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Florida Region

NOEL WAMER

After experiencing two years of aboveaverage tropical storm activity, the 1996 season produced only one topical system that effected the Region. Tropical storm Josephine crossed the upper Peninsula October 7-8. Although this was a relatively minor storm, it did produce a number of storm-driven waifs in the Gainesville area. Other than this, the Region's weather was uneventful. Many fronts that passed over were dry and did not produce notable fallouts of migrants. A weather-related fallout was noted in Jacksonville September 14 after the passage of a cold front. Several days of rain produced another notable fallout in northeastern Florida October 5-6. During this period twelve species of warblers were reported in a Jacksonville vard and twenty species were recorded at nearby Fort George Island. This system reached south Florida October 10-11, when significant fallouts were noted at Bahia Honda State Park and at Key West. The only other notable fallout was at Dog Island November 3, where high numbers of arriving winter residents

There were few notable trends evident during this season. There seemed to be fewer of the uncommon sparrows-such as Clay-colored and Lincolns-reported than in recent seasons. Blue-winged and Goldenwinged warblers were well reported, including an astonishing one-day count of 18 Blue-wingeds in Alachua September 21. The previous high count for the Region had been just seven. There was no sign of an invasion by winter finches, and even American Goldfinches were virtually unreported. There were a number of notable rarities. Two species of alcids, Razorbill and Dovekie, were recorded. The latter is probably only the second ever reported from the Gulf

were noted.

Coast. The presence of Horned Lark, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting provided almost a complete sweep of the Atlantic dune-front vagrants. Only Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow was missing. Other notable rarities included the Region's ninth Say's Phoebe and fourth Varied Thrush.

The assistance of Bill Pranty, Linda Cooper, Gail Menk, and Peggy Powell in compiling the data from which this report is derived is gratefully acknowledged.

Abbreviations: C.P. (County Park); D.I. (Dog I., Franklin Co.); F.D.C.P. (Ft. DeSoto C.P., Pinellas Co.); M.I.N.W.R. (Merritt Island N.W.R.); P.P.M. (Polk County Phosphate Mines); S.C.C.P. (Saddle Creek C.P., Polk Co.); S.L.C.P. (Sawgrass Lake C.P., Pinellas Co.); S.M.N.W.R. (St. Marks N.W.R., Wakulla Co.); S.R.A. (State Recreational Area); W.S.S.P. (Wekiva Springs S.P., Orange Co.).

Loons to Waterfowl

Only two Red-throated Loons were reported. One at Huguenot City Park, Jacksonville, Nov. 23 (PP) was in an expected location, but one at Bivans Arm, Alachua, Nov. 28+ (JH) was a very rare inland occurrence. A Com. Loon at D.I., Aug. 25 (DE, LM) and another at St. Marks Light, Wakulla, Sept. 22 (HH) both had probably summered. The 40 Pied-billed Grebes at S.M.N.W.R., Sept. 13 (DE, LM) probably represented the arrival of wintering migrants. The only



Eared Grebe reported was at Springhill S.T.P., Tallahassee, Leon, Sept. 26 (GM). Most recent falls have had multiple occurrences. The season's only reported pelagic trip found 10 Cory's Shearwaters off Brevard Sept. 19 (RR, DC). Late and rarely seen from shore were single Cory's off M.I.N.W.R., Nov. 22 (RW) and Gauna River S.P., St. Johns, Nov. 27 (NW). A Sooty Shearwater was also reported on the Sept. 19 pelagic (RR, DC). A dead Audubon's Shearwater was found on the beach in n. St. Johns Aug. 9 (PP). Rounding out the procellariforms were the 14 Wilson's Storm-Petrels seen on the Sept. 19 pelagic (RR, DC). The nine Am. White Pelicans in n. Jacksonville Aug. 9 (RC) had probably summered locally. This species is rarely reported inland in Panhandle, but 66 were at L. Jackson, Leon, Nov. 1 (GM, FR). Four flocks passing D.I. between Oct. 8-Nov. 3 totaled about 800 individuals (DE, LM). The only inland report of Brown Pelican came from L. Jessup Conservation Area, Seminole, Oct. 12 (fide LM). An imm. Great Cormorant at Bahia Honda S.P., Monroe, Oct. 12 (PWS, SS) was 11 days earlier than the state's previous early report. The 229 and 391 Anhingas at the Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area (both fide JM) Sept. 28 and Nov. 23, respectively, were notable local numbers. The only Am. Bitterns reported were one over Tallahassee Sept. 22, and the interesting observation of a flock of five heading out over the Gulf from D.I., Nov. 3 (both DE, LM). The 11 Reddish Egrets, including one white morph, at Hagens Cove, Dixie, Sept. 1 (RR) provided a locally high count. A high inland count of 10 Roseate Spoonbills came from the Little-Big Econ State Forest, Orange, Sept. 21 (fide LM). Well n. and also inland, single spoonbills were in Leon Sept. 21-26 (DE, LM) and Nov. 29 (GM).

Fulvous Whistling-Ducks bred at the Zellwood muck farms, Orange and Lake, as usual, where there were 350 Aug. 19, including one brood of 17 (PF, MH). Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks may have expanded their breeding range, as the summering birds at Bienville Plantation, Hamilton, included imm. birds Aug. 13 (RC). All previous breeding reports have come from the s.w. part of the Region. The 2 reports of Greater White-fronted Goose-two at S.M.N.W.R., Oct. 25 (DH) and three at M.I.N.W.R., Nov. 27+ (LA, m.ob.)—were probably average numbers. A below-average total of 11 Snow Geese were reported, with the southernmost being five at L. Kissimmee Nov. 27 (DF, DrF, MS). Considered an extreme rarity up until the last few years, Ross'

Goose seems to be becoming almost annual. This season's report was one adult at M.I.N.W.R., Nov. 9+ (HR, m.ob.). The 210 Mottled Ducks at the P.P.M., Aug. 5 (PF) was considered to be a high count locally. The White-cheeked Pintail at M.I.N.W.R. remained from the summer season, but was shot Nov. 27, the opening day of hunting season. The two N. Shovelers at Zellwood Sept. 2 (RS, PB) were early, as were three Gadwall near Gainesville Sept. 21 (CL). The four Gadwalls at Sawgrass Lake C.P., Pinellas, Nov. 10 (RS, PB) were local rarities. The two Eur. Widgeon at M.I.N.W.R., Oct. 9+ (HR, WF, m.ob.) were at a location where the species is nearly annual in occurrence. More unusual was one at P.P.M., Nov. 17. The four Redheads there on the same day were considered locally rare (both CG, PT). The P.P.M. continued to harbor high numbers of Ring-necked Ducks. The peak count this fall was 3210 Nov. 15 (PF, BC, LC). Scoters were scarce, and the normally most-frequent Black Scoter went unreported. A Surf was at Madeira Beach, Pinellas, Nov. 30 (KN) and a Whitewinged was at New Smyrna Beach, Volusia, Oct. 7 (TP). The latter is the earliest state report. The presence of three alternate-plumaged Ruddy Ducks in E.N.P., Sept. 15 (TG) suggested possible summering there.

Raptors to Alcids

The only concentration of Swallow-tailed Kites reported was 33 over Saddle Creek C.P., Polk, Aug 9 (PF), and the only Snail Kite reported outside of the species normal range was also in Polk, where one was present at L. Starr from mid-August-November (JHo). A Mississippi Kite lingered in Tallahassee until Oct. 3 (DE, LM). Early N. Harriers were at Zellwood Aug. 25 (JH et al.) and Hagens Cove Sept.1 (RR). An impressive movement of 96 harriers was observed at D.I., Oct. 13 (DE, LM). Equally as impressive were the 470 Broad-winged Hawks which passed Mashes Sands C.P., Wakulla, Oct. 8 (DE, LM). Key West hosted 20 Broad-wingeds Oct 11 (JO). The most noteworthy of the Short-tailed Hawk reports was a northern and late dark-morph n. of Hudson, Pasco, Nov. 29 (BPr). Rarely seen in migration, a Swainson's Hawk was at Archbold Biological Station, Highlands, Sept. 15 (RB). Single Swainson's were at Key West Nov. 12 & 19, and two were there Nov. 22 (all JO). Unusual Red-tailed Hawks included an imm. dark morph in Alachua Sept. 2 (JH, RR) and "Krider' s" at S.M.N.W.R., Nov. 14 (DW). There were 2 sightings of Golden Eagles in the panhandle, which

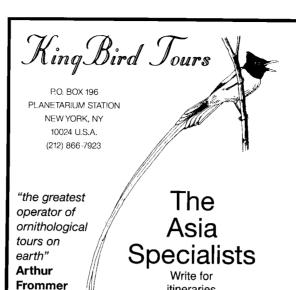
might have been the same bird. One was seen Oct. 5 & 10 at Bald Pt., Franklin (JD, CW), and one was seen n. of S.M.N.W.R., Nov. 17 (RW, GH). The 40 Merlins passing Mashes Sands C.P., Wakulla, Oct. 8 (DE, LM) was just 4 short of the Region's one-day record number. The numbers of Peregrine Falcons continue to reflect its recovery. The peak of passage this fall was the first weekend of October. On Oct. 5 at Guana River S.P., 30 were recorded in several hours (RR et al.). In the same general area, 50 were seen Oct. 6 (PP). Normally rare inland, four Peregrines were present at the same time at the Springhill S.T.P., Oct. 11 (HH). One at D.I., Oct. 28 was an ad. male of the tundrius race (DE, LM).

Certainly in the least expected category was a Yellow Rail flushed from a dry prairie at Three Lakes W.M.A., *Osceola*, Oct. 15 (TD *et al.*). Rarely detected in the fall, a Black Rail was found at Bienville Plantation Oct. 19 (MD). A King Rail at D.I., Nov. 13 (DE, LM) provided probably a first for that location. American Coot numbers peaked at P.P.M., Nov. 15 when 52,560check were present (PF, BC, LC). A Limpkin, a regular vagrant to the Keys, was at Key West Sept. 1 (JO). The 17 Whooping Cranes at L Kissimmee, *Osceola*, Nov. 27 (DF, DrF, MS) must have been impressive.

Black-bellied Plover at Orange L., Sept 22-25 (RR, JB) provided Alachua's 2nd report. A few Am. Golden-Plovers were scattered across the Region: two at the traditional Zellwood location Aug. 19 (PF, MH), a ≤six at 2 locations in n. Jacksonville Aug. 22-Sept. 13 (MD, NW, RC), singles in Tallahassee Sept. 14 (DE, LM) and Oct. 2 (GM), and another at Key West Nov. 17 (JO). The only concentration of Snowy Plovers reported was 14 at D.I., Oct. 28 (DE, LM). Semipalmated Plovers are regular at some inland locations, so the 23 at P.P.M., Aug. 11 (CG, PT) were not unexpected. More interesting was one at Orange L., Sept. 21-30 (KS, RR). Single Piping Plovers reached Honeymoon Island S.R.A., Pinellas, Aug 30 (PB, WY) and Key West Sept. 1 (JO). Franklin hosted impressive flocks of Am. Avocets. There were 14 at D.I., Sept. 2, and 19 at Alligator Pt., Sept. 30 (both DE, LM). An avocet at Ft. Island Beach C.P. Oct. 21 (BS) provided the first report for Citrus. The only inland Willet report was of two at P.P.M., Aug. 8 (CG, PT). As usual, Zellwood was the location of the only Upland Sandpiper reports. One was there Aug. 1 (SB) and two were seen Sept. 3 (GB). Long-billed Curlews are always noteworthy. This fall individuals were seen at Hickory Mound Impoundment, Taylor,

FIELD NOTES SPRING 1997

Aug 27-30 (JC, JL, v.o.), F.D.C.P., Oct 5-8 (MW, LA, v.o.), and Honeymoon Island S.R.A., Nov. 3 (WY). An impressive 2000 Semipalmated Sandpipers were in n. Jacksonville Aug. 9 (RC). The only 2 White-rumped Sandpiper reports were one in n. Jacksonville Aug. 31 (RC) and two at Orange L., Sept. 21 (KS). Only a single report of Baird's Sandpiper was received, but the eight at S.M.N.W.R., Oct. 8 (DM) ties the state high count. The 250 Pectoral Sandpipers in n. Jacksonville Aug. 29 (RC) represented a notable local count. A Purple Sandpiper was on the jetties at Smyrna Dunes C.P., Volusia, Nov. 20 (HR). A high count of 230 Stilt Sandpipers was reported from Zellwood Aug. 19 (PF, MH), and 145 were at the P.P.M. on the late date of Nov. 15 (PF, BC, LC). Surprisingly, a peak of eight Buff-breasted Sandpipers in n. Jacksonville between Aug. 25-Sept. 13 (RC, NW) bested Zellwood's high count of six Sept. 2 (PB, RS). A single Buff-breasted was at M.I.N.W.R., Aug. 31 (BH, SH). The five Short-billed Dowitchers in Gainesville Nov. 26-28 (RR) were the first reported from Alachua since 1991. The only high count of Short-billeds received was 226 inland at P.P.M., Nov. 30 (PF). The very-early Long-billed Dowitcher at D.I., Aug. 3 (DE, LM) was in alternate plumage and calling. All but 2 of the 5 reports of Wilson Phalarope were from P.P.M., where there were six Aug. 11 (CG, PT), seven Sept. 2 (SR, MHu, BC, LC), and one Oct. 20 (CG, PT). Single Wilson's were at Bienville Plantation Aug. 31 (RC) and Springhill S.T.P., Sept. 4-12 (GM, JC). Alachua got its first report of Pomarine Jaeger, thanks to tropical storm Josephine Oct. 8, when two were at Newnans L. (JH, RR). The single Lesser Blackbacked Gulls in n. St. Johns Aug. 9 (PP) and Huguenot City Park Aug. 31 (RC) both likely summered. However, the adult at F.D.C.P., Sept. 21 (RS, BHo, MHo) was likely an early arrival as none had been noted there through the summer. It was followed closely by a 2nd-year bird Sept. 26 (LA). Another Lesser Black-backed, a first-year bird, was at Little Duck Key, Monroe, Oct. 11 (PWS, SS). Always of note on the n. Gulf Coast was a Great Black-backed at St. George I., Franklin, Oct. 11 (TK). Both of the really good gulls of the season were found at M.I.N.W.R., where a Black-legged Kittiwake was found Nov. 22 (RWe) and two Sabine's Gulls were seen Nov. 15 (SB) during strong NE winds. The 225 Sandwich Terns at F.D.C.P., Sept. 27 (RS) and the 250 at D.I., Oct. 23 (DE, LM) were both good counts, as were the 1700 Forster's



1997 BIRDING TOURS

MALAYSIA

Malaya/Borneo 29 June - 20 July

INDONESIA #1

Halmahera/Sulawesi 11 July - 3 August

INDONESIA #2

itineraries

Lesser Sundas Flores, Timor, Sumba, Komodo, Sumbawa 3-24 August

1998 **BIRDING TOURS**

THAILAND 3-25 January

SOUTH INDIA

1-24 January

SRI LANKA 24 January - 9 February

PHILIPPINES

20 February - 23 March

BHUTAN

27 March-19 April

NW CHINA

Xinjiang 10-21 June

TIBET

19 June -18 July

MALAYSIA

28 June-19 July **INDONESIA**

S Maluku (Moluccas) Is. Ambon, Seram, Buru, Kai, Tanimbar 29 July - 30 August

Terns at P.P.M., Sept. 8 (CG, PT), the latter probably being the 2nd-highest Regional count. Two Com. and four Sooty terns were inland at Newnans L., Oct. 8 in the wake of Josephine (RR, JH). A late Black Tern was at M.I.N.W.R., Nov. 23 & 24 (LA et al.). Also among the storm waifs at Newnans L., Oct. 8 was a Black Skimmer (JB). It was another of those rare twoalcid falls for the Region. A Dovekie at Venice, Sarasota, Nov. 23 (FV, LB, AS et al.) provided the 2nd report for Florida's Gulf Coast. The moribund Razorbill was found at Juno Beach, Palm Beach, Nov. 7 (fide HL) provided the state's 10th report.

Doves to Shrikes

The six White-winged Doves reported from D.I., Oct. 22-Nov. 2 (DE, LM) and the two at Bald Pt., Nov. 4 (JD) were probably w. vagrants. The two at Key West Nov. 24 (JO) and one at St. Petersburg Nov. 27 (RS) were just as likely from the peninsula's introduced population. The 2 reports of Black-billed Cuckoo were singles at Key West Sept. 1 (JO) and Paynes Prairie State Preserve Oct. 26 (MM). Both of the season's Groove-billed Anis were at D.I., Oct 22 & 28 (DE, LM). The Lesser Nighthawk closely observed and heard

calling at D.I., Oct. 12 (DE, LM) provided the Region's earliest fall report. A very early Whip-poor-will was singing at Rock Springs Run State Preserve, Orange, Aug. 6 (PS, BSi). More typical arrival dates for this species were two Aug. 24 and three Aug. 28 at Bald Pt. (both JD). Western hummingbirds were apparently less obvious than in recent falls. The only Blackchinned reported was a male at Cedar Key, Levy, Nov. 21 & 22 (DH). There were six Rufous/Allen's reported from Alachua from October+ (fide RR). An ad. 3 Rufous visited a Jacksonville feeder for one day only Oct. 6 (PP). A bird identified as a first-year & Rufous visited a feeder at Lakeland, Polk, Nov. 25+ (GL, GiL et al.). The five Hairy Woodpeckers at Toosahatchee State Preserve, Orange, Aug. 17 (fide KF) were a notable report for this rare and declining species.

An impressive 30 E. Wood-Pewees were found at F.D.C.P., Oct. 9 (PB). Banding stations provided interesting reports of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers. At W.S.S.P., three Yelow-bellieds were banded Aug. 31-Sept. 3 (PS). Another was banded at Casey Key, Sarasota, Oct. 11 (AS). A Yellow-bellied called persistently at S.C.C.P., Oct 3 (PF), and singles were reported

from Leon Oct. 11 (JC) & 13 (DH). The 3 reports of Least Flycatchers, from Sept. 15-Oct. 9, were a typical number for the season (v.o.). The outstanding tyrannid of the season was a Say's Phoebe at Bald Pt., Oct. 14 (JD, JC, JL), which represented about the 9th state report. Vermilion Flycatchers were reported in typical numbers at the typical locations: an imm, male at Tallahassee Oct. 12 (GM), an ad. male at D.I., Oct. 24 (DE, LM), an ad. male at S.M.N.W.R., Oct. 24-Nov. 23 (JR, m.ob.), and an ad. male in central Pasco Nov. 5+ (SB, m.ob.). An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Gainesville Nov. 17-18 (RR, GMc) continued the now almost annual Regional occurrence of the species. Western Kingbirds were reported less frequently than usual. All seven reported in the period Oct. 18-Nov. 29 were in the n. part of the Region (v.o.). Surprisingly, there were no reports from the c. or s. part of the Region. The only concentrations of E. Kingbirds reported were 350 at Amelia I., Nassau, Aug. 31 (RC) and 40 Sept. 5 at F.D.C.P. (MW). Only three Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were reported, a less than typical number. There were two at a traditional wintering site near Ruskin, Hillsborough, Oct. 27 (DB, SB), and an ad. male was seen at D.I., Oct. 31 (DE, LM). The four Horned Larks at Smyrna Dunes C.P., Nov. 20 (HR) were in the beach dune habitat favored by this rare visitor. Fish Crows continue to increase at Key West. The twelve there Oct. 26 and Nov. 24 (both JO) were the highest counts to date. A White-breasted Nuthatch s. of Tallahassee Sept. 8 (GM) had strayed from the species' limited Regional range. A very early House Wren was seen at Lake City Aug. 23 (JK). There were only 2 reports of Winter Wren. One visited a birdbath in Tallahassee Oct. 12 (FR), and another was seen at D.I., Oct. 24 (DE, LM). The 25 Swainson's Thrushes at S.L.C.P., Oct. 8 (MW, LA) were an impressive number, as were the 40 Hermit Thrushes at D.I., Nov. 3 (DE, LM). A road-kill Am. Robin at Rock Springs Run State Reserve Sept. 24 (BE) represented probably the 2nd-earliest fall report for the Region. The & Varied Thrush at Honeymoon Island S.P., Nov. 1-5 (WY, m.ob.) was the most notable rarity of the season and provided only the 4th Florida report. A good diurnal movement of Am. Pipits was detected at D.I., Nov. 3 (DE, LM) when 50 were counted moving to the N and E. A Loggerhead Shrike at D.I., Nov. 3-5 (DE, LM) was the first recorded there since 1960.

Vireos to Finches

This season's report of Bell's Vireo came from Tallahasssee, where one was seen Sept. 20 (JC). Late Yellow-throated Vireos were seen in Tallahassee Nov. 1 (HH) and W.S.S.P., Nov. 9 (TL). The 6 reports of single Philadelphia Vireos were from the period Oct. 5-Oct. 31 (v.o.). A late Redeyed Vireo was at D.I., Nov. 3 (DE, LM). Notable counts of Blue-winged Warblers included four at S.C.C.P., Sept. 14 (BC, LC) and an astonishing 18 in Alachua Sept. 21 (v.o., fide RR). The latter is by far the highest one-day count in the Region. Notable were three Golden-winged Warblers in Hamilton, also Sept. 21 (JK). Both hybrid forms were reported. A "Lawrence's" was seen in Hamilton Sept. 21 (JK) and a "Brewster's" was seen at Bonner Park, Pinellas, Oct. 12 (KN, JF, BP). The 13 Nashville Warblers reported between Sept. 13-Nov. 3 (v.o.) represented an above-average seasonal total. A rare Black-throated Gray Warbler was found at Bonner Park Oct. 17 (JF, KN, m.ob.). Cerulean Warblers made a notable showing, with 14 reported from Aug. 11-Oct. 5 (v.o.). The 105 Am. Redstarts at S.C.C.P., Oct. 5-6 (CG, PT) and 51 at W.S.S.P., Oct. 5 (fide PS) were both notable counts. A Louisiana Waterthrush at S.M.N.W.R., Oct. 25 (JR) provided the latest-ever fall report, as did a Connecticut Warbler at Key West Oct. 24-25 (JO). Also late were Yellow-breasted Chats at Alligator Pt., Nov. 4 (JD) and Tallahassee Nov. 28 (DH), and a Blue Grosbeak in s. Leon Nov. 13 (GM). The only Dickcissel reported was at St. George I., Sept. 19 (JC). Uncommon sparrows seemed to be especially uncommon this fall, with the exception of Lark Sparrow. Only two Clay-coloreds were reported. One was at Cedar Key Oct. 6 (SD, GS), and another was seen in Polk Nov. 10 (CG, PT). There were two Lark Sparrows at the Tram Road S.T.P., Leon, Aug. 29 (JC), and singles were reported at D.I., Sept. 7 (DE, LM) and in Jacksonville Sept. 21 (PP). An early Savannah Sparrow was seen at the Avon Park Air Force Range, Highlands, Sept. 13 (MaS), and an early Seaside Sparrow was at D.I., Sept. 1 (DE, LM). The season's only Lincoln's Sparrows were singles at D.I., Oct. 31 (DE, LM) and St. Petersburg Nov. 9 (JA et al.). The six Whitecrowned Sparrows at D.I., Nov. 3 (DE, LM) were the only ones reported. Only three Dark-eyed Juncos were reported: one each at D.I., Nov. 3 (DE, LM), Jacksonville Nov. 24 (MD), and S.M.N.W.R., Nov. 28 (BA, LA). The two Lapland Longspurs at Smyrna Dunes C.P., Nov. 20-24 (HR, m.ob.) and the Snow Bunting at Canaveral National Seashore Nov. 24+ (LA, m.ob.) were notable rarities The 4 reports of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were about average for the season (v.o.). The lack of Shiny Cowbird reports, except from Key West, was interesting, although probably nothing to get encouraged about. The season peak at Key West was six Sept. 23 (JO). A very early Bronzed Cowbird was at Alligator Pt., Aug. 15 & 20 (ID). The one seen w. of Florida City, Dade, Nov. 23 (HL, GH) was on a more typical date. A ? Baltimore Oriole in Tallahassee Aug. 24 (GM) represented a typical arrival date. The inexorable spread of the House Finch continues. A pair in Ocala Oct. 29 (RR) provided the first report from Marion, while just to the n. in Gainesville they are becoming more common. On Sept. 21, 55 were counted there (RR). The only Pine Siskin report was one banded at Casey Key Nov. 2 (AS). An Am. Goldfinch in Alachua Aug. 28 (RoR) provided the earliest Regional report.

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