

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

# Burrowing Owl



October - November 2001 Issue

Volume 30 No. 6

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



To each and all,  
Right now we share collective grieving. Let's abide in the assurance  
of collective healing. Thank you for supporting and experiencing  
Nature in whatever way is meaningful and healing to you.

## In this Issue

CNMA Field Trip Reports	2	Children Welcome	4	Conservation Legacy	6
Thursday Birders	2	NM Audubon - Council Corner	4	Recycle Computers	6
Audubon Programs	2	We're always relied on the kindness of...	4	Book Review: Cranes: The Noblest Flyers	6
Another Trip Report	2	Festival of the Cranes	5	Sangre de Cristo Audubon Field Trips	6
CNMA Field Trip Schedule	3	Birding Tourism in New Mexico	5	Two Gifts In One!	7
HawkWatch Observations	3	Festivities For Feathered Folunteers	5	Audubon Adventures	7
Sevilleta Open House 2001	3	Election Day is October 2. VOTE!	6	Coming in October	7
What Species Am I?	4			Directory	(back page)



## CNMAS Field Trip Reports

by Sei Tokuda

### Sunday, August 29: *Bandelier and Jemez Falls*

Rebecca Gracey and Les Hawkins led this trip. There were six people on the trip, three of them from out of state. They saw 22 species, but did not see their target species, the Black Swift and the Three-toed Woodpecker. They came across a Black Bear at the monument, impressed the visitors with the beauty of N.M., and were able to produce the visitors' special target bird, a Roadrunner. It was seen in the front yard of the home of Beth Hurst-Waitz.

### Friday - Sunday, August 24 - 26: *Catron and Grant Counties/Datil and Glenwood Camping trip*

There were only two people of this trip, one of whom was leader Tim Parker. That made no difference to the birds, as 67 species were seen. These included Purple Martin at Apache Springs, Forster's Tern at Bill Evans Lake, Bridled Titmouse at the Gila River access owned by Nature Conservancy, and a Magnificent Hummingbird at the town of Mogollon. Pinyon Jays were seen in abundance, including one flock of 75 birds. (It seems that access to the Gila River along Highway 809 near Bill Evans Lake is no longer allowed. There are cables barring admission to parking areas and "No Trespassing" signs posted.) The camping provided beautiful sunsets and one calling Poorwill.

### Sunday, September 9: *Corrales Bosque*

On the way to El Malpais the birding group made a right turn at Coors Blvd. and headed for the Corrales Bosque. There were reports of high migration activity in the Albuquerque Rio Grande bosque. It was a beautiful day and 43 species were seen including a Dusky Flycatcher, Wilson's Warblers, Orange-crowned Warblers, and a possible Black-billed Magpie seen at a great distance. Also seen was a Snowy Egret flying over the Rio Grande. Five people enjoyed the trip.

### Sunday, September 16: *Quarai National Monument*

Ten people showed up on this beautiful Sunday morning. The most significant findings were the Brewer's and Clay-colored Sparrows, a large flock of Pinyon Jays, MacGillivray's, Wilson's and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Band-tailed Pigeons at Manzano Pond, and great views of the popular resident Rock Wrens.

## Thursday Morning Birding Group

Weekly birding outings every Thursday. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary. Call Margaret Wallen at 291-1595 for details of outings.

The *Burrowing Owl Newsletter* is published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October and December, by Central New Mexico Audubon Society, PO Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002. Subscription is free to National Audubon Society members, \$12 to nonmembers.

## Audubon Programs

All Central New Mexico Audubon Society meetings and field trips are open to the public. Meetings are at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, NW corner of Copper and Jefferson NE, 7:15 p.m., usually the third Thursday of the month.

### October 18:

*Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness*, a multimedia slide show documenting citizen efforts to designate public lands in southern Utah's spectacular canyon country as Wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act. This 20 minute journey through redrock splendor was made possible through the generous donation of photos, music and words from concerned Utahans who wish to pass this heritage onto future generations, which includes a special reading by Pulitzer Prize winning author Wallace Stegner from his famous *Wilderness Letter*. Presentation by Bob Brister, the Outreach Associate for Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, who also will give an update on the status of the Utah wilderness movement.

### November 8:

*Why are male birds so brightly colored? or What a bird will do to get a date.* - A presentation by Tim Parker

In many bird species, males produce ornate feathers, sing elaborate songs, and engage in vigorous displays. To the casual observer, it seems absurd that natural selection could allow animals to develop such apparently frivolous traits. However, we now know that many of these displays provide information to other members of the species about vigor, fighting ability, health, and so on. Tim Parker will present an informal discussion of ornamentation in birds including what females like, why they like it, and how honesty is enforced in male signaling. [See page 4 for an article by Tim Parker.]

## Another Trip Report

by Beth Hurst-Waitz

The Mt. Withington trip on Saturday Sept. 15 with Hart's Birdathon team was very beautiful - and dramatic weatherwise. Though we were "unscathed," as it were, by clouds, wind, rain, or lightning, all around us the sky gods were engaging - and so was The Rainbow.

At twilight, the chamisa bushes seemed to hang heavy in our headlights as we splashed through the considerable puddles in the ranch road "down" at 7,000, after our descent from 10,100. And heavy they were - with wet, mounded, soggy snow!

Flocks of American Pipit, a painter's view of male and female Red-billed Crossbill, and a Harrier being harried by a Sharp-shinned Hawk - at 10,100 feet! - were some of the day's feathered memories. Birds have the right idea: Viewing the world from a high perspective must be why they're so "up" lifted!



October - November 2001

## CNMA's Field Trip Schedule

### Sunday, October 7 - Otero Canyon and Cedro

This is a half-day trip and will be lead by Nick Vaughn. This area is noted for the variety of warblers that come through during this time of the year. Dress appropriately and bring water and snacks. Meet at 8 AM at the Four Hills Shopping Center (Central Avenue SE west of Tramway Blvd). Call Nick Vaughn at 265-1350.

### Saturday, October 13 - Sevilleta NWR Tours

Please join other CNMA's members in the tours of the refuge.

### Saturday, October 20 - Bosque del Apache

Join Art Arenholz on this trip to Bosque del Apache to view the early winter migrants. This is a good time of the year to study the Ross' Goose. Dress warmly; bring water, food, and snacks. The trip should end by 3 PM. Meet at 8 AM at the UNM physics department parking lot (NE corner of Lomas and Yale Blvd). Call Art (298-1724) or Sei (266-2480) for details.

### Saturday & Sunday, November 3 & 4 - Bosque del Apache Work & CNMA's Birding Days

This is the weekend that the Volunteers for Outdoors work in the refuge to prepare the trails, etc. for the visitors to the annual Crane Festival. Work usually starts at about 8:30 AM and ends before 4:30 PM, leaving ample time for early morning and late afternoon birding. Campsites and a Saturday night dinner will be provided for volunteers. Call Beth (898-8514) for details.

### Sunday, November 11 - Las Vegas, NWR

The closed parts of the Las Vegas NWR beyond Crane Lake are open for visitors during Sundays in November. This is a rare opportunity, and Tim Parker will lead interested birders to tour the refuge on the second Sunday in November. Dress warmly and bring lunch, water, snacks, etc. Meet at 8 AM behind the Winchell's Donut Shop in the Far North Shopping (NE corner of San Mateo and Academy Blvd). Call Tim (924-2296 or 277-3210) for details.

### Sunday, November 25 - Ladera Wash

This half-day trip will be led by Nick Vaughn, and the target birds will be the Black-throated, Rufous-crowned and Sage Sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, etc. Dress appropriately and bring water and snacks. Meet at 8 AM on the outside of the entrance to Boca Negra Park (on Unser Blvd, north of Montañito). Call Nick Vaughn at 265-1350 for details.

## HawkWatch Observations

Banders and volunteers are at the banding stations for the Manzano hawk watch through November 5. Call Bobbie Posey at 255-7622 for more information.



Central New Mexico Audubon Society assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending society-sponsored activities and will not be held liable for such accidents. You attend at your own risk.



## SEVILLETA OPEN HOUSE 2001 Saturday, October 13

### 4th Annual Sevilleta NWR/ La Joya Community Open House

Refuge Tours • Food • Booths  
Live Animal Exhibits

Generally closed to the public, the refuge is open for guided tours only at this Open House event! Exhibits and events at the visitors center are free and do not require registration.

~•~ Reservations are required for tours ~•~

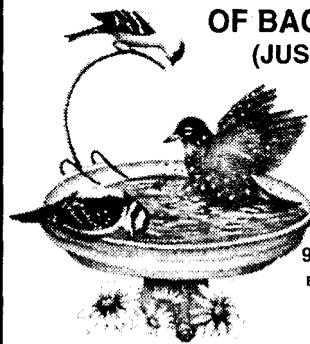
**Cost is \$6 per person for guided tours:**

Birding Tour ..... 6:30 - 9:30 am  
Historical Refuge Tour ..... 7 - 10 am  
Research Refuge Tour ..... 9 am - 12 pm  
Plant Tour ..... 10 am - 1 pm  
Geology Tour West ..... 1:30 - 5:30 pm  
Geology Tour East ..... 2 - 5:30 pm

Tours will meet and activities will be held at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, located off I-25 at exit 169  
For more info call for a brochure today (505) 864-4021

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*A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer,  
it sings because it has a song.  
~ Maya Angelou ~*



## What Species Am I?

by Timothy H. Parker

HOW DO YOU KNOW TO WHICH SPECIES YOU BELONG? For most of us, and for most birds, the solution is simple. Typically, young birds simply look at their parents and draw the obvious conclusion – “my mother is a goose (for example) so I also must be a goose.” Birds are not actually making a logical deduction, but instead are ‘imprinting’ on whomever is taking care of them after hatching. In imprinting, there is a brief window of time during which the young bird forms an attachment to the caretaker. However, imprinting is unreliable if your caretaker happens to belong to a different species. For instance, imprinting has caused problems for wildlife managers trying to rear endangered Whooping Cranes in the nests of the more common Sandhill Crane. In this case, the Whooping Cranes grew up to think they were Sandhills, and thus did not choose appropriate mates when they reached maturity. This is obviously not a natural situation, but under normal conditions, imprinting undoubtedly works well for Whooping Cranes.

What about birds who under natural conditions never meet their own parents? For instance, Brown-headed Cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other ‘host’ species and abandon them for the host species foster parents to incubate and rear. A young cowbird might have the same problem the young Whooping Cranes had – imprinting on the foster parents and then in adulthood mating with the wrong species. In addition to the Brown-headed Cowbird, there are dozens of other ‘brood parasite’ species worldwide that lay their eggs in other species’ nests. Also, several species in a group known as the Megapodes, found in Australia and nearby islands, bury their eggs in decomposing vegetation, near geothermic vents, or near other natural heat sources. When these eggs hatch, the young dig their way out and disappear into the forest. Young Megapodes and brood parasites all share the same problem: how to figure out what species they belong to despite the fact they never see their parents.

Recent research with Brown-headed Cowbirds appears to have found partial answers to this conundrum. Mark Hauber at Cornell University suspected that young cowbirds might actually look at their own feather coloration, and then seek out other individuals who looked like them. He took young cowbirds that had never seen another cowbird and dyed their feathers differently. These birds were then allowed to interact with each other. Individuals with the same dye pattern tended to associate with each other more than with individuals that were dyed other patterns. Thus cowbirds seem to decide who they are by looking at their own appearance.

Other mechanisms have also evolved that allow cowbirds to find members of their own kind. For instance, cowbirds have an innate tendency to associate with other individuals producing typical cowbird vocalizations. After locating other cowbirds by call, a young cowbird probably learns other cues that will help it more easily identify members of its own species in the future. Further studies are needed to understand how other species whose young are not raised by their parents learn to identify themselves, but these results from the study of cowbirds give us a good idea of where to look.

## Children Welcome

~• Parents, please read this! •~

Central New Mexico Audubon Society welcomes and encourages participation of young people in all our activities – both for their education and ours, for their enjoyment and ours, and for their future and ours.



If you can accompany your child, we welcome you. If you are unable to attend with your child, please remember two things: that you need to make arrangements with a consenting adult, before the day of the event, who agrees to accompany and supervise your child; and that you need to sign an *Agreement, Waiver and Release* form of Central New Mexico Audubon Society. This policy applies to any child under the age of 16. Children 16 and older are welcome to attend on their own, but we still require that the parent(s)/guardian sign a liability waiver on their child’s behalf.

You can get either form ahead of time from any trip leader or board member listed in our *Directory*.

We are blessed with the talents and irrepressible spirit of a whole new generation of young birders and conservationists. We dedicate ourselves to making their discovery of birds and Nature as safe and as fun as children deserve their world to be. Thank you for your cooperation.

## New Mexico Audubon - Council Corner

The next meeting of the Audubon Council is in Roswell on **October 20**. What a beautiful time to “sneak” a tour of Bitter Lake NWR while you’re sharing the viewpoints, accomplishments, and goals of Auduboners from every chapter in the state. Contact Beth Hurst-Waitz, 898-8514, for more details or if you want to carpool.

## We’ve always relied on the kindness of...

our volunteers. A warm feathery “thank you” to Laurel Ladwig, who stepped forward at our September meeting and volunteered to organize and catalog our Audubon slide collection. Laurel, we owe you a supersized bag of popcorn! Now if someone would just volunteer to use those newly organized slides to do Audubon presentations for Scouts, schools, seniors...



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October - November 2001

14th Annual  
**Festival of the Cranes**  
 Bosque del Apache  
 National Wildlife Refuge

November 15 - 18, 2001  
 Socorro, NM

## Festival of the Cranes

Time to get your festival program booklets and figure out how you can be on that tour with the refuge manager, still make it to the lecture with that well known photographer and not miss the field trip with your favorite birding buddies. The 2001 line up of field trips, lectures, classes, art events and children's activities is as impressive as always, and then some:

This year's festival marks the return of the **Boatdacious Birding** trip at Elephant Butte Lake which is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 14.

Our very own (oh can we say that, yes we will!)

**Christopher Rustay** will be leading a group of serious birders on a **Sparrow Walk** Saturday morning, Nov. 17.

Also quite noteworthy is the Saturday keynote address by **Pete Dunne**, well known author of *The Wind Masters: The Lives of North American Birds of Prey*, *Hawks in Flight*, and *Feather Quest: A North American Birder's Year*.

To get your festival program booklet, call Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR at 505-835-2077 or visit their web site at <http://www.friendsofthebosque.org/>

Please reserve your favorite activities early, because they can fill up quickly. Advance registration ends Nov. 10.

## Festival Festivities For Feathered Folunteers

We need YOU to help our Chapter make a strong presence at Bosque del Apache – the adopted refuge of Central New Mexico Audubon Society – during the Festival of the Cranes!

**Saturday and Sunday, November 3 and 4:**

We team up with the dedicated volunteers at *New Mexico Volunteers For The Outdoors* for this popular project, as we help get trails and other facilities ready for the thousands of visitors to the Festival. Work can be one or two days, it's never too hard, and it's always fun! Plus, who can resist the allure of being outdoors in early autumn in New Mexico, where the birds are!?!? Wear comfortable clothes, long pants and long-sleeved shirt. Bring gloves, hat, water, lunch, sun and bug screen. Saturday dinner is provided at the Refuge. Call Celia Nobles (884-1991) to RSVP, and tell her you're from Audubon!

**Saturday and Sunday, November 17 and 18:**

This is the 14th year Auduboners have helped greet visitors to this beautiful refuge for this famous event! We'll need staffers for two sites, the Phil Norton Photography Blind and the Audubon Council tent, to greet visitors, help them ID birds, share our Audubon vision and love of nature, and **GET TO WATCH BIRDS!!!** It's what we do best! Call Jeff Myers, 998-1502, or Beth Hurst-Waitz, 898-8514, to choose your slot. Thank you!

## Birding Tourism in New Mexico

Exciting news for birders who nest in, and migrate to, New Mexico! The New Mexico Department of Tourism is working with a consultant, Susan Keith, to develop promotional materials that will put the spotlight on the wonderful opportunities for birding ecotourism in the Land of Enchantment. Your CNMAS Chapter is gratified to have been included in some preliminary meetings with Susan, arranged through the ambassadorship of Christopher Rustay. Susan is already working on the first brochure! Here's what you can do to help right now: Dig out the brochures, flyers, bird trail maps – all those fun, attractive, colorful bird tourism promotional materials that you've collected from other states – and send them today to: Susan Keith, Culture to Culture, 5708 Tinnin Road, NW, 87107. Thanks – we'll keep you updated!



## Election Day is October 2. VOTE!

CNMAS endorses no politician. We do, however, support ideas and issues. The protection of Petroglyph National Monument has been a priority of our chapter for over ten years. Petroglyph National Monument, as you know, is a unit of the National Park System located on Albuquerque's West Side. In our view, it is a precious and fragile natural, cultural, and recreational resource. The most critical issue facing Petroglyph is the proposed extension of Paseo del Norte, a six-lane highway, through the monument.

Don't take our word on it. Call the candidates about this and other issues. Do make your choice based on an informed decision and consideration of ALL the issues important to you and, thus, to our community.

Supports **Protecting** Petroglyph National Monument from construction of Paseo del Norte:

		Campaign Phone #
Alan Armijo	No	242-1965
Jim Baca	Yes	266-3494
Martin Chavez	No	884-8049
Rick Homans	No	883-9135
James Lewis	No	232-4810
Mike McEntee	No	298-2344
Robert Schwartz	No	897-4640

## Conservation Legacy

"Conservation should be as American as apple pie." That's the first sentence in the flier, "Conservation Is Conservative," produced by the REP Environmental Educational Foundation. And what does "REP" stand for? **Republicans For Environmental Protection.**

Regardless your political affiliation, you might brush up on some history of environmental conservation in this country by visiting the REP website at <http://www.conservationisconservative.com>; calling 889-4576 in Albuquerque to request a brochure; or writing to them at 3200 Carlisle NE, Suite 105, 87110. CNMAS endorses no political party or candidate, but we do commend REP to your attention as a forum for the exchange of ideas and political networking.

## Recycle Computers

The Science Fair Office has announced in its September newsletter that corporations, businesses and individuals who want to get rid of outdated computers should call the Science Fair office at 277-4916, or contact them at [scifair@unm.edu](mailto:scifair@unm.edu). Don't throw your old computers away! Science Fair coordinators will pick up and deliver your computers to teachers and schools in need of this equipment.



## Cranes: The Noblest Flyers

In Natural History and Cultural Lore

A work of literature by Alice Lindsay Price

*Art Arenholz gives us a glimpse of this new book through his eyes in the following review:*

Birders who live near Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge naturally have a special affinity for cranes. In this new book, the author has something about cranes for everyone.

For those who are disappointed in the decision to start a new flock of Whooping Cranes, which will migrate from Wisconsin to Florida, she describes how that happened.

For those who just love cranes, she presents interesting facts and wonderful stories, mostly about Sandhill and Whooping Cranes.

For those inclined toward walking the tightrope between science and cultural lore, she mixes those two masterfully.

For those fascinated by cranes from around the world, she sprinkles solid information about the world's 15 crane species.

And now a secret: I am not really a lyrical guy, but I truly enjoyed reading this book, which is written in a style that is at times lyrical, at times scientific, at times poetic, at times storyteller.



And here's another secret: Audubon members will have a special opportunity to meet **Alice Lindsay Price** and to view cranes with her at **Bosque del Apache in January**, together with the Friends of Bosque del Apache. Watch for the date and more details in the next Burrowing Owl.

## Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society Field Trips

<http://www.rt66.com/peacmyer/scas/>

Oct. 13, Saturday: Maxwell NWR: Fall Migrants

Nov. 11, Sunday: Las Vegas NWR: Cranes & Waterfowl

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October - November 2001

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## Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in Dec 2001 - Jan 2002 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by **Nov. 15**. Contact Turtle-Bear at 265-6094 or [turtlebear@jensenbear.com](mailto:turtlebear@jensenbear.com). For advertisement inquiries, please contact Beth Hurst-Waitz, 898-8514 or [brave\\_e@juno.com](mailto:brave_e@juno.com).



## Audubon Adventures 2001-2002

Enclosed please find my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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Help support this educational outreach program! Send your check payable to CNMAS with this form to Audubon Adventures, c/o CNMAS Treasurer, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710.

## Coming in October:

### The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior

608 pages with nearly 800 color illustrations by David Sibley  
featuring essays from leading ornithologists on  
bird anatomy and behavior

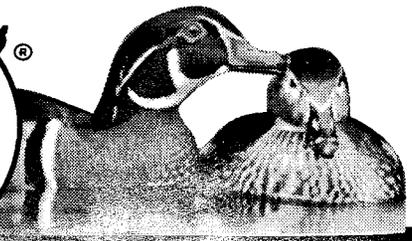
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#### WHOM TO CONTACT

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Membership Hotline  
(800)274-4201, chadd@audubon.org  
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Randall Davey Audubon Center  
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**Bosque del Apache NWR**  
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**Junior Duck Stamp Program**  
Laurie Rosenthal, staff  
Sharon Ingram, volunteer

**US Fish and Wildlife Service**  
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Albuquerque, NM 87102  
External Affairs Office (505)248-6911

**Sandia Ranger District**  
US Forest Service  
Clifford Dils, District Ranger  
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Tijeras, NM 87059  
(505)281-3304

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of Game and Fish**  
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Santa Fe, NM 87503-0001  
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<http://www.gmfs.state.nm.us>

#### DIRECTORY

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Webpage <http://www.rt66.com/peacmyer/cnmas/>  
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#### HOSPITALITY/PUBLICITY CHAIRPERSON

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Dianne Cress 256 Zena Lona NE 87123 work 841-2586 home 298-0085

**CONSERVATION CHAIRPERSON**  
**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS CHAIRPERSON**  
Jeffrey Myers 2208 Rozinante Ct. NW 87104 work 998-1502 home 843-8114  
[jmyers@peacocklaw.com](mailto:jmyers@peacocklaw.com)

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON** (for change of address only)  
Ed Dover 1421 San Carlos SW 87104-1040 242-5427 [edover@juno.com](mailto:edover@juno.com)

#### TREASURER

**AUDUBON ADVENTURES CHAIRPERSON**  
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