

# Tracks



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## From the Executive Director's Desk



There are many quotes about man's responsibility to the earth, to the environment, to his fellow man, and to the creatures with whom we share this planet, all making the unarguable point that such responsibility is the foundation of our survival as a species. One that caught my attention recently is Albert Einstein's perspective on our personal humanity, on our responsibility to ourselves :

***"A human being is a part of the whole universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a prison, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."***

At the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, we see that compassion in action every single day - individuals who see an animal or bird in distress and care enough to go out of their way to ensure the best attention possible. So far in 2011, our staff and volunteers have tended to almost 3,000 patients with a wide variety of ailments and responded to an almost equal number of telephone callers concerned about everything from ducklings unable to get out of a backyard pool to an orphaned fawn by the side of a freeway to a mourning dove nest balanced precariously on an eave over a much-used front door.

Occasionally we receive some patients that arouse more than their fair share of interest, mostly because they're an unusual sight in these parts. At one point earlier this year we had 14 Brandt's Cormorants, usually found in marine environments along the Pacific Coast, that were possibly blown off course by the severe weather in late Spring. And then there were the three young Western Gray Squirrels, native to California and Oregon, that came to the Center this summer. These shy, tree-living squirrels with white undersides and silver fur are not as common as the prolific and adaptable non-native Eastern Gray Squirrel, so it was a special joy to eventually release them back into the forests where they're most comfortable.

Our most recent unexpected patient was a majestic Golden Eagle with a severely broken wing. Sadly, despite compassion in action by WildRescue volunteers who clambered into a

gulch to rescue him and then brought him to the Center for intensive care, and the expert advice provided by specialists in Virginia and Minnesota, and the efforts of a renowned veterinary surgeon at the Medical Center for Birds, the eventual result was not a good one. Nonetheless, we are very grateful to our animal care and welfare partners here in California and around the country who consistently step forward to give our wildlife patients every opportunity for a positive outcome.

Several changes have taken place this spring and summer at the Wildlife Center. In early April we unveiled a long-awaited and much-needed acquisition - a brand new digital x-ray unit that allows hospital staff to make diagnoses onsite, thereby minimizing the stress on the injured animal and allowing for prompt treatment response. Then in June we said goodbye to Abigail Rindo, who returned to her home state of Wisconsin after ably staffing our front desk and enhancing our social media and web presence, and said hello to Amber Rindy, who comes to us from the Phoenix Zoo and brings a variety of skills to her position as Administrative Assistant. The presence of nine interns, most of whom are San Jose State pre-veterinary students, has been invaluable to our care and rehabilitation staff and we'll be sorry to see them leave when school begins again. And last but not least, the newest addition to our team is Brian Cook, an experienced Volunteer Coordinator, who has taken over those responsibilities from Jennifer Constantin, allowing her to devote all of her time now to building the Center's important Outreach and Education program.

As we enter the fall and winter months, continuing to care for sick and injured birds and animals, and educating the public on wildlife issues, we are grateful to everyone who stops what they are doing in their busy lives to bring these animals to us or call us for advice. We also want to thank all the school teachers and community organizations who request an educational presentation with one of our animal ambassadors and everyone who has supported us to date, whether through financial encouragement or by bringing a box of old blankets and towels to us. We deeply appreciate you all. Together, we widen ***"our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."***

Anita Templer

## Tracks

The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley is a California nonprofit organization that since 1993 has been committed to providing the highest quality care and rehabilitation to urban wildlife and to promoting a mutually beneficial and respectful coexistence between humans and wildlife in our communities.

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## Olive's Words of Wisdom *Seize the Season: Take Advantage of the Fall and Winter Months*



Olive is a Western Screech Owl and an educational animal at WCSV  
Photo: Dave Constantin

**Q.** I love wildlife, but don't want it living with me. What can I do to prevent this and when should I take action?

**A.** Late fall and winter are the best times of year to take care of your property and avoid uninvited animal tenants. Regardless of your location, whether you're in the heart of San Jose or the Saratoga foothills, it's only a

matter of time before you'll have wildlife encounters. Even if it seems novel and interesting initially, having wildlife in your home or certain areas of your yard can ultimately be unwanted, and in some cases, detrimental to all parties involved. Preventing problems from occurring is the easiest, most cost effective and sanity saving method by far. Here are some hoot-worthy helpful tips:

**Give your home a thorough perimeter check.** Wild animals look for even the tiniest entrances to potential den/nesting sites. They look for any location that's safe, easily defendable, and ideally close to food/water. Check all around your home for open or poorly secured vents/grates and any other holes or cracks. In late fall and winter, it's unusual to find dependent young, but be sure to check for any wildlife before closing these areas off completely. Don't forget to install or replace chimney caps.

**Wildlife proof your deck, shed, and fence.** Block access to these areas by attaching hardware cloth and burying it at least several inches into the ground.

**Make improvements to your yard.** Now's the time to trim your trees – when it's not nesting season! You can beautify your property without the worry of disturbing bird and squirrel nests. It's also a great opportunity to trim trees away from power lines and rooftops. This will help keep mammals like raccoons from accessing your home.

**Cover your pool.** Keeping the pool covered beginning in early spring, and keeping it on when not in use throughout the spring and summer, will help to avoid major headaches and time spent cleaning. Mating pairs of Mallard ducks look for open water sources to nest, and for the female to raise their ducklings for several months until they can fly. Those that have low vines, shrubs, or other ground cover nearby are particularly inviting. Blocking or removing these from around your pool/pond can also help.

Now's the time to use a little elbow grease to prevent animals and birds from taking up residence in your home environment and to enjoy your wildlife neighbors from afar. ♪♪

## Creature Feature *The Cedar Waxwing*

by Matthew de Tar, animal care volunteer and high school student

Thanks to a bright yellow-tipped tail and belly, light brown crest, black mask and cluster of deep red feathers on their wing tips it's hard to miss a Cedar Waxwing. Cedar Waxwings are small birds that are not only native to California but also found in Canada and as far south as Mexico. Thanks to its wide range the Cedar Waxwing is also known as Southern Waxwing, Canada Robin, Cedar Bird, Cherry Bird, or Recellet. The most prominent feature of the Cedar is the group of red feathers on the tip of their wings, a feature that is also shared with its relative the Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*).

Cedar Waxwing nests, which range from 12–16 cm in diameter, are loose cups made of grass and twigs and are

lined with softer materials. The Cedar Waxwing likes to nest in open forest areas where there is an abundance of fruit. Since they are also drawn to the sound of running water, you can often find them bathing in shallow streams.

Cedars will eat insects, but their diet mainly consists of fruit. Because of this, many Cedar Waxwings can become “drunk” when they gorge themselves on the fruit that has begun to ferment. This may sound funny but Cedars can injure themselves when “drunk” by slamming in to windows.

So if you see a Cedar Waxwing in your neighborhood, do the birds a favor and put a decal on your window to help protect this little, but very beautiful bird. ♪♪

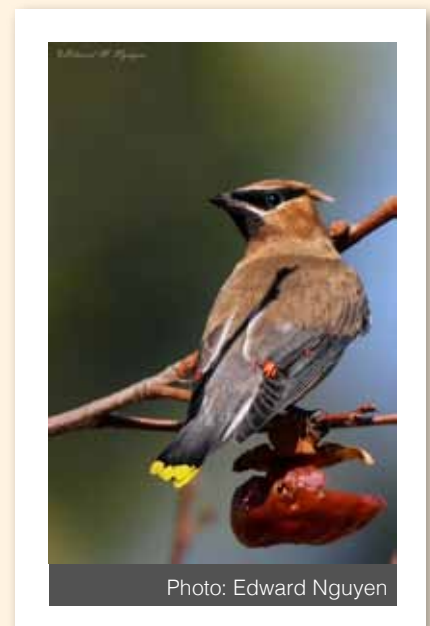


Photo: Edward Nguyen

## Western Burrowing Owl Gets Banded at the Center *by Jen Constantin*



Photo: Carole Baldwin



Photo: Jen Constantin

With their large, round eyes and small, non-threatening size, Western Burrowing Owls captivate with ease. These unique birds are the only owls that nest underground, preferring to let other animals like ground squirrels do the tough job of actually digging the burrow.

While burrowing owls are most active at dawn and dusk and have been seen hunting at all hours of day and night, they are most often referred to as diurnal (day active). This also adds to their appeal. What a wonderful treat to be able to see owls without having to lose sleep!

You'd think burrowing owls would be able to live the good life with all these things going for them. However, their habitat preference of dry, tree-less, open areas with short grasses and ground-dwelling mammals is the primary issue behind their decline in the Bay Area. These plots of land are vanishing rapidly, being replaced with subdivisions, strip malls, and other development. In California, burrowing owls are listed as a Species of Special Concern, and their numbers are dangerously low in the Bay Area.

On March 22, 2011, when an injured Western Burrowing Owl was brought to WCSV by a San Jose Airport employee, everyone was anxious. How injured was this bird, and would we be able to help keep the population alive by getting him back out there? While it wasn't clear what had caused the owl's injuries, WCSV's Wildlife Rehabilitation Supervisor, Ashley Kinney, found he was suffering from severe shock, abdominal bruising, and internal bleeding. Ashley found blood in his upper mouth and nasal cavity (glottis and choana, respectively), and in his droppings.

WCSV staff administered oxygen therapy (commonly used in these types of shock and trauma cases), steroids, antibiotics, and a bronchial dilator injection to prevent pneumonia caused by fluid-filled lungs. It took the burrowing owl three days to fully stabilize and he even began eating on his own by day five.

Two weeks after intake, this gorgeous owl was ready to be banded and have flight time in an outdoor aviary at WCSV. Jack Barclay, a renowned biologist who has devoted more than 20 years to burrowing owl conservation, paid a visit to the Center to personally band the bird for future identification. Using a sterilized plastic frozen juice container, he kept the

*Continued on page 5*



## Western Burrowing Owl. . . continued from page 4

owl's head covered and body in a perfect position to allow him to quickly place a metal band around each of the bird's legs.

After a week of regaining strength, getting reacclimated to the outdoors, and hunting live insects and rodents, the burrowing owl was ready to go home again. WCSV volunteers joyfully released him back where he had been found three weeks earlier, at the San Jose Airport. Since that time he has been spotted by Barclay on more than one occasion. We are all thrilled to have played role in giving this burrowing owl a second chance! ♪



Photo: Jen Constantin

### What's being done?

Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) holds regular public meetings to discuss local environmental issues and initiatives, such as those concerning Western Burrowing Owl habitats.



Photo: Carole Baldwin



Show your support of local wildlife with WCSV gear!

Shop our online store at:  
[www.wcsv.org/how-to-help/store](http://www.wcsv.org/how-to-help/store)

## Patient Gallery *Photos by Carole Baldwin*



Gray Fox receiving specialized care at WCSV after transferring in from another rehabilitation center.



American Kestrel recovering from trauma after being struck by a plane.



Bullock's Orioles orphaned after their nest had fallen to the ground.



Coyotes growing up wild at WCSV after being transferred in from another rehabilitation center.



# Patient Gallery . . . continued from page 6



Wildlife Rehabilitation Supervisor Ashley Kinney examines a Coyote that had been hit by a car.

Photo by Carole Baldwin



Sonoma Chipmunk raised with siblings at WCSV after their nest was removed from a car.

Photo by Traci Tsukida



Golden Eagle during examination. Radiographs taken later revealed multiple wing fractures.

Photo by Traci Tsukida



After you've enjoyed your copy of Tracks, please share it with others by taking it to a hospital waiting room, vet office, etc...



Great Blue Heron who initially came in too weak and sick to fly.

Photo by Carole Baldwin

# Passion in Action *Above and Beyond*

by Ashley Kinney

In June of 2011, a Mourning Dove flew into a window and caught the attention of an animal lover. This dove could not have fallen into better, more compassionate hands. The man who found her knew that when a bird hits a window they sometimes snap out of the trauma after 10–30 minutes, so with great hope that she would recover on her own he gave her space and time. After 30 minutes he returned to find she could not fly away and so decided to bring her to the Wildlife Center.

During his visit this very sincere man expressed great appreciation for the Center and said that he has always supported places like WCSV. He said that although he does not have much, he wanted to donate the money he had

saved from recycling bottles and cans to our wildlife hospital.

Soon after arrival, the Mourning Dove was assessed for injuries and hospital staff found soft-tissue damage around the radius and ulna of the right wing, slow pupillary response, and bruising to the head and abdomen. The bird was lethargic and in shock. Staff treated her with fluids, oxygen therapy, pain management, and anti-inflammatory medications.

This caring and generous man's donations went directly toward the animal's care. It was because of him and all he did to get the Mourning Dove to WCSV that we were able to release the bird after one month of care. This story has inspired and touched many hearts at the Center. 🌿



## Acknowledging Some of our Invaluable Partners in Service:

Adobe Animal Hospital  
Animal Eye Specialists  
Cameron Veterinary Hospital  
Happy Hollow Park and Zoo  
Los Gatos Birdwatcher  
Medical Center for Birds  
Tina Peak, DVM  
WildRescue

*In Remembrance of  
Dale Kochenburg  
June 17, 2011*





## Education and Outreach *Wild versus Tame*

by Jen Constantin

Each year the Wildlife Center admits at least one wild animal that had been exposed to a pet lifestyle. Typically these animals have not received a proper diet, veterinary care, exposure to siblings or surrogate parents, housing and exercise necessary for their age and species, and have had too much contact with people and domestic animals. Undoubtedly the caretakers had the best of intentions, but without proper care and too much human contact, these animals can quickly become non-releasable. Thankfully, many do eventually get to WCSV, where they receive the care they need and get every chance to once again lead a normal, wild life.

In May of this year, a tame crow was brought in to WCSV. He reportedly was found on the ground – a healthy bird that couldn't fly quite yet. More than a month later he was brought into WCSV lacking any injuries, but was thin, in poor body condition, and far too comfortable around people. The first steps were to get him on a proper diet, limit human contact, and begin the process of socializing with other crows. It was immediately clear that exposure to other crows was terrifying him, and that successful release would be impossible. He could no longer lead the life of a normal crow. Because these birds are so social, they can easily become attached to whatever species they have the most contact with at a young age. Unfortunately for this crow, he'll have to live out his life at WCSV, but he was lucky that we were able to take him on as a wildlife ambassador. State law requires that non-releasable wildlife become part of a licensed education program, or be humanely euthanized. In the near future, you can look for him on exhibit at WCSV.

One month later, WCSV accepted a coyote pup transferred from Native Animal Rescue (NAR), a rehabilitation center in Santa Cruz. NAR had already warned WCSV staff that this was not a typical coyote. The family that took him to NAR admitted keeping him for some time, and clearly had cared for him like a domestic puppy. WCSV staff were careful to create a more natural environment which included a den, a large amount of twigs and branches, and essentially no human contact. They also gave him a normal "wild" coyote diet consisting of fruit, egg, mice, rats, and quail.

Because of his previous exposure to humans, this coyote expressed a great deal more interest in his caretakers than other coyotes at the Center. He would wag his tail, try to play with shoes, and howl for food. Initial attempts by hospital staff to socialize him with three other pups did not go smoothly. It took several attempts utilizing a variety of strategies over a period of two weeks, and WCSV staff nearly giving up hope, before the coyote finally began to turn the corner. He went from running from the other coyotes when they



Photo: Ashley Kinney

acted aggressively toward him to running with them in a family unit. He also began hiding when catching sight of people. It's particularly critical for coyotes and other predatory mammals to remain distrusting and fearful of humans, for everyone's safety. Thankfully, this coyote is behaving as he needs to now and should be able to be released!

Many do not know it's illegal in California to keep wildlife as pets, and also that most veterinarians are not able to treat wildlife. The sooner sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife get to a licensed rehabilitation center such as WCSV, the better the odds for a successful release. In order to keep our Bay Area great and diverse, we need to keep wildlife wild and help give them their best chance at a normal life. ♪♪



Photo: Traci Tsukida

# Who's Been Digging Up My Lawn?

by Jackie Turner, Certified Master Gardener

Did you ever go out into the yard in the morning and find that “someone” has been tearing up your lawn overnight? Even worse, did you ever lay out brand new sod and find it neatly re-rolled the next day? Who would do this and why?

Well, a number of animals will dig in your lawn – birds, such as robins looking for tasty treats, or squirrels burying their food or rediscovering it, but these animals are active during the day and will make a fairly tidy job of it. Skunks may dig for grubs overnight but will usually make small individual holes. The most likely culprit when it comes to digging up your lawn or rolling up your sod is the raccoon.

At this time of year raccoons are on the move, leaving their dens, finding new habitats, and finding good food sources for the youngsters. One of these food sources is lawn grubs. Although you may find the raccoon activity very irritating, they are in fact letting you know that there is a plentiful supply of grubs in your lawn which will eventually eat the roots of your grass and create ugly brown spots on the nice green surface.

## How do I keep raccoons away?

We at the Wildlife Center recommend a number of options for deterring raccoons from your yard and they are used with varying degrees of success. The more you use at once, the better – ammonia-soaked rags, motion-detector lights, motion-detector water sprayers, talk radio, keeping pet food indoors, and hot pepper deterrent sprayed around the problem areas. But, in this case, get rid of the grubs in your lawn and the raccoons will move on.

## What are these grubs?

There are several grub species in our area but all look alike – white to grey with brown heads, ½ to 1 inch long when fully grown, and usually curled into a C shape. All have



Photo: Carole Baldwin

similar lifecycles. Masked chafers are the most common grub in California. The parent brown beetles mate and lay eggs in the soil in late spring to early summer. The grubs hatch during the summer and feed on the grass roots and thatch (the layer of dead grass roots and stems). Damage from their feeding becomes most apparent during late summer and fall when you will notice irregular patches of dying grass, which will often feel spongy. In the winter the grubs burrow deep into the soil, pupate in the spring, and emerge as adults in late spring.

A healthy lawn can tolerate some grub damage. Aerating the lawn to remove thatch, watering more deeply and less frequently to encourage strong healthy roots, and raising your mowing height will permit the grass to grow more vigorously and withstand some feeding by the grubs. But a dense population of grubs can attract raccoons and will disfigure your lawn.

## How do I get rid of the grubs?

First, verify what the raccoons are telling you. Try digging around the roots in the damaged areas and look for the C-shaped grubs. The best way to rid yourself of lawn grubs is to treat the area with beneficial nematodes, available from any full-service nursery. These microscopic round worms will hunt down, penetrate, and kill the grubs within a few days. Considered biological control, nematodes will not harm people,

pets, earthworms, or the environment and will remain effective for 2 years. Nematodes can be applied in spring through September, as the weather remains warm.

The nematodes can easily become desiccated so are best applied to irrigated turf. The nematodes should preferably be applied in the evening, and the lawn should be

watered regularly for the next two weeks to keep the soil moist. For better control you can apply again two weeks later. Check with your nursery for more details on application. Chemical pesticides are also available but these are detrimental to beneficial organisms, not to mention the environment.

## And in the meantime?

A temporary solution to keeping raccoons off the lawn is to cover the perimeter or the problem area with plastic garden netting available from nurseries and hardware stores. The netting is available in green so that you can maintain the aesthetic appeal of your lawn. Raccoons do not like the feel of the netting underfoot and this will allow the nematodes the time to do their job. Of course you will need to remove the netting when you mow the lawn. Ridding yourself of the grubs and raccoons will all require some patience on your part. Once a raccoon has discovered a good food source, she will come back to it for a while. But, she will eventually figure out that her favorite treats have disappeared and move on to new territories. ♪



## Living with Coyotes by Ashley Kinney

The coyote is a widespread canine occupying the entire United States, parts of Canada, and South America. Before human intervention and the eradication of other large predators, they only inhabited two-thirds of the Western United States. There are 19 subspecies of *Canis latrans*. Coyotes weigh between 20-50 pounds, and are similar to a tan-colored Shepherd-type dog. They live in pairs, large packs, or smaller packs. Lone coyotes do exist; they are most often found in heavily hunted populations or when young males leave their pack. Coyotes are omnivorous by nature; they feed on a wide variety of mammals, carrion, insects, and fruit. Their intelligence and opportunistic feeding habits allow them to survive in many different areas and habitats, but it also puts them in conflict with humans, mainly in agricultural regions, as well as in urban and suburban areas.

Coyotes are drawn to urban and suburban neighborhoods for two reasons: human encroachment into native habitat, and the availability of food. Historically, society has attempted to solve human/coyote conflicts, whether in agricultural regions and more recently suburban areas, by killing them. Despite years of poisoning, trapping, neck snaring, and shooting this species, there are more of them in North America today than ever before.



Photo: Ashley Kinney

The coyote's success appears to be directly related in part to lethal attempts to manipulate its population. As with many wild species, populations are naturally regulated by available food and habitat. Lethal control (trapping, shooting, poisoning) can disrupt the packs hierarchy, causing members to disperse, which allows more coyotes to reproduce, and encourages larger litter sizes due to the decreased competition for food and habitat. Lethal control also ensures that only the most resilient ones survive.

Most wild coyotes have a strong fear of humans; however, those that learn to associate humans with food can become habituated. Habituated coyotes are now frequent in suburban areas. They take advantage of the abundant food, water, and shelter. Unsecured garbage, unfenced gardens, and unattended domestic animals become easy prey. Documented cases of coyotes biting people are extremely rare, and in most incidents, associated with people feeding them. Since coyotes by nature are wary of humans, they will avoid them whenever possible. If you encounter a coyote, remember the following: never feed or attempt to tame it, avoid direct eye contact, do not turn your back or run. If followed by a coyote, make loud noises and make yourself look big.

Coyotes are not considered a disease threat. Outbreaks of rabies in coyotes are rare, and they are not commonly implicated in the transmission of the disease to humans or domestic animals. Here are some helpful tips that help humanely deter coyotes and other wildlife:

- Secure garbage cans by fastening lids with rope, bungee cords or chains. Tie the handle to a stake driven into the ground.
- Put garbage out on the morning of pickup instead of the night before.
- Dispose of especially attractive food wastes, such as meat, cheese, and eggs, by adding a small amount of ammonia to the bag to deter wildlife.

- When composting, use enclosed bins. Avoid adding dog or cat waste and any food that may attract wildlife.
- Outdoor lights triggered by motion sensors can keep coyotes (and other animals) from approaching your house at night.
- Clear away bushes and dense weeds near your home where coyotes find cover and animals to feed on.

Coyotes cannot differentiate between pets and wild prey. To avoid these situations, consider fencing your property or yard. The fence must be at least six feet tall with the bottom extending at least six inches below the ground. Keep animals in at night; coyotes are crepuscular, meaning active during dawn and dusk. Always bring your pet food inside at night. Spay or neuter your dogs. Coyotes are attracted to, and can mate with, unaltered domestic dogs. Ninety percent of a coyote's diet consists of rodents; however, they can harm or kill animals kept outside, such as chickens, rabbits, goats and calves. To prevent loss, keep domestic animals in a closed, secure shelter at dawn and dusk when coyotes are most active. Fright devices, such as sirens and sensor lights, may help deter wildlife from approaching domestic animals. The use of guard animals such as llamas, donkeys and special guard dogs, have proved effective in reducing coyote predation of pastured animals.

**WCSV is committed to coexisting peacefully with all wild animals found in our area. If you have a question regarding our featured species or any other animal conflicts, please make sure to give us a call. You can also find information by going to our website, [www.wcsv.org](http://www.wcsv.org).** ♪

## Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley

A Rehabilitation, Release  
& Educational Facility

3027 Penitencia Creek Road  
San Jose, CA 95132

### If You Found an Animal in Distress

Watch from a considerable distance. If the wild animal seems to need assistance, go to [www.wcsv.org](http://www.wcsv.org) or call WCSV at (408) 929-9453 for advice. Trained staff and volunteers can assess the situation and determine the best course of action. If the animal is clearly injured and it's safe to do so (some animals must never be touched!) secure it in a well-ventilated box, and place it in a warm, dark, and quiet place until you can transport it to WCSV. Please do not feed or handle it; every species has different dietary requirements and giving the wrong food can be detrimental.

Keep up with Center highlights, including news, photos, and success stories:

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