

Electronic Monitoring: A promising alternative to at-sea monitoring in the New England groundfish fishery

Lead Proponent: Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Fisheries Technical Assistance Program, Portland, Maine USA

Lead Technical Support (software and hardware development and training) Ecotrust Canada, Prince Rupert, British Columbia Canada

Funder: The Nature Conservancy, Brunswick, Maine USA

Industry Partner: Maine Coast Community Sector, Topsham, Maine USA



EC employee installing EM system on Maine vessel (left).

The Gulf of Maine Research Institute, along with The Nature Conservancy, Maine Coast Community Sector and Ecotrust Canada, is conducting a two-year Electronic Monitoring Project that will develop and test an affordable, open-source electronic monitoring system on seven active groundfish vessels across both gillnet and trawl gear types. The data collected will meet federal technical specifications and be compared to data collected by the fishermen as well as that of at-sea-monitors. This work aims to validate self-reported data, build on existing federal initiatives and introduce an additional electronic monitoring provider to increase capacity and further it's operationalization in preparation for regulatory approval.

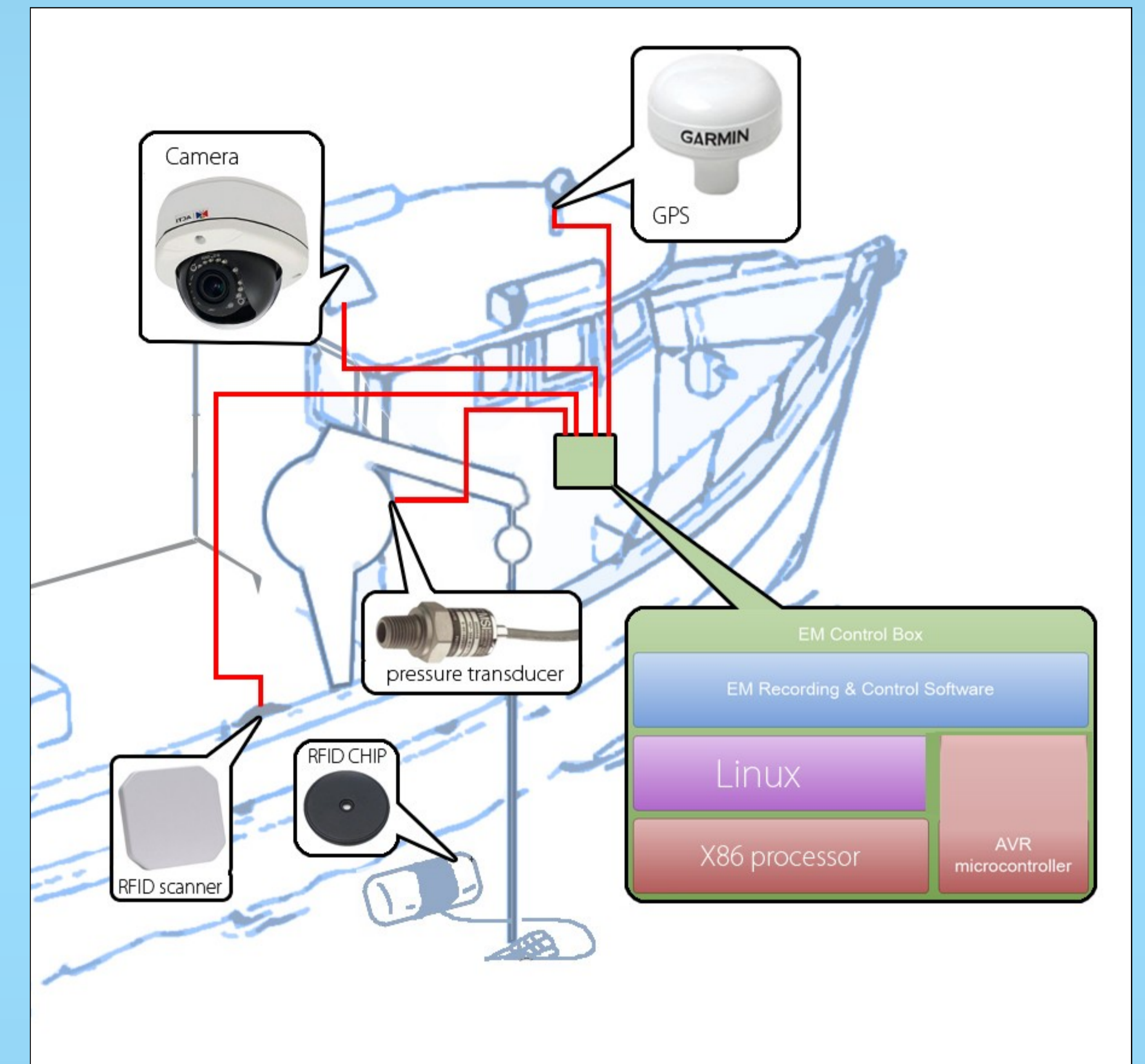
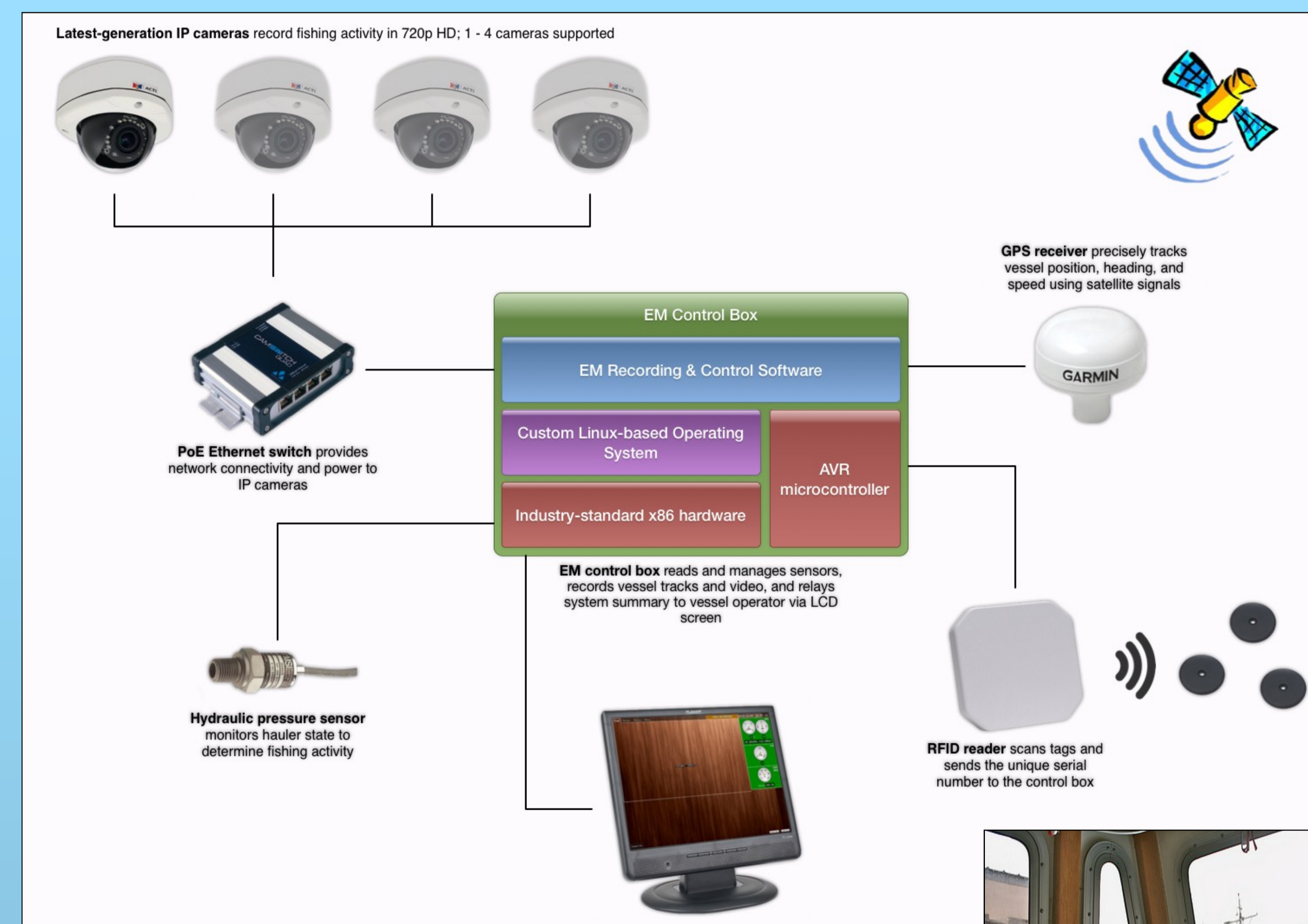


Image above shows Ecotrust Canada's system as installed on a crab BC fishing vessel. For the fishery in Maine a different sensor set up is used to determine fishing activity and a second camera is used.

Ecotrust Canada's Approach to Monitoring

Working off of the principals of our fisheries program, we aim to provide monitoring services that are more affordable and more user friendly than traditional systems, and pursue the following objectives:

- . To support better resource management and stewardship;
- . To increase social and financial equity for fishing fleets;
- . To adhere to the tenants of information democracy;
- . To build monitoring capacity of fishing communities; and
- . To improve fleet and coastal community viability.



EM system components, including screenshot from Maine vessel showing feed from one of two cameras.



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