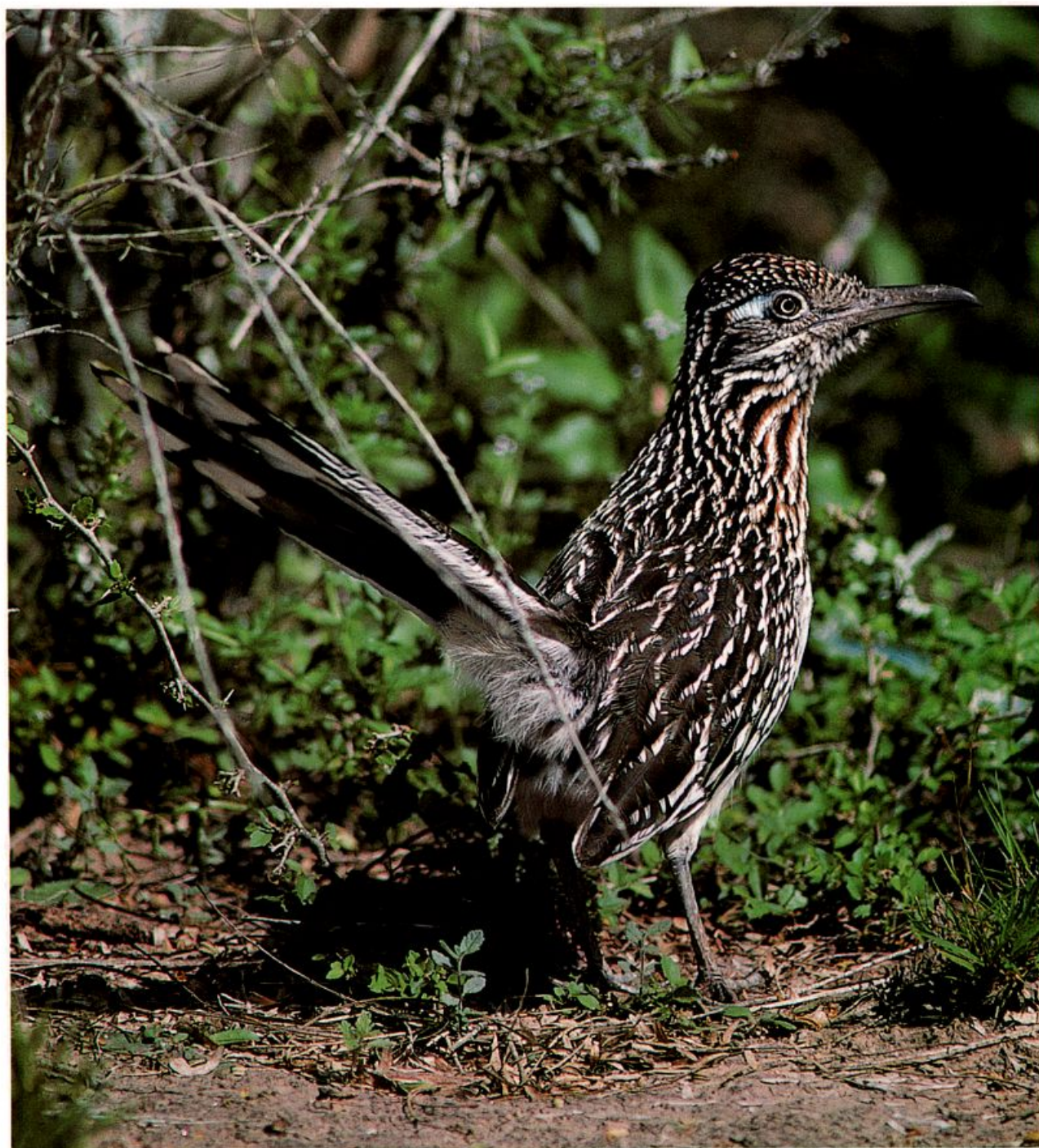


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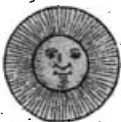
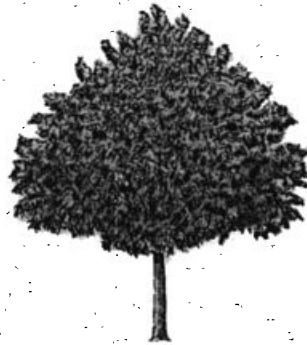
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Field Notes



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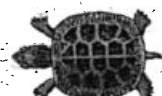


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From the Editor

Happy Birthday and Congratulations to National Audubon Society Field Notes!! With this issue we commence our fiftieth volume.

When *Field Notes* became a separate magazine, a half-century ago, Ludlow Griscom was the Chairman of the Board of the National Audubon Society and he was the regular author of The Changing Seasons column. Robert Cushman Murphy was the Honorary President of the Society. That first issue had only 13 regions, only two full-page black-and-white photographs, both by Roger Tory Peterson, and in total, was a mere 20 pages in length; no color cover, no advertising, no color on the inside, and postage-stamp sized hand-drawn maps. The subscription fee was \$2.00/year. During its first year, it took



on the subtitle "A bimonthly magazine devoted to the results of bird watching" WHAT A GRAND OLD PUBLICATION!!

Today, after many decades of cooperative publication, as we approach the year 2000, we would very much like to investigate the possibility of modernizing the presentation of *Field Notes*. Our wish would be to accomplish several goals in possibly reformatting the publication: (1) the regional reports would be produced more efficiently, (2) the material would reach our readers in much less time, (3) we will have facilitated a more smooth and thorough flow of information within the bird community, (4) production will be accomplished in a more environmentally friendly manner, and (5) by modernizing, we will have reduced the costs of publication. We think our goals are achievable.

We have, therefore, carefully constructed a questionnaire soliciting your responses to a series of questions, which we hope you will complete and send back to us just as soon as possible. We have included some questions of a pretty general nature so that we can, once again, get a more complete picture of our present readership. Over the last several years, the

readership profile has changed, and we want to know who you are. Some of the questions have to do with computers and electronic mail, because in the late 1990s, modernizing a publication would involve heavy use of computers by the producers and the readers.

Let me assure all of our readers that we have not made any firm plans regarding which ways in which to bring the publication up to date. Nor have we determined a timetable. The reason we are asking you to respond is so that your wishes and viewpoints can be taken into consideration. In whatever direction we

decide to move, we want you to move with us. Our readers and contributors are the backbone of *Field Notes*, as they have been for the past 50 years. We are committed to serving you in a manner that is agreeable to all of us.

Please take the requisite few moments to thoughtfully complete the questionnaire. Then, please get it back to us as soon as possible. We will tabulate the results and report back to you on them in the next issue of *Field Notes*. We will not proceed with any new formatting of the publication without informing you at every step of the process.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the questionnaire and returning it to us. We want to learn your views and thank you for sharing them with us.

Stay tuned!

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ON THE COVER: Greater Roadrunner in Texas. Photograph by Frank W. Mantlik.

How to Read the Regional Reports

Birds have no respect for range maps. Bird distribution in North America is constantly changing, as birds expand their ranges into new areas, disappear from former strongholds, or alter their patterns of migration.

Our knowledge of bird distribution is also changing constantly, as discoveries continue to come in. Keeping up with all these developments is a challenge for ornithologists, conservationists, and birders.

The Regional Reports, published four times a year, contain a wealth of information about our dynamic birdlife. To those seeing the reports for the first time, they might appear difficult or technical, but they are not; anyone with any birding experience will find the reports easy to understand. We invite you to read the report from your area of the continent; we predict that the information there will alternately surprise you and confirm your ideas about birdlife in your region. To help you get started, here are answers to some questions that may occur to first-time readers.

What kind of information is included, and do the Regional Editors report everything that's reported to them?

Regional Editors do not report every sighting of every bird. Such a list would be huge, unwieldy, and not very useful. Instead, they solicit reports from as many observers as possible, screen the records for accuracy, choose those that are most significant, look for trends and patterns of occurrence, connect scattered bits of information, and ultimately come up with a concise, readable summary of the real bird news—the important avian events and trends of the season throughout their region.

Why are there abbreviations in the text?

We abbreviate some frequently used words and phrases to save space. Most are easy to understand and remember. (See the following list of abbreviations.) In addition, some Regional Editors use shortened versions of the names of birding hot spots; they list these local abbreviations in a separate paragraph, just after the introductory comments and just before their main species accounts.

What do the initials in parentheses mean?

Most records published in each report will be followed by initials, to indicate the source, the person(s) who found or reported the bird(s) mentioned. The initials may be followed by *et al.* (short for *et alia*, meaning “and others”), or preceded by *fide* (literally, “by the faith of”—meaning that this is a second-hand report, and the person cited is the one who passed it to the Regional Editor).

There are good reasons for giving credit to the observers involved. Readers may be reassured about the accuracy of surprising sightings if they know who the observers were; researchers who want to know more about a certain record may be able to contact the observers directly.

Who sends in their sightings?

All observers are invited to send in notes to their Regional Editors: details on rare sightings, species that were scarcer or more numerous than usual during the season, unusual concentrations on migration, and so on. Reading the reports for your region for a few seasons is the best way to find out what kinds of information are desired. Although the Regional Editors cannot cite every record that they receive, every contributor helps them to produce a more thorough and accurate summary.

Why are some bird names in heavier type?

We use boldface type to draw attention to outstanding records of rare birds. General categories of birds that the Regional Editors would place in boldface would include: any species that has been recorded fewer than 10 times previously in a given state or province; any new breeding record for a state or province; or any bird totally outside established patterns of seasonal occurrence. (For the most part, records are not boldfaced unless they are backed up with solid details or photographs.) Birders who like to know about rare birds (and most of us do) can get a complete rundown of the season's outstanding rarities by scanning all the Regional Reports for those boldfaced birds.

What are the sections marked “S.A.”?

“S.A.” stands for “Special Attention” (and, by coincidence, is pronounced “essay”). The purpose of the essays is to draw attention to noteworthy phenomena or trends.

Likely topics include new population trends or new patterns of bird distribution, unusual invasions or migration events, field research projects that have yielded new data, specific conservation problems that have an impact on birdlife, or detailed discussion of some outstanding (or perplexing) rare bird record. Experienced readers make it a point to flip through all the reports and read all the S.A.s, even in regions where they do not read the rest of the text.

Standard Abbreviations used in the Regional Reports

Abbreviations used in place names:
In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Other abbreviations:

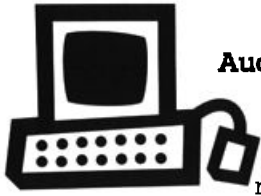
| | |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| Cr. | Creek |
| Ft. | Fort |
| Hwy | Highway |
| I. | Island or Isle |
| Is. | Islands or Isles |
| Jct. | Junction |
| km | kilometer(s) |
| L. | Lake |
| mi | mile(s) |
| Mt. | Mountain or Mount |
| Mts. | Mountains |
| N.F. | National Forest |
| N.M. | National Monument |
| N.P. | National Park |
| N.W.R. | National Wildlife Refuge |
| P.P. | Provincial Park |
| Pen. | Peninsula |
| Pt. | Point (not Port) |
| R. | River |
| Ref. | Refuge |
| Res. | Reservoir (not Reservation) |
| S.P. | State Park |
| W.M.A. | Wildlife Management Area |

Abbreviations used in the names of birds:

| | |
|------|----------------------|
| Am. | American |
| Com. | Common |
| E. | Eastern |
| Eur. | European or Eurasian |
| Mt. | Mountain |
| N. | Northern |
| S. | Southern |
| W. | Western |

Other abbreviations and symbols referring to birds:

| | |
|------|--|
| ad. | adult |
| imm. | immature |
| juv. | juvénal or juvenile |
| sp. | species |
| v.t. | video taped |
| † | means that written details were submitted for a sighting |
| * | means that a specimen was collected |
| ♂ | male |
| ♀ | female |
| CBC | Christmas Bird Count |



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To join our activist network send your name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail address to Activist, NAS, NY activist@audubon.org.

Our Home Page

The mission of the National Audubon Society is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.



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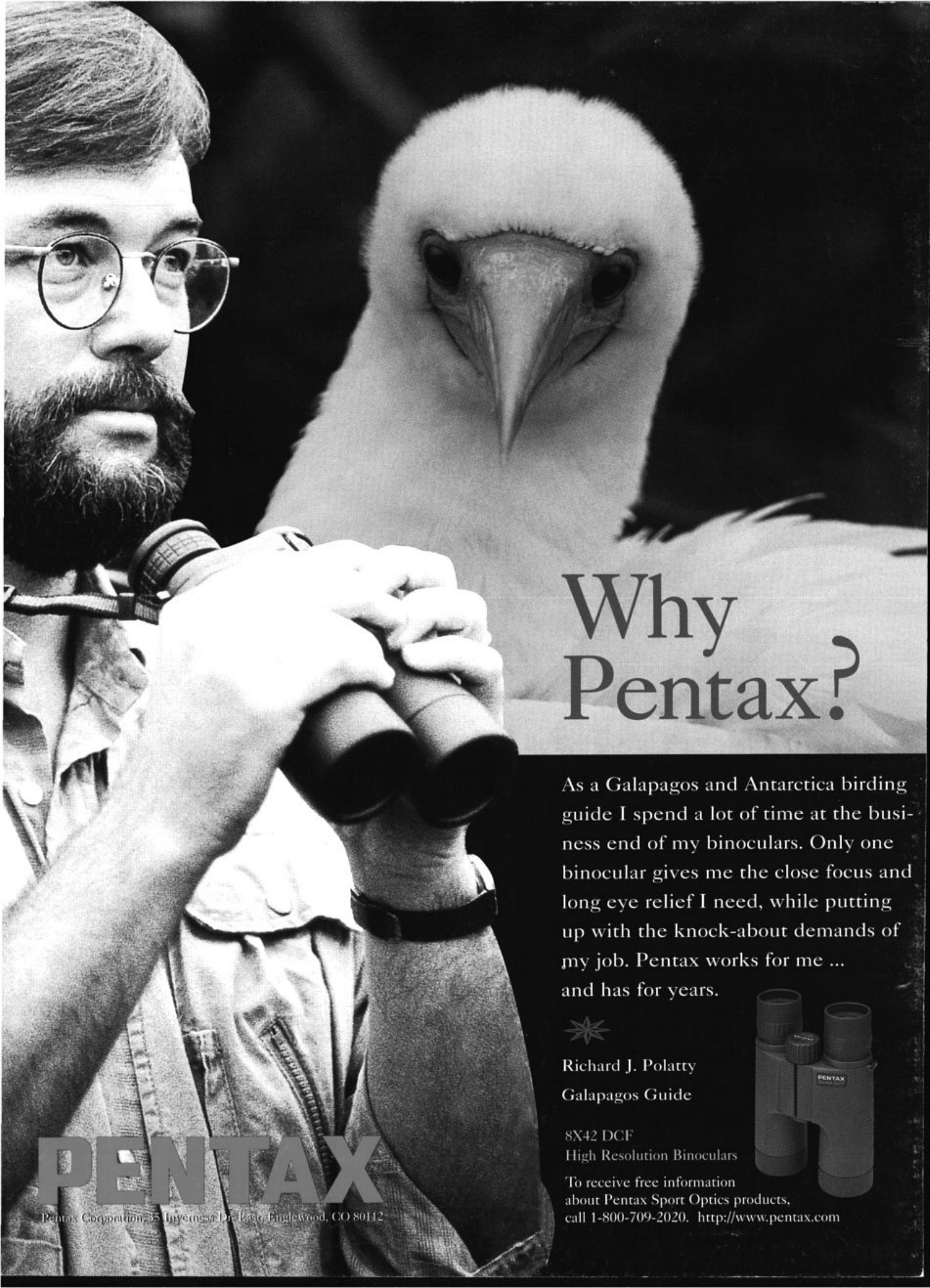
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