

Burrowing Owl

December 1998 January 1999 Issue

Volume 28 No. 1

Welcome to Central New Mexico Audubon Society! Come join us. All our meetings and field trips are free and open to the public



99th Christmas Bird Count Tradition, Legacy, Science

Did you know that Auduboners like us have been contributing to the most extensive collection of data on birds ever compiled? Since 1900, when ornithologist Frank Chapman organized the first-ever Christmas Bird Count, the results of Christmas Bird Counts have been published and used for censusing and mapping winter bird populations and their distributions. In 1900, Frank Chapman organized 27 friends in 25 locations on Christmas Day. Today, volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda and the West Indies will count and record every bird and bird species they see. More than 1600 individual Christmas Bird Counts will be held during a 2 1/2 week period. It's amazing to think of, when you realize what the alternative was back in 1900 — the event known as the "side hunt," when groups got together to shoot as many birds and small animals as they could!

Come join us for this conservationist sport that combines birding, camaraderie, and enjoyment of the great outdoors. Don't be dissuaded because you feel like

you're not a "good enough" birder! Expert birder lead all counts, we travel in groups, and the more eyes, the better! And to whet your enthusiasm for the event, check out the web sites discussed in the CBC internet article on page 6. Computers and the internet have become an important part of the Christmas Bird Count and will forever change the speed and significance of the data collected. After your cyberspace experience, get ready for the real thing by contacting a trip leader to volunteer. Your \$5 participant fee covers the cost of publication of results in National Audubon Field Notes. What a wonderful way to celebrate the Winter Solstice!



Frank Chapman

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Local Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 19 Bosque del Apache NWR, Socorro
Contact Steve Cox, 345-2385 Meet at Refuge Headquarters, 7:00 a.m.
Owl Bar afterwards for treats and tallies.

Sunday, December 20 Albuquerque
Contact Hart Schwarz, 266-1810 Meet at Corrales Shopping Center, NW corner of Coors and Alameda 7:15 a.m. Compilation party afterwards at the home of Ron and Beth Waitz, 898-8514

Saturday, January 2, 1999 Sandia Mountains
Contact Jonalyn Yancey, 286-2949 Meet at parking lot of now-closed Pete's Mexican Restaurant, north Hwy. 14, 1/2 mile north of Sandia Crest Road turnoff 8:00 a.m. Compilation party immediately following at Jonalyn's house.



The 105th Congress—a Mixed Bag

Congress has completed its legislative work and, as usual, there's good news and bad news.

The bad news is that bills tackling grazing, takings, endangered species, regulatory reform, and Superfund cleanup all failed to pass. That's a load of environmental business for the new Congress next year—and a chalkboard of interest to anyone interested in the environment.

But lawmakers did boost Land and Water Conservation spending and approved funding for several areas important to critters and to people—geographically, yes, in New Mexico. Globally, we like to think, of benefit to all.

Bandelier National Monument will expand by some 975 acres, with the approval of \$300,000 for the purchase of the additional land surrounding the monument.

Tres Pistas, also known as Three Gun Springs, has survived the threat of development with the earmarking of \$1.4 million in federal funds for the purchase of the last 146 acres remaining in private ownership. For 10 years, New Mexicans representing government, citizen groups, public agencies, and conservation organizations, including Audubon, have worked to preserve the area, which is a prime feeding ground for numerous species of raptors and is on a main migratory route for birds of prey. It also is popular with hikers and contains numerous archaeological sites. Auduboners know the area as the access to the Sandia Hawk Watch site and will remember Louise Waldron, the dedicated activist who has hosted Moonlight Walks and Potlucks from her home in Monticello.

Thanks go to Louise for her persistence, and to Rep. Heather Wilson for supporting the appropriation. Aztec Ruins National Monument, a delightful monument in

the Farmington area, benefits from \$600,000 appropriated to add 292 acres to its boundaries.

Petroglyph National Monument will benefit from \$3 million approved to buy lands held by private landowners within the boundaries of the monument. The monument was created in 1990, and private "in-holdings" still comprise some 1,800 acres of the 7,244-acre monument, which protects thousands of ancient Indian rock etchings.

Baca Ranch, Baca Grande, Valles Caldera -- names that describe the 95,000-acre tract in northern New Mexico that is the heart of the Jemez Mountains and supplies the headwaters to a number of Jemez Mountains streams—is on its way to being included in the public domain. We owe Senator Domenici our thanks for coming through on the purchase. We should not forget to thank Senator Bingaman, too, who in 1997 introduced legislation to acquire the Baca. This is great news indeed. At the same time, the process is not yet complete, and we need to be watchful of the management package that is implemented. For example, under the current negotiation, the property will not be managed by either the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service, but by a special Board of Trustees as a "working ranch."

Ah, we all know the cautionary watch word "vigilance." In the spirit of the moment, we'll tuck it away, for now, as we celebrate with and thank those who helped gain these protections. We'll keep you informed!

—Beth Hurst-Waitz

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Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.



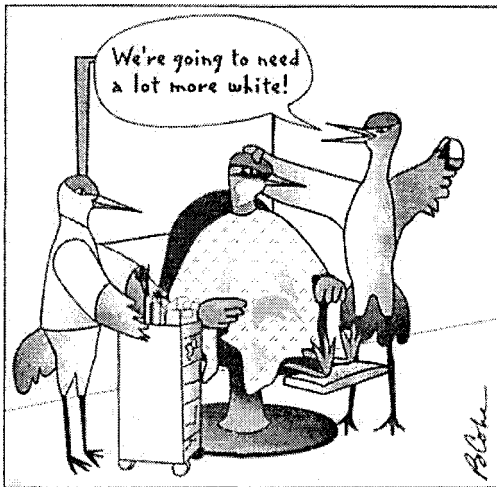
Send this application and your check to:
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Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 30002 • Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710

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Central New Mexico Audubon Society
Local Chapter Code— Q51 7XCH8

Use the above form for new subscriptions only. Contact Membership Chairperson for changes of address or correction in your Burrowing Owl label. Nonmembers can receive the Burrowing Owl by sending your name and address with \$12 to CNMAS. c/o Beth Hurst-Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710



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Sandhills trying to take advantage of endangered species protection for Whoopers.

Bird Biology Class in Los Lunas

Celestyn Brozek will be teaching "Introduction to Bird Biology" class at the University of New Mexico-Valencia Campus in Los Lunas (32 mi. from Albuquerque). The class starts on January 20 and ends on May 12, 1999. It is a 4-credit university class and can be taken for credit or audited. The classroom meetings are on Mondays and Wednesdays, 7-8:15 PM. In addition, the course includes five Saturday field trips to Bosque del Apache, Water Canyon, and Sandia Mts. It is an excellent introduction to the birds of New Mexico and a lot of fun! For information call Celestyn at 925-8611.

New Mexico Audubon Council

The New Mexico State Audubon Council is an umbrella organization comprised of members from the boards of the five Audubon chapters in New Mexico—Southwestern, Mesilla Valley, Southeastern, Central and Sangre de Cristo—plus Randall Davey Audubon Center, our state office in Santa Fe.

The date for the next Council meeting is December 12. Audubon members are welcome. The facilities of the Sevilleta Refuge will be open to us both for the meeting and for housing. Terms for housing are \$10/person/night plus \$10 if you want bedding. Let Tom Jervis know if you want housing and which nights. E-mail him at jervidaec@aol.com or phone him at (505) 662-5287 to RSVP. The meeting will start at 10:00 AM, and we're planning on a potluck dinner that evening.

The agenda will include updates on the Conservation Services Division of the New Mexico Game and Fish Department and the Wolf Recovery Program, as well as

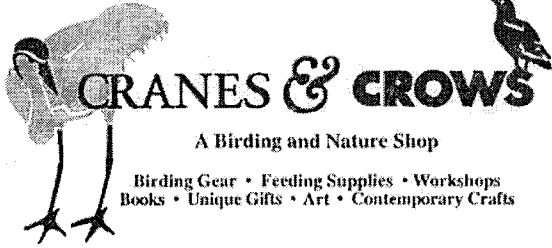
Winter Bird and Bat Festival at Nature Center

The Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center will host the Winter Bird and Bat Festival January 22-24, 1999. For the first time the weekend will be a joint enterprise of the Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center, Hawks Aloft and HawkWatch International. For another first, Festival '99 will examine not only birds but bats, the world's only flying mammals and important migrants that roost and fly through the Bosque and middle Rio Grande valley.

An exciting roster of speakers will explore the twin themes of bird/bat migration and behavior in winter. The celebration begins Friday night, January 22 with a dinner and slide/talk with Kent Clegg, Whooping Crane Aviculturist and Ultralight Pilot. The evening begins at 6:30 at El Pinto Restaurant, the cost is \$40 per person. Reservation and payment by January 8. Call 344-7240 for reservations.

Scheduled from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Saturday are Gail Garber of Hawks Aloft, master falconer Tom Smylie, Rio Grande Zoo bird curator Bill Aragon, passerine expert Donna Thatcher, and UNM bat expert Bill Gannon. Also planned for Saturday is a canoe trip for bird watching on the Rio Grande guided by Hawks Aloft, children's programs by Talking Talons and Hawks Aloft, and a bird identification workshop conducted by members of Audubon Society. Wildlife Rescue of NM will be on hand, too.

On Sunday, festival attendees will carpool for a \$15 trip to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, looking for and learning about bald eagles with raptor experts Jim Place, Gail Garber and Jon Stravers.



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New Mexico Audubon Council cont'd

strategizing for the next legislative session. We may even have a behind-the-scenes tour of Bosque del Apache set up for Sunday morning, the 13th. Sevilleta Refuge north of Socorro. Please call Beth Hurst-Waitz for more information, 243-7029 or 898-8514.



December 1998 January 1999

Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome on field trips: Audubon members and nonmembers, novice and experienced birders.

December Trips

Sunday, December 6 Bosque del Apache. This is always a rewarding birding trip. Meet at 7:30 at the Physics Parking Lot at Lomas and Yale. Bring your lunch and dress warmly. If the weather is bad, we'll reschedule for next Sunday, Dec 13. Call Sei (266-2480) if not sure about the weather.

January Trips

Saturday and Sunday, January 30-31 Las Vegas and Maxwell National Wildlife Refuges. Bring your lunch and lots of warm clothing, it can get pretty cold. This can be a day trip or stay overnight in Springer. This trip is a must to see Hawks and Eagles! Call Sei (266-2480) to let us know who is going and for information on car pooling and accommodations. Meet at 7:30 am at Far North Shopping Center behind Village Inn, San Mateo and Academy. If the weather is bad we'll try for the next weekend, Feb 6-7.



Burrowing Owl Subscription

The Burrowing Owl Newsletter is published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October and December. Subscription is free to Central New Mexico Audubon Society members, \$12 to nonmembers.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society
P.O. Box 30002
Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87190-0002

Audubon Programs

Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. Light refreshments are served from 7:15. Come to St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, northwest corner of Copper and Jefferson.

No meeting in December

Thursday, January 21 Photographing Birds in New Mexico—Jim Karo, longtime member of both the Central NM Audubon Society and the NM Ornithological Society, as well as one of the state's most accomplished bird photographers, will be our speaker for this program. Jim has a great slide collection to share with us in addition to his advice and expertise. Come and learn a few "tricks of the trade."

Thursday Morning Birding Group

For information on weekly birding outings (every Thursday), call Julie Goodding at 255-9366. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary.



Christmas Bird Count Program

Lecture and Birdwalk : The CBC Phenomenon

Friday, December 4 Lecture at 7:00 p.m. at the Rio Grande Nature Center

Sunday, December 6 Birdwalk from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Meet at intersection of Tramway and Forest Rd 333.

Hart Schwarz offers a combo slide/talk and birdwalk, reviewing the 100-year history and mystery of the annual Christmas Bird Count. Following the Friday talk, Hart will lead a Sunday hike through bird count territory in the Sandia foothills and Juan Tabo Gorge. Hikers can expect to see Bewick's wrens, sage thrashers, rufous-crowned sparrows and, perhaps, a fox sparrow. Wear hiking boots and bring field guides, binoculars, drinks and snacks. Cost: For Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center \$18 for both or \$4.50 for lecture and \$18 for the birdwalk if purchased separately; non FRGNC members \$20 for both or \$5 and \$20 separately.

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332-4737



December 1998 January 1999

Trip Reports by Charlotte Green

Aug 1. Bandelier. Fifteen of us braved the rain to see 17 species on this trip. We spent the morning at Bandelier and walked along the trail in between the cloud bursts. We saw lots of Canyon Towhees, Williamson's Sapsuckers and great looks at several Pygmy Nuthatches. After lunch on the covered patio at the visitors center, we headed for Jemez Falls where we saw the Black Swifts. A stop at the Jemez ranger station didn't yield anything so we headed for Bernalillo for an early supper at The Range.



Aug 29-30. Bitter Lake. Fourteen people spent the weekend getting great views of shore birds. This is the best place in the state to see lots of them. We saw a Reddish Egret, Western, Least and Spotted Sandpipers, Avocets, Stilts, Snowy and Semipalmated Plovers. At the park in Roswell there were two Mississippi Kite adults feeding their young and a Burrowing Owl. On the way to Bitter Lake we took a little detour to Ft. Sumner where we saw Red-headed Woodpeckers, Scissor-tailed and Olive-sided Flycatchers and a Yellow Warbler. We also wanted to check out two new areas, Melrose and Boone's Draw. Beautiful, but not too much at either one of these places at this time of year. It should be better in the Spring, we'll try again then. Watch for our Spring trips.

Sep 12-13. Percha Dam/Caballo Lake. It was hot! Weather-wise and bird-wise. Lots of warblers including Tennesee, Audubon's, Townsend's, Yellow, Wilson's, MacGillivray's, Common Yellowthroat and Chat. However the best bird of the trip was a male Black-throated Blue Warbler. He was beautiful! We also discovered a good Mexican restaurant for supper in Derry (8 miles South of Percha). It's called the Old School House Cafe. Check it out when you are in the area and let them know you're a birder.

Sep 26 - Hawkwatch and Quarai. Because last year was so cold at Hawkwatch, we decided to go to Quarai first this trip. It was beautiful and warm at both sites. We saw several warblers and lots of Towhees at Quarai. We had some close looks at Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks before they were released at Hawkwatch. But the best look of the day was when they caught a very rare for New Mexico Broad-winged Hawk and brought it up for us to see. What a beauty!

Statewide Christmas Bird Counts



For sites not listed, contact Sandy Williams,
(505) 827-9914

Caballo
Sunday, January 3
Contact Barry Zimmer
(915) 821-6737

Clayton
Monday, December 28
Lois Herrmann, (505) 983-6036

Espanola
Sunday, December 20
Bernie Foy, (505) 466-1587

Five Points (Sevilleta NWR)
Friday, December 18
Steve Cox, (505) 345-2385

Gila River
Saturday, January 2
Roland Shook, (505) 388-3441

La Luz (Alamogordo)
Saturday, December 26
John Mangimeli, (505) 479-4102

Las Cruces
Saturday, December 19
Tim Lawton, (505) 522-2056

Las Vegas
Saturday, January 2
George Blanchard, (505) 421-2381

Peloncillo Mountains
Sunday, January 3
Alan Craig, (520) 558-2220

Santa Fe
Saturday, December 26
Pat Insley (505) 982-0796

Santa Rosa
Tuesday, December 22
Bill West, (505) 473-2780

Sevilleta NWR
Wednesday, December 23
Steve Cox, (505) 345-2385

Silver City
Saturday, December 19
Roland Shook, (505) 388-3441





Christmas Bird Count & the Web

This year's count, the 99th, marks the beginning of a new era for the CBC. For the first time in its history, all CBC results will be entered directly on the BirdSource website, maintained by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. This should help to reduce errors in data entry and will make the results available much sooner. The capability to track large amounts of information quickly has the potential to greatly enhance the Count's usefulness.

The internet itself provides access to a great deal of other information related to the CBC. When we used one of the internet's search engines to find the exact phrase "Christmas Bird Count" we had 744 hits! The great majority of the sites were local Audubon chapters and birding clubs. Check out:

BirdSource

<http://birdsource.cornell.edu/cbc/bs.htm>

Audubon's CBC

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>

United States Geological Survey

<http://www.mbr.nbs.gov/bbs/cbc.htm>



Just A Few Web Sites

National Audubon Society

Partners in Flight WatchList (for information on birds at risk):

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/watch/>

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology BirdSource

(weather map of bird distributions, population and migrations):

<http://birdsource.cornell.edu>

New Mexico Ornithological Society:

<http://biology.unm.edu/~nmos>

The Peregrine Falcon Fund

(for continuing information on the Arizona Condor population):

<http://www.peregrinefund.org>

Share with Wildlife program of New Mexico Game and Fish Department:

<http://www.gmfsh.state.nm.us> (Click on "Nongame")

Hawks Aloft

<http://www.rt66.com/~hawkssnm>

HawkWatch International

<http://www.info-xpress.com/hawkwatch>

Bosque del Apache NWR

<http://www.sturgeon.irm1.r2.fws.gov/u2/refuges/newmex/bosque.html>

Rio Grande Nature Center

<http://www.unm.edu/~natrcent>



Audubon Adventures

Once again, Audubon Adventures had a great response from the teaching community, and we are pleased to provide kits to the following teachers. All are in Albuquerque, except as noted:

Judy Vinyard
Arroyo del Oso Elementary

Joyce Simpson
Arroyo del Oso
Elementary

Cynthia Basye
Wherry Elementary, Kirtland
AFB

Carolyn Minette
Wilson Middle School

Jane Adolf
Manzano Day School

John Wayne Prentice
Apache Elementary

Thomas Roskamp
Dowa Yalanne Elementary
Zuni, NM

David Cleary
Dowa Yalanne
Elementary
Zuni, NM

Rebecca Tydings
Rio Grande Nature Center

Helen Hunt
Governor Bent
Elementary

Connie Veitz
Marie Hughes Elementary

Murry Enggass
Governor Bent
Elementary

Reinhart Klein
Governor Bent Elementary

Gregory Goldstein
Martin Luther King
Elementary, Rio Rancho

Heidi Dooley
Marie Hughes
Elementary

Carl Simpson
Kirtland Elementary

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Help support this educational outreach program! Send your check payable to CNMAS with this form to Ron Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87114.



December 1998 January 1999

The Campaign for Safer Birds & Cats

The American Bird Conservancy has launched a citizen education and action campaign to end the massive and unnecessary loss of birds and other wildlife to predation by domestic cats. Scientists estimate that free-roaming cats (owned, stray, and feral) kill hundreds of millions of birds and possibly more than a billion small mammals in the U.S. each year. Cats kill not only birds that frequent our backyards, such as the Eastern Towhee, American Goldfinch, and Song Sparrow, but also WatchList species such as the Snowy Plover, Wood Thrush, and Black-throated Blue Warbler, and endangered species such as the Least Tern and Piping Plover. Not only are birds and other wildlife at risk, but cats who roam free often lead short and painful lives, living on average less than 5 years, whereas indoor cats often live to 17 or more years of age.



The National Audubon Society advocates responsible ownership of all pets. If you are a cat owner and would like a list of suggestions as to how to minimize their impact on wildlife, please contact: Susan Roney Drennan, Vice President for Ornithology, National Audubon Society, 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; email sdrennan@audubon.org, or check out the citizen education page on Audubon's web site at www.audubon.org/bird/cat/.

Important Information

Wildlife Rescue

If you find a sick or injured bird, call 344-2500.

Rare Bird Alert

To learn about sightings all over the state or to report a rare sighting, the number in Albuquerque is 323-9323. e-mail: Pinyonjay@aol.com

Bat in Trouble?

Call Talking Talons before you intervene.
281-1133 or 281-1515

Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in the Feb./Mar. 1999 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by January 12. Contact Browning Coke at 256-9130 or email bcokenm@aol.com.

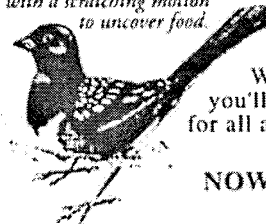
Straight from the Horse's Mouth: Conservation Services Division Plan

These remarks are by Director Jerry Maracchini excerpted from the minutes of the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission meeting on September 24, 1998.

"We need to repeal the statute that legislatively created our CSD. The reason is when the CSD was created by the legislature in 1993 it came with the proviso that money should be appropriated from the general fund to support some of its activities, most of the activities are already funded by game protection fund money. The majority of the work that CSD does is hunting and fishing dollars related. We do not think that the argument regarding whether the department needs general fund money will ever go away. We do not believe that we will continue to get general fund money. We would like the act repealed leaving the language in that maintains that the department has the authority to continue working on the provisos that are in the legislation as far as the authority to work on non-game species. We have the Wildlife Conservation Act, which would allow us this authority. We would like to reorganize the CSD so that it is more effective and representative of the financial and status and employees that we have. We do not think that we need to have a legislatively created CSD. The work that the CSD does will not go away, we have no intention of disbanding or stopping any of the programs."

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Hon. Bill Redmond
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(202) 225-6190

Hon. Heather Wilson
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
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(505) 983-4609

Bosque del Apache NWR
(505) 835-1828

US Fish and Wildlife Service
500 Gold Avenue, SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Regional Director (505) 766-2321
Refuges and Wildlife (505) 766-2036
Habitat Conservation (505) 766-2914

Sandia Ranger District
US Forest Service
Clifford Dils, Acting District Ranger
11776 Highway 337
Tijeras, NM 87059
(505) 281-3304

**New Mexico Department
of Game and Fish**
Villagra Building
P.O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87503-0001
(505) 827-6681

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CNMAS Phone Number: 255-7622
CNMAS Home Page: <http://www.rt66.com/peacmyer/cnmas.htm>

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Cindy Clark 2147 Black Willow Dr. NE 87122
home 822-1467 work 332-4737

INFORMATION • FEDERAL JUNIOR DUCK STAMP CONTEST

JoAnn Roll Bosque del Apache NWR (505) 835-1828

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Charlotte Green 808 Freeman Avenue NW 87107
Sei Tokuda 3008 Marble Avenue NE 87106 phone 266-2480

NEW MEXICO COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE/PARTNERS IN FLIGHT REP

Jonalyn Yancey 860 State Road 344, Edgewood, NM 87015
work 884-6807 home 286-2949

EDITOR, BURROWING OWL

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