

EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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MAY 2010

Congratulations Jill

Eurobodalla Shire honoured Jill as the 2010 Senior Citizen of the Year on 24 March. The nomination acknowledged her strong commitment to the preservation of the environment and to community education, and her active volunteer role in Red Cross Telecross and Landcare.

There were reports of Mrs Whiter relating a very amusing tale of an old colonial in Africa giving her advice that she get a hobby because boredom can lead to lowering the level of the gin bottle! So she took up birdwatching which leads us to share in her wealth of knowledge to-day.

Demetrios Bertzeletos and his studies

Local members will be familiar with this young man who looks at nature so perceptively, usually through a camera lens. When asked, Demetrios provided the following information.

Four years ago, I came to Australia in the hopes of studying biology, the love of my life. Despite ANU not having an ornithological bachelor, the zoology and genetics courses offered were more than sufficient for my interests and in the ensuing three years I learnt much regarding life. This ranged from its interactions with its environment, the driving forces behind its behaviour, cells and the DNA contained within them and how all interact in its evolution.

The highlight of my undergraduate career was undertaking a special topics course, under the supervision of Dr Naomi Langmore, studying the range expansion of the Common Koel into SE Australia. From the data I was generously provided with from both ENHS and COG, we found evidence suggesting that the prevalence of Red Wattlebirds in suburbia is one of the reasons behind this expansion. Interestingly, it seems that the two species met around the Sydney area in the mid 19th century allowing for the host switch to occur and that Koels in our area parasitize mainly Wattlebirds (keep your eyes out for chicks reared by other species: Orioles, Friarbirds and Figbirds in particular as these are the main hosts in the north). I've been informed by Naomi that she's attempting to get this work published, and if it is I will certainly let the Society know.

This year, I am undertaking an honours project between CSIRO and ANU titled: 'The phylogenetic and phylogeographic relationships of parrot featherlice and their hosts around the Eyrean Barrier of southern Australia'. In layman's terms, I am basically looking at the evolutionary histories of lice and five parrot species, searching for signs of co-evolution between the parasites and the host and if the barrier has influenced this at all.

I am still in the process of gathering data and I am hoping for some interesting results. No one has looked at the evolutionary relations between parrots and their louse fauna anywhere in the world.

Given the opportunity, I wish to thank the Society and its members for all the wondrous outings we've had together and for giving me access to their database for the Koel project. I look forward to seeing you all again soon. Demetrios

WHAT TO EXPECT IN JULY-AUGUST

July is a month of which I am not terribly fond, it is a bit too cold and dark and though August is not all that much better, it does bring the first summer-breeding migrants and that reminds us that spring will soon be here. However, July still has its high moments; in the woodlands and on the farms, Rose and Scarlet Robins, the rare Flame and the even rarer Pink to entrance us, the Spotted Pardalotes singing their little heads off and the first Fan-tailed Cuckoo trill. At sea, the albatrosses and Australasian Gannets, Fluttering Shearwaters and White-fronted Terns; and the delightful little Double-banded Plovers pottering round estuaries and lakes. The Fairy-wrens begin to assume their courting colours, the Magpies ravage doormats and pick up sticks for new nests, and the Australian Ravens are either refurbishing last year's or building anew. The Grey Butcherbirds are in full song but don't begin building till the first week in August. And it is in August that the Olive-backed Orioles, Noisy Friarbirds and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters return to set the woodlands ringing as they settle in to choose mates, claim territories and begin the spring breeding. In these months, the reptiles and frogs are resting quietly in their chosen cold weather retreats and the insect population is drastically reduced. Sometimes an echidna appears in the midday warmth, waddling about looking for a feed of the ants that continue to be reasonably lively right through winter. In woodland and forest the early wattles are pools of brightness and the first orchids poke their heads through the thin soil on stony hillsides. Not bad for a couple of months that can look somewhat unpromising. JW

A Good Season for Butterflies



Common Brown male (on left) and female photographed perched on his own finger by Demetrios Bertzeletos January 2009.

December was a dead loss for the butterfly fancier and January wasn't much better, though a variety of Skippers appeared late in the month and spent a week or so feeding on the hybrid Lantana. Both the Ochres, Orange and Splendid, side by side, a Lilac Grass-skipper and Spotted, Painted and Flame Sedge-skippers, a few little Narrowbrand Grass-dart and a robust Greenish Darter. The nymphs started to appear in the same month and we had a nice array of the usual browns, with a Yellow Admiral and the first Monarch, just for interest. It wasn't until 4 February that I saw my first Orchard Swallowtail, a

species that usually emerges in October or November out here at Guerilla Bay. In March things became quite exciting with the first sighting since February 1992 of a Lesser Wanderer, followed by three or four of the Small Grass Yellow that we don't count on seeing all too often. There were good numbers of all the browns, specially female Common Brown, Brown Ringlet and a few Australian Painted Lady and hordes of Meadow Argus fluttering up from the grassy roadsides, the most I've seen for years. But the Monarch stayed away right through the month and was not seen again till the middle of April. Then on one glorious day I had a Blue Triangle, the Monarch and a female Varied Eggfly all feeding on the Lantana. Now, at the beginning of May, the numbers are declining, though the beautiful Monarch is still wafting about. I took a brief trip inland to the south-west slopes, round Junee and Narrandera, in early April and encountered a huge migration of Australian Painted Lady, often seeing 500 or more clustering round flowering shrubs. I can remember only one such migration here on the coast in the last 28 years, so these movements aren't an annual event. Such a pity, for they are a delight. JW.

Superb Fairy-wren Oddities

We come across a lot of interesting behaviour by accident in our wanderings but this one was a real gem. We have a prolific Superb Fairy-wren, colour banded Red on Black. She has had seven successful nests out of nine that we know of since December 2006. There were three this year, two of them successful. For the nest in question, her third, she had seven helpers: four males (two were young birds from last year's nests) and three young from her second nest. In the nest there were two young and one unhatched egg and we were lucky enough to witness the young leaving at 1300 on January 18.

We were about 20 metres away, looking at other things, when we noticed a lot of activity going on round the nest. Birds seemed to be coming and going and looking into the nest but they weren't carrying food. This went on for about ten minutes without Red and Black appearing; she then arrived with a very big grub, thick and shiny and about 3 cm long. She went to the nest and immediately one of the young fluttered out and perched precariously about 20 cm away. This resulted in a flurry of activity from the entire group, with some birds sitting next to the young one and others bringing it food. We left at this point in case the young one moved in our direction. The next morning we found both

young birds perched in the sun-bathed Macrozamia and being fed by the equivalent of a Fairy-wren conveyor belt. We wonder how the group knew that the fledglings were about the leave the nest. **SMG**.

FIELD MEETINGS. Saturday 12 June, L. Brunderee. Take the Potato Point Road from Bodalla and meet at the Fire Station on left-hand side before Potato Point at 2 p.m. Lake and woodland birds.

Sunday 27 June, Nangudga L. Meet at Narooma Visitors Centre at 9 a.m.

Saturday 10 July, Burrewarra Point. Take the Guerilla Bay turn-off from George Bass Drive and meet at Point car park at 2 p.m.

Sunday 25 July, Ringlands. Meet at Narooma Visitors Centre at 9 a.m. Rain forest leads to bushland next to Wagonga Inlet.

NEW MEMBER. We welcome Lucy Gibson from Dalmeny.

INTERESTING AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Three **Australasian Shoveler** at Comerang in Apr. (JC)

Of interest: a **New Zealand Storm Petrel** was recorded off Ulladulla - species had been declared extinct but was recorded recently on an offshore island in NZ.

(PJP) submitted field notes on a single **Dunlin** at TS estuary on 5 Jan.; this record is under consideration by the NSW Rarities Committee. We believe there is no previous record in NSW.

The Field Meeting at Monga on 28 Mar: **Pilotbird** calling; up to 5 **Crescent Honeyeater**; a very late flowering Monga Waratah, and flowering Pinkwood showered us in white petals.

Brown Thornbill nest building at MO (NM) in Apr.

Migrating Yellow-faced Honeyeater, one hour counts at MHS in Apr. (JM): 9th 3,500, 13th 11,500, 21st 27,500.

Up to 3 White-breasted Woodswallow at Pedro Swamp in Apr. (JM)

Yellow-bellied Glider found dead at Lilli Pilli (JT).

Up to 400 **Grey-headed Flying Fox** at BBWG (EA).

Single Varied Eggfly butterfly at BP and Pedro Swamp in Apr. (JW/JM). Last recorded in 1998.

VULNERABLE AND THREATENED SPECIES

Eastern Osprev: Mar: 1 or 2 at Durras.

Square-tailed Kite: 1 at Mystery Bay Mar. and Apr.

Bush Stone-curlew: no reports.

Australian Pied Oystercatcher: Mar: 10 at Brou L.; max. 7 at TS estuary; 4 at MYA River; 2 at Durras, NA and Mystery Bay. **Apr:** max. 25 at Brou L.; 20 at Coila and WL; up to 18 at TS estuary; 4 at Long Bch; 2 at Mystery Bay. **Sooty Oystercatcher: Mar:** 11 at Mystery Bay; 8 at Broulee Is; 6 on Pedro Bch; max. 4 at Candlagan Ck; 3 at Durras, BP and Long Bch; 2 at Lilli Pilli. **Apr:** 6 at Mystery Bay; 3 at Long Bch, BP and MHS; 1 at Coila and TS.

Lesser Sand Plover: Mar: 3-5 at TS estuary. **Apr:** 4-12 same place.

Hooded Plover: Mar: 5 at WL including 3 juveniles. **Sanderling: Apr:** 3 at TS estuary; 1 at Mystery Bay.

Glossy Black Cockatoo: Mar: 3 including young at PDD, Pedro Swamp, Pedro, Mystery Bay; 3 at Bergalia; 2 at BP;

call at MKS. Apr: 4 at Pedro; max. 3 at Pedro Swamp, Bergalia and Bodalla; 2 at PDD.

Powerful Owl: Mar: call at MKS. Apr: 1 at BP.

Barking Owl: Mar: call at Comerang. Apr: 1 at Pedro; 2 calling at West Flat.

Scarlet Robin: Mar: 1 or 2 at Pedro Swamp. Apr: 1 or 2 at Pedro Swamp and Bergalia.

Olive Whistler: a male reported at Bingie in Mar.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SYSTEMATIC LIST RECORDS

The following records are from March and April 2010.

GROUND BIRDS. Up to 10 **Stubble Quail** at Comerang (JC).

WATERSIDE. Max. 270 Black Swan; Aust. Wood Duck, Pacific Black, Chestnut and Grey Teal, Musk Duck all breeding; 6 Little Penguin surfing the breakers at Broulee, 1 at Durras; max. 30 Aust. Grebe and 2 dy at Pedro Swamp, on nest at Belowra (JM/JC); up to 67 Aust. White Ibis and 180 Straw-necked; max. 69 Royal Spoonbill at TS estuary, up to 48 at Trunketabella, max. 6 at MYA, 3 at BBWG, 2 at Comerang. Up to 4 Striated Heron at TS estuary, singles at Mummaga L. and NA; first return of Cattle Egret at MYA 13 Apr., 56 at BBWG, 6-9 at Comerang (JW/EA/JC); 1-3 White-necked Heron in MYA, including a juvenile, nest with 4 chicks at MYA in Mar., single at Bergalia (JF/MC/GR/WN); up to 5 Eastern Great Egret; max. 18 White-faced Heron at Pedro Swamp including

immatures; up to 25 **Little Egret** at Trunketabella, 24 at Brou L. (PJP/BS); 3 **Eastern Reef Egret** at Broulee, 2 at MHS, singles at BP, TS estuary and Mystery Bay (FM/JM/JW/MA); max. 50 **Pelican**; up to 15 **Aust. Gannet** at BP; **Cormorant** maxima 45 **Little Pied**, 125 **Little Black**, 4 **Pied**, 18 **Great**; 1-3 **Darter** at TS estuary, single at Comerang.

RAPTORS. 1 or 2 **Kestrel**; 2 **Aust. Hobby** feeding on dragonflies at Pedro Swamp, singles elsewhere; 2 **Brown Falcon** at Comerang, 1 at Belowra and Mystery Bay; 1 or 2 **Peregrine** at Pedro Swamp, singles at BP, TS estuary; a **Black-shouldered Kite** at TS and MYA; up to 5 **Whistling Kite** at TS estuary, 1 or 2 elsewhere; max. 7 **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** including many immatures at TS estuary; single **Swamp Harrier** at Barlings and PDD (JW/JF); 2 **Grey Goshawk** at PDD, 1 at MO and Mystery Bay (JF/NM/MA); single **Brown Goshawk** at Pedro Swamp and Bergalia; 1 **Collared Sparrowhawk** at MKS, PDD, Pedro Swamp and Comerang; 1-3 **Wedge-tailed Eagle**; **Little Eagle** 1 at Barlings and Bergalia.

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CRAKES, RAILS, GALLINULES & BUTTON-QUAIL. Up to 10 **Purple Swamphen,** young at Comerang; max. 8 **Dusky Moorhen,** young at Comerang, nest at Pedro Swamp; 1-3 **Eurasian Coot** at Pedro Swamp. Probable **Painted Button-quail** at MO in Apr. (NM)

WADERS. Up to 14 **Masked Lapwing**; max. 15 **Pacific Golden Plover** at TS estuary, 7 at Mystery Bay, some in breeding plumage (GR/WN/PJP/MA); up to 85 **Red-capped Plover** at TS estuary, 45 at Brou L., 30 at Coila, 26 at WL, 7 on Pedro Bch, 4 at Mystery Bay; first return of **Double-banded** at TS estuary 12 Apr., max. 16 (PJP/GR/WN); 2 **Black-fronted** at MO (NM); max. 111 **Bar-tailed Godwit**, some in breeding colours; up to 7 **Whimbrel**; max. 9 **Eastern Curlew**; up to 43 **Red-necked Stint** at TS estuary.

SKUAS, GULLS & TERNS. Max. 225 **Silver Gull** at NA (BS); up to 12 **Caspian Tern** at TS estuary; no more than 50 **Crested Tern,** juveniles at TS estuary; 1 **White-fronted Tern** at BP.

OTHER NON-PASSERINES. Up to 30 Rock Dove in MYA; max. 8 White-headed Pigeon including immatures; no more than 4 Spotted Dove; Brown Cuckoo-Dove calling at MKS; up to 20 Common Bronzewing; Crested Pigeon widespread, max. 18 at BP; no more than 6 Wonga Pigeon; 1 or 2 Peaceful Dove at PDD and Comerang; max. 14 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo; up to 6 Gang-gang; numbers of Little Corella in MYA built up in Apr. to a max. of 200; up to 21 Sulphur-crested; max. 30 Rainbow Lorikeet, 30 Musk, 20 Little. Four Fan-tailed Cuckoo at MO, fewer elsewhere, calls widespread; single Horsfield's-Bronze calling at OMBS, 1 immature at PDD (TH/JF); up to 4 Shining Bronze at MO, calls at PDD and Pedro Swamp (NM/JF/JM); 1 Channel-billed at Mystery Bay in Mar. (MA); 1 Southern Boobook at Pedro, calls at PDD, MKS, Pedro Swamp, Bergalia, Comerang (JS/BA/SMG/JM/DHK/JC); up to 5 Tawny Frogmouth at BP, regular pair at Mystery Bay, 1 at OMBS and TS; late White-throated Nightjar call at PDD (BA); Aust. Owlet-nightjar calls at Comerang and Pedro Swamp; up to 30 White-throated Needletail at Belowra, max. 8 at PDD and Comerang, 1 at Durras; 2 Dollarbird at PDD; Kookaburra widespread; 2 Sacred Kingfisher at Candlagan Ck, 1 at Bingie, Bergalia, TS estuary and Comerang in Mar. (HR/PJP/DHK/JC); 2 Azure Kingfisher at Comerang, 1 or 2 at TS estuary.

PASSERINES: Single Superb Lyrebird at Kianga and MYA SF, call at MKS; max. 6 White-throated Treecreeper at PDD, 2 Red-browed at MO (JF/NM); max. 4 Striated Pardalote at Pedro Swamp, 2 at Comerang, 1 at MO and Mystery Bay, calls at Monga (JM/JC/NM/MA/FM): 6 Brown Gerygone at Mystery Bay, max. 4 at PDD and Pedro Swamp, 2 at BP and TS; up to 4 White-throated at Belowra (JC). 4 White-eared Honeyeater at MO, 1 at MYA SF and Mummaga L., call at Pedro Swamp; single Fuscous at TS and Pedro Swamp; Brown-headed at Monga, PDD, Pedro Swamp, MO, MYA SF, TS, Belowra; up to 10 White-naped, dy at Pedro Swamp; max. 16 Noisy Friarbird; female Scarlet Honeyeater at MHS and Mummaga L. (MC/FM); max. 12 White-fronted Chat at TS estuary; 2 Rose Robin at Comerang and MO, 1 or 2 at MYA SF; 1 at PDD, calls at Monga and MKS; Varied Sittella 12 at TS estuary; up to 8 at PDD; 7 at Comerang; 5 at MO; 4 at Belowra; 3-12 at Pedro Swamp; 4 Rufous Whistler at Belowra, 2 at Comerang, Pedro Swamp, 1 at MHS, MO, Mystery Bay; 2 Crested Shrike-tit at PDD, 1 at MO; 3 Rufous Fantail at Mummaga L., 1 or 2 at PDD, singles at MKS, Bingie, MO, TS and Comerang; 2 Black-faced Monarch (1dy) at Comerang in Mar. (JC); Leaden Flycatcher to end Apr.; single Restless Flycatcher at Long Bch, Bergalia, TS estuary, Comerang and Belowra (BMV/DHK/ GR/WN/PJP/JC); up to 16 Dusky Woodswallow; Cicadabird calls to 5 Apr. at Pedro Swamp; 2 White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike at Comerang, Pedro Swamp, 1 at BP (JC/JM/JW); Aust. Figbird in MYA and TS; 3 Olive-backed Oriole at MO, 2 at Comerang, 1 or calls at BP, PDD, Pedro Swamp, Pedro, TS and Mystery Bay; 2 Little Raven at TS Estuary (PJP); up to 60 Aust. Raven at Comerang; max. 9 White-winged Chough; a Satin Bowerbird attending a bower at Mossy Pt. and a dy being fed at PDD (ABB/BA); a Bassian Thrush at MYA SF (JH); up to 150 Starling; over 200 Tree Martin at Comerang; small groups of Silvereye moving north both months; 1 Golden-headed Cisticola at Comerang in Mar.; 1 Mistletoebird or calls at MO, Mummaga L., Pedro Swamp and Pedro; up to 12 **Aust. Pipit** at Comerang, 6 at Belowra, 3 at Coila, 2 on Eurobodalla Rd, one in MYA and TS; max. 8 **Diamond Firetail** at Belowra, nest building in Mar.

MAMMALS. Single **Echidna**; **Spotted-tailed Quoll** scats at Pedro Swamp; 1 **Sugar Glider** at Pedro, calls at BP and Pedro Swamp; possible **Squirrel Glider** calls at Pedro Swamp; up to 3 **Brushtail Possum**; max. 20 **Eastern Grey Kangaroo**; up to 5 **Red-necked** and **Swamp Wallaby**; single **Fox** and calls; 4 **Bottle-nosed Dolphin** at MO, 3 at Candlagan Ck, 2 at TS estuary (JH/HR).

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS. Up to 15 Snake-necked Turtle at Comerang; Dark-flecked and Pale Garden Sunskink still out; 1 Weasel Skink at BP and Mossy Point; 1 Eastern Blue-tongue; 1-3 Jacky Lizard; max. 10 Eastern Water Dragon; 1 or 2 Lace Monitor at BP, Pedro Swamp, Pedro, Brou L.; a Diamond Python at Comerang; Red-bellied Black Snake still out; small White-lipped Snake after froglets at Pedro Swamp (JS/JM). The rain in February resulted in many frog sp. breeding, Common Eastern Froglet; Brown-striped Frog; Spotted Grass Frog; Haswell's Froglet; the Toadlets: Brown, Smooth, Tyler's; the Tree Frogs, Bleating, Brown, Jervis Bay, Peron's, Leaf-green, Tyler's, Verreaux's.

INSECTS.

The Spiders: Golden Orb, St Andrew's Cross, Huntsman, White-tailed, Leaf-curling, Little Striped Wolf, Water, Spiny, Crab, Daddy Long Legs.

The Beetles: Ladybirds and Dung.

The Dragonflies and Damselflies: Many reports of blue and red coloured dragon and damselflies. The red include, Wandering Percher, Scarlet Percher and Common Glider; the blue, Common Bluetail, Aurora Bluetail and Blue Skimmer.

MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES. The Moths: hundreds and thousands of Bogongs making their autumn migration; other moths include Hakea, Red-lined Geometrid, Emeralds, Wattle Snout, Gum Snout, White-stemmed Wattle, Eye-spot, Heliotrope, Magpie, Green-blotched. The Butterflies: Orange and Splendid Ochre, Barred Skipper, Greenish Darter, Macleay's Swallowtail, Blue Triangle, Orchard Swallowtail, White Migrant, Small and No Brand Grass Yellow, Imperial and Black Jezebel, Cabbage White, Brown and Grey Ringlet, Varied Swordgrass, Common and Spotted Brown, Meadow Argus, Aust. Painted Lady, Yellow Admiral, Monarch, Lesser Wanderer, Common Pencil-blue, Wattle and Plumbago Blue, Common Grass Blue.

Blossom. Eucalyptus tricarpa, Acacia falcata, A. ulicifolia, A. terminalis, Banksia integrifolia, Pseuderanthemum variabile, Lagenifera gracilis, Arthropodium milleflorum, Pratia purpurascens, Oxylobium ilicifolium, Glycine clandestina, Stylidium graminifolium, Comesperma volubile, Synoum glandulosum, Leptorhynchos nitidulus, Parsonsia straminea, Telopea mongaensis, Eucryphia moorei, Leucopogon lanceolatus, Brunoniella pumilo, Phragmites australis, Hibbertia aspera, Daviesia ulicifoli, Commelina cyanea, Correa reflexa. Berries: Einadia hastata, Tasmannia insipida. Fungi: Aseroe rubra, Amanita ananiceps, A. farinacea, A. cineroeannulosa, Lycoperdon scabrum, Geastrum triplex.

Weather. Warm autumn, fine, sunny and mild. **Rainfall: Mar:** 68mm at BP, 48mm at MKS, 67mm at Pedro Swamp, 34.5mm at TS, 35mm at Comerang. **Apr:** 18mm at BP, 8mm at Pedro Swamp, 6mm at TS, 2mm at Comerang.



This is the corner where members place interesting articles or publish their queries. We encourage you to send items to the Editor.



We have a repeat performance of these Cattle Egret (DB April 2009) reported by Eric Andrew at the BBWG this issue in WATERSIDE. Looking like balloons or plastic bags before they disperse to paddocks and their more familiar settings.

CONTRIBUTORS ABBREVIATIONS

BA	B Allan, PDD	JM	J Morgan, Pedro Swamp	BB	Batemans Bay
MA	M Anderson, Mystery Bay	WN	W Nelson, TS	BBWG	BB Water Gardens
EA	E Andrew, SB	PJP	P Parker, TS	BI	Bermagui
ABB	A&B Bellingham, Mossy Pt	HR	H Ransom, Mossy Pt	BP	Burrewarra Point
JC	P&J Collett, Comerang	GR	G Rayner, TS	CO	Congo
MC	M Crowley, MHS	JS	J Sagar, Pedro	ERBG	Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens
JF	J Fearn, PDD	BS	B Scales, NA	MH	Moruya Heads N & S
SMG	M&S Guppy, MKS	JT	J Thompson, Lilli Pilli	MKS	Maulbrooks Rd S
JH	J&J Houghton, TS	BMV	B&M Versey, Long Bch	MO	Meringo
TH	T Hunt, OMBS	JW	J Whiter, BP	MYA	Moruya
DHK	D&H Kay, Bergalia	FM	Field Meeting	NA	Narooma
RMcK	R Mackay, Canberra			NP	Newstead Pond
NM	N Montgomery, MO			OMBS	Old Man Bed Swamp
				PDD	Percy Davis Drive
				PP	Potato Point
				SB	Surf Beach
				TL	Tilba L.
				TN	Tomakin
				TS	Tuross Head
				WL	Wallaga L.

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