can be done?** Moving towards sustainability depends on significant action now. Population size changes slowly, and human-made capital – homes, cars, roads, factories, or power plants – can last for many decades. This implies that policy and investment decisions made today will continue to determine our resource demand throughout much of the 21st century. As the Living Planet Index shows, human pressure is already threatening many of the biosphere's assets. Even moderate "business as usual" is likely to accelerate these negative impacts. And given the slow response of many biological systems, there is likely to be a considerable time lag before ecosystems benefit significantly from people's positive actions. We share the Earth with 5–10 million species or more. By choosing how much of the planet's biocapacity we appropriate, we determine how much is left for their use. To maintain biodiversity, it is essential that a part of the biosphere's productive capacity is reserved for the survival of other species, and that this share is split

between all biogeographic realms and major biomes. To manage the transition to sustainability, we need measures that demonstrate where we have been, where we are today, and how far we still have to go. The Living Planet Index and the Ecological Footprint help to establish baselines, set targets, and monitor achievements and failures. Such vital information can stimulate the creativity and innovation required to address humanity's biggest challenge: how can we live well while sustaining the planet's other species and living within the capacity of one Earth?

#### How is the Ecological Footprint calculated?

The Ecological Footprint measures the amount of biologically productive land and water area required to produce the resources an individual, population, or activity consumes and to absorb the waste they generate, given prevailing technology and resource management. This area is expressed in global hectares

**Table 7: YIELD FACTORS** selected Countries

	Primary Cropland	Forest	Pasture	Ocean Fisheries
World	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Algeria	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.8
Guatemala	1.0	1.4	2.9	0.2
Hungary	1.1	2.9	1.9	1.0
Japan	1.5	1.6	2.2	1.4
Jordan	1.0	0.0	0.4	0.8
Lao PDR	0.8	0.2	2.7	1.0
New Zealand	2.2	2.5	2.5	0.2
Zambia	0.5	0.3	1.5	1.0

**Table 8: EQUIVALENCE FACTORS, 2003**

	gha/ha
Primary Cropland	2.21
Marginal cropland	1.79
Forest	1.34
Permanent Pasture	0.49
Marine	0.36
Inland water	0.36
Built-up land	2.21

**Table 9: CONVERSION FACTORS**

	2003, gha/ha
1961	0.86
1965	0.86
1970	0.89
1975	0.90
1980	0.92
1985	0.95
1990	0.97
1995	0.97
2000	0.99
2006	1.00

(gha), hectares with world-average biological productivity (1 hectare = 2.47 acres). Footprint calculations use yield factors (Table 7) to take into account national differences in biological productivity (for example, tonnes of wheat per United Kingdom or Argentinian hectare versus world average) and equivalence factors (Table 8) to take into account differences in world average productivity among land types (for example, world average forest versus world average cropland).

Footprint and biocapacity results for nations are calculated annually by Global Footprint Network. A detailed methods paper and copies of sample calculation sheets can be obtained at [www.footprintnetwork.org](http://www.footprintnetwork.org).

## IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

### GLOBAL

#### • China's first panda cub of the year is born

China's first panda cub of the year has survived the crucial first three days of her life, state media reported. The female cub weighed just 90.2 grams (3.2 ounces) at birth, but has gained seven grams in the next three days, increasing her chances of survival, Xinhua News Agency said. It said the panda was being cared for by the China Panda Protection and Research Center in Wolong, Sichuan province. The still nameless female was born to a 13-year-old giant panda named Ji Ni, the oldest panda to deliver a first cub, Xinhua said. (*The Hindu online* 26.2.2007)

#### • New bat species discovered in Madagascar

Zoologists have discovered a new species of bats, *Myzopoda schielmani*, with large flat adhesive organs or suckers attached to its thumbs and hind feet. According to Steven M. Goodman, Field Biologist, the species occurs only in the dry western forests of Madagascar. The previously known species, *Myzopoda aurita*, occurs only in the humid eastern forests of Madagascar. Mr Goodman said the new findings have also changed the earlier belief that *Myzopoda* was endangered and included only one species. (*The Hindu*, 8.1.2007)

#### • Ringtones to make nature statement

Amid the cacophony of cell phone ringtones these days, add these: the clickety-click-click of a rare Central American Poison arrow dart frog, the howl of a Mexican gray wolf and the bellows of an Arctic beluga whale.

A U.S. environmental group is hoping that if people hear these sounds of threatened animals on cell phones, they will wonder where they came from — and consider the fate of the animals and birds that make them.

"The point here is education and inspiration," said a conservation advocate at the Centre for Biological Diversity in New Mexico.

Like other activist groups, the centre is looking to the immediate attention cell phones can bring to its cause. Already, some 24,000 people have downloaded the rare rings for free from the centre's website. (*The Hindu online* 28.02.07)

### NATIONAL

#### • Rare Asian vulture bred in captivity

An endangered species of vulture has been bred in captivity for the first time cheering those trying to rescue the South Asian bird from the brink of extinction. Britain's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) said that the *Oriental white-backed vulture* chick hatched at a breeding center last week at Pijore in Haryana. Number of South Asia's *Oriental white-backed, long-billed and slender-billed vultures* have plummeted by more than 97 percent in the last 15 years. Scientists say the decline is largely due to farmers dosing their cattle with *diclofenac*, a drug used to treat inflammation, poisoning the scavenging birds one step up the food chain. India banned the production and sale of *diclofenac* in May last year, but implementation of the ban has been slow. India has also been successfully breeding in captivity the Slender-billed vulture, another of the three threatened species since 2005 (*The Business Line*, 10.1.2007)

#### • Turtle eggs galore along Puducherry coast

Several nesting areas of turtles have been found along the Puducherry coast in the last three months. Conservationists and fishermen found turtle eggs in burrows along the coast in Veerampattinam, Murthikuppam and Manapet fishing hamlets. But they could not be hatched as the fishermen sold them to the nearby arrack shops. The latest find was in Veerampattinam. The fishermen said the eggs would be handed over to the Forest Department. However, P. Devaraj, Deputy Conservator of Forests said, "We haven't got any information from local people. Several burrows were found in the past three months but before we could protect the eggs, they were sold." The department was planning an awareness programme on allowing the eggs to hatch. They would be bought from the fishermen and an artificial rookery set up at Manapet. (*The Hindu daily* 26.2.2007)

#### • Call to focus on tapping green fuels

In the two-day National Symposium on Chemical Engineering, conducted at the Andhra University, main focus was on tapping green fuels like bio-diesel and bio-ethanol. Mr. M. Ganapathy, President of Reliance Group of Manufacturing Industries, said that India should focus on bio-fuels to meet the energy needs of the country, as the fossil fuels are getting fast depleted the world over and there is an imperative

need to evolve appropriate strategies to promote *Jatropha* cultivation in the country. He said, "*Jatropha curacas* is our best bet and we want to promote contract farming on marginal lands". (*The Business Line*, 6.2.2007)

#### STATE

##### • Wildlife Crime Control Bureau in Kochi likely

The southern unit of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) proposed by the Centre is likely to be located in Kochi. The WCCB would be modeled on the Narcotic Control Bureau (NCB) with powers to detect and investigate wildlife crimes. It would act as a Nodal Agency and work in tandem with State Forest Department, law enforcing agencies and Customs and Central Excise units in South India. The proposed unit would focus on poaching, smuggling of wildlife animals and their parts and products, illegal felling of valuable forest trees and misuse of forest cover for drug cultivation. (*Protected Area Update Feb 2007- The Hindu*)

##### • Nature Interpretation Center at Pampa, Periyar

A Nature Interpretation Centre constructed by the Forest Department was recently inaugurated at Pampa with the aim of providing nature education to the pilgrims visiting the Sabarimala shrine. The center will be run by the Periyar Foundation. The Centre will have a museum with information on the flora and fauna of the Sacred Grove of Sabarimala. With the help of photographs, video clippings, and posters, it will also highlight the importance of forest conservation. (*Protected Area Update Feb 2007- The Hindu*)

##### • Mangrove Research Center planned

The Fisheries Department has taken the initiative to start a Mangrove Ecosystem Research Center at Ayiramthengu in Kollam. If the project materializes, it will be the first Mangrove Research Center in the country. The 50-acre mangrove forest owned by the fisheries department at Ayiramthengu is an environmental hotspot, where many species of animals breed and feed. It provides habitat for many marine species, otters, migratory birds etc. In 1996 the Fisheries Department stepped in with a programme to preserve it. The success of the programme has now prompted the department to put forth the proposal. (*The Hindu daily*, 8.1.2007)

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

#### Nature Facts

- Hoolock Gibbons are the only apes found in India
- Sloth bear is the only bear species found in Kerala
- Project Tiger Scheme has been under implementation since 1973 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Government of India.
- Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary got its name due

to the presence of the endemic tree *Gluta travancorica* locally known as Chenkuringi.

## GREEN LIVING TIPS FOR HOLIDAYS

- Find out about your destination before you go on holiday - it may be an environmentally sensitive area. Doing this will also ensure you are informed of what to see and any local customs.
- Avoid taking things on holiday that you will throw away.
- Dispose off any rubbish responsibly - it can be hazardous to wildlife.
- Use public transport, cycle or walk instead of using a car.
- Use facilities and trips run by local people whenever possible.
- Don't be tempted to touch wildlife and disturb habitats whether on land, at the coast or under water.
- Be careful what you choose to bring home as a holiday souvenir. Many species become endangered because they are killed for curios or souvenirs.
- Don't leave any rubbish at the beach - turtles are often killed by plastic bags as they're mistaken for jellyfish. Many other items take years to degrade.

## ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA, KERALA STATE OFFICE

### ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Training Workshop for Education Officers on Environment Education and Education for Sustainable Development at New Delhi

The workshop held at WWF-India, Secretariat for the Education Officers was on Education for Sustainable Development. The workshop was led by eminent persons like Mr. Staffan Svanberg, ESD Consultant, Sweden, Dr. Valdy Lindhe, Asst. Professor, Uppsala University, Sweden, Mrs. Gunnila, Director, Environment Education, WWF-Sweden and Ms. Lima Rosalind, Director, Environment Education, WWF-India. The workshop was very interesting as it was packed with creative and thought provoking exercises. Most of them can be adopted for the Environment Education activities of the state offices. It provided a baseline for EDS in WWF-India network.

#### 2. Vembanad Waterbird Count 2007

Mr. A.K. Sivakumar, Education Officer and Ms. M.V. Aswathy, Volunteer of WWF-India participated in the Vembanad Waterbird Count 2007 jointly organized by Kottayam Nature Society and Kerala

Forests and Wildlife Department on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2007. The team in which WWF-India representatives were included listed 22 species of birds at Thanneermukkom area. Above 6000 numbers of Whiskered terns were counted from this area. Large egret, Indian shag, Oriental darter, Lesser whistling teals, Black headed gulls were the other important birds observed.

### 3. Green Gathering at Kozhikode

The Green Gathering for the district of Kozhikode was organized on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2007 at Govt.L.P.S.Maruthonkara, Kuttiyady. Smt.Indira, President, Maruthonkara Grama Panchayat inaugurated the event and Education Officer of WWF-India briefed on the programme. Sri. Rajan, Headmaster of the School, Sri.Murali, Member of Maruthonkara Grama Panchayath, Sri Preman, President of Janakikkad VSS felicitated the programme.

The programme included technical sessions on Significance of Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Biodiversity of Kerala, Local Environmental Problems, Participatory Forest Management and VSS Activities which were led by Dr.Sabu.P.G, Dr.T.N.Vijayakumar, Mr. A.K.Sivakumar and Mr.Pradeep.

In the evening and the next day morning, the participants were taken for a field trip to the Janakikkadu forest area. They observed number of birds, butterflies and plants there. Participants enjoyed a session of writing stories connecting environment, economy and society. It was the part of providing a basic idea of education for sustainable development.

### 4. FDA Evaluation at Munnar Forest Division

WWF-India, Kerala State Office conducted the Independent Evaluation of National Afforestation Programme of NAEB, MoEF by Forest Development Agency, Munnar. Sri. A. Sreejith, Project Officer of WWF-India, Kerala State Office led the evaluation team. The process and quality of implementation of PFM and its impact on local communities and resources were examined. The evaluation was essentially centered on the functioning of Vana Samrakshana Samithies (VSS). Methodology of evaluation included meetings and interviews, secondary data collection, rapid appraisal, questionnaire surveys, field visits, quadrat study and verification of the records and registers.

### 5. World Wetlands Day 2007

WWF-India, Kerala State Office and Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) Sub Centre, Thiruvananthapuram observed WWD 2007 at Thiruvananthapuram on 2<sup>nd</sup>



February 2007 in association with Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE).

The programme was inaugurated by Sri.L.Radhakrishnan IAS, Secretary to Govt for Forests and Wildlife. Prof.M.K.Prasad, Executive Chairman & Director, Information Kerala Mission presided over the inaugural function. Dr.K.Kokkal, Principal Scientific Officer, KSCSTE briefed on the relevance of WWD 2007. Sri.Unnikrishnan Unnithan, Member Secretary, KSCSTE felicitated the programme. The programme was attended by about 120 participants including school/ college students, NGO representatives, scientists, academicians etc.

Following the inaugural function, the technical sessions were led by Dr.K.G.Padmakumar, Professor and Senior Scientist from RARS, Kumarakom, Dr.C.Subramaniya Aiyar, from Kerala Agricultural University and Dr.George Chakkachery, Scientist-in-charge of CWRDM Thiruvananthapuram Sub Centre.

Painting and Elocution Competitions were conducted for school students in the afternoon. Film show on wetlands and water resources was also conducted for the participants. During the valedictory session, Dr.A.E.Muthunayagam, Executive Vice President, KSCSTE addressed the audience and distributed the prizes to the winners.

### 6. Wetland Bird Watching Programme at Punchakkari - Akkulam

WWF-India, Kerala State Office organized a Wetland Bird Watching Programme for general public around Punchakkari and Akkulam wetlands of Thiruvananthapuram City on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2007. Fifteen people from various walks of life including four foreigners participated in the programme. The programme was led by A.K.Sivakumar, Education Officer of WWF-India and Mr.T.Varun, College of Engineering, Trivandrum and Volunteer of WWF-India.



The team observed lot of birds. The significant sightings are of four White Ibises (*Threskiornis aethiopica*) and a Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*) at Punchakkari and Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) at Akkulam. These birds are rarely found in these areas. A slide show also was conducted at WWF-India, Kerala State Office during the break after lunch to provide the participants with a clear view on importance of wetlands and the water birds.

#### 7. Training Programme for Teacher Trainees at Mavelikara and Thodupuzha

WWF-India, Kerala State Office and CPREEC, Chennai jointly organized two workshops on Environment Education and Education for Sustainable Development for trainees of six Teacher Training Colleges at Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara and Al - Azhar Training College, Thodupuzha on 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> February 2007 respectively. Sixty nine trainees from Mount Tabor Training College, Pathanapuram, NSS Training College, Pandalam, Jameela Beevi Training College, Kayamkulam and Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara attended the programme at Mavelikara and forty eight trainees from Mount Carmel Training College, Kottayam and Al - Azhar Training College, Thodupuzha attended the second workshop at Thodupuzha.



The workshops at Mavelikara and Thodupuzha were inaugurated by Smt. Anne Paul and Smt. Mariamma Philip, Principals of the venue colleges.

Technical sessions on Environment Education and Need for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection were led by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar and Sri.A.Sreejith. The session on local environmental problems were handled by Sri.Umesh Babu, and Dr.S.Seetharaman, Conveners of the DIMC (NGC). Both of them brought out many serious local environmental problems like disposal of domestic waste into water bodies, filling up of paddy fields, vanishing hills, depletion of water resources, water pollution and change in land use pattern etc. A PowerPoint presentation on Biodiversity of Kerala and impacts of climate change on the same was done by Ms.M.V.Aswathy, Volunteer of WWF-India.

The participants were also involved in other programs like 'Feel the Nature' which is a semi meditation programme that helps participants to understand the waking up process of nature in the early morning, story writing session on linking economy, environment and society etc.

#### 8. Green Gathering at Nilambur

The Green Gathering for the district of Malappuram was organized on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at Chaliyar View Dormitory, Nilambur. Ninety four Nature Club Members from eight different Nature Clubs participated in the programme. Dr.N.C.Induchoodan, Divisional Forest Officer (Nilambur South) inaugurated the programme. The first technical session on Significance of Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection was led by Dr.Induchoodan himself. He highlighted the dependency of humankind on nature for his own sustenance. He asked the students to find out the connections they have with nature.

The discussion session on local environmental problems was led by Dr.T.N.Vijayakumar from NSS College, Manjeri. The participants took active involvement in the group discussions and presentations, field trip through the sandy banks of River Chaliyar. The other technical sessions were led



by Mr. A.K.Sivakumar, Education Officer of WWF-India on Biodiversity and its Kerala perspective and Dr.T.Sajeev of Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) Sub Center, Nilambur presented his topic titled "A Big Question and Small Answers".

#### 9. Nature Education Camp at Vazhachal

A Nature Education Camp was conducted around Vazhachal forests from 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2007 for the Nature Club Members of Sri Ayyappa College, Eramallikkara, Chengannur. Fifteen students and two teachers participated in the camp which was led by Education Officer, Project Officer and Mr.Suresh, Volunteer.

The most interesting part of the camp was the field trip in which they observed a number of birds including the rare Malabar Pied Hornbill. These birds are found nesting only in Vazhachal in the State. On the third day, the participants conducted a socio economic survey among the *kadar families*, the indigenous people of the region. An interactive study on the tourism potential of the area also was done with the tourists, forest department officials and VSS members.

#### 10. Presentation on WWF and Wildlife preservation at Thiruvananthapuram

AMWAY is currently conducting their Annual Celebrations in the month of February 2007. At a national level, there has been an initiative for AMWAY to associate with WWF – India in supporting the conservation efforts. As a beginning, for the AMWAY Family Children's Painting Competition, the theme was decided as Wildlife Management. Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese and Mr.A.K.Sivakumar delivered the lecture on 'Wildlife Management and Need for Conservation' at Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam. The programme was attended by about 50 children and their parents belonging to the AMWAY family.

#### 11. Teachers Training Programme at Alhuda School, Panayikkulam

WWF-India, Kerala State Office and CPREEC, Chennai jointly organized a Teachers Training Workshop on Environment Education at Alhuda

School, Panayikkulam, Aluva on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The target group was the Advisers of WWF-India affiliated Nature Clubs in Kerala. Eighteen teachers participated in the workshop. Discussion sessions on local environmental problems, need for Nature Club activities, new activities were led by Prof. S. Seetharaman, Mr. A.K.Sivakumar and Mr.A. Sreejith. The morning bird watching session was interesting.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Mr. A. V. George  
Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese  
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- Subscriber:-** Make a contribution of Rs. 500 per annum and become a Subscriber of WWF-India. Also, get a WWF-India Newsletter, Personalised Subscriber Card, Tax exemption u/s 80G, WWF-India Library Membership, Car Sticker and 15% Discount on WWF Merchandise.
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Ph: 91 11 41504803, 41504815/16/17

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