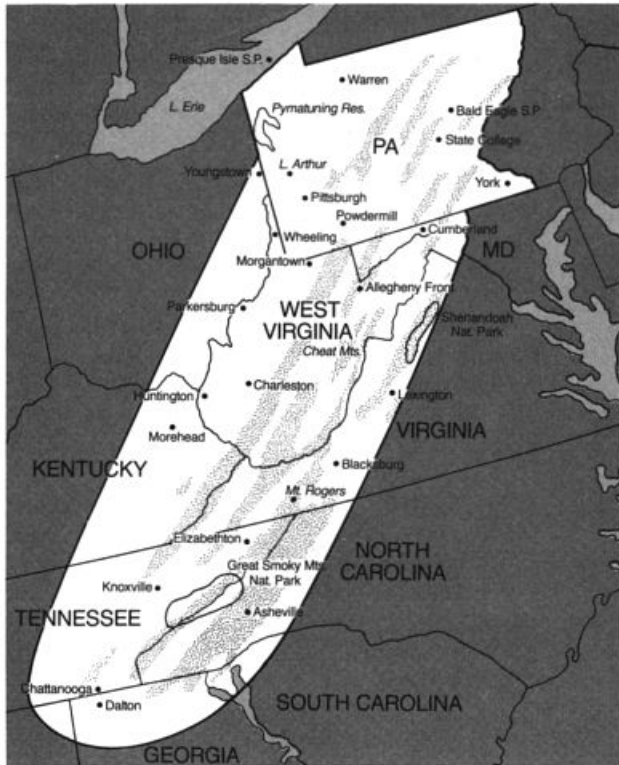


appalachian region



GEORGE A. HALL

Weatherwise it was a fairly average summer, but the birding was more interesting than in most. The cool weather of May continued into early June, but temperatures for the whole month averaged about normal. Precipitation was also normal. The only hot weather—not very hot—came in mid-July, but late July, was very cool (temperatures in the 30's F in the north). From mid-June until late July, most areas had very little precipitation.

The May migration of landbirds was late, and many migrants were still moving through the Region in the first week of June. An unusual variety of waterfowl remained in the Region into June and through the summer. As usual, the northbound shorebird flight continued after June 1. The southbound shorebird flight began in the first week of July, but was not very heavy by the end of the period. There was no sign of landbird migration in late July.

As a result of the generally mild season, most species appeared to have productive breeding seasons. Observers reported more

than the usual number of nests. Although there were the typical exceptions, most forest and woodland species were in good numbers and had successful breeding seasons. The grassland birds, too, were in good shape. A large number of “northern” species were found nesting farther south or at lower elevations than normal. Some of these, such as the Magnolia and Yellow-rumped warblers, have been moving south for several years. But others, such as the Winter Wren and Blackburnian and Canada warblers, were new to the trend. It appeared that some late migrants did not finish their flight

north, and stopped to breed when physiology gave the word.

There were a few “semi-rarities” adding spice to the season.

Abbreviations: B.E.S.P. (*Bald Eagle State Park, Centre Co., PA*); G.S.M.N.P. (*Great Smoky Mountains National Park.*); G.B.W.M.A. (*Green Bottom W.M.A., Cabell Co., WV*); G.R.W.A. (*Grand R. Wildlife Area, Trumbull Co., OH*); M.L.W.A. (*Mosquito L. Wildlife Area, Trumbull Co., OH*); P.I.S.P. (*Presque Isle State Park, Erie Co., PA*); P.N.R. (*Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland Co., PA*); R.C.B.L. (*Robert C. Byrd Locks, Ohio R., Mason Co., WV*); S.H.L. (*South Holston L., Washington Co., VA/Sullivan Co., TN*); Y.C.S.P. (*Yellow Creek State Park, Indiana Co., PA*).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

As usual, a few Com. Loons lingered into the summer: Edinboro L., PA, to June 19 (DS); Pymatuning L., PA, June 30–July 7 (RFL); Y.C.S.P. to June 17 (MH); and Nelson, VA, June 10–22 (NC). More unusual was the Horned Grebe at Mosquito L., OH, June 10 & 19 (D&JH). Pied-billed Grebes were found at Conneaut Marsh,

PA, June 24 (JF), S.H.L. July 21 (LM), and Hamilton, TN, June 1 (CC), but the only evidence of breeding was young birds in Upshur, WV, June 26 (BBCF). In early June small numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were present throughout the Region, but most disappeared by July 1. The largest number was 48 at Mosquito L., OH, where an immature was seen June 8 (J&DH).

The only report of Am. Bittern came from Conneaut Marsh, Crawford, PA, June 23 & 27 (JF). However, Least Bitterns were unusually numerous for the Region: Confirmed breeding records came from G.B.W.M.A. (WA, HS) and Meigs, TN (TR). Other sightings were made at P.I.S.P. June 12 (JM); Conneaut Marsh, PA, June 27 (JF); Mosquito L., OH, June 8 (J&DH); and Shady Valley, TN (first local record; WC, LM). The Great Blue Heron continues to thrive in this Region: The heronry at Lordstown, OH, had 309 nests (CB), and one at Boardman, OH, had 100 (NB), while in Elk, PA, a historic site had 10 nests after having been abandoned for many years (DWO). The usual summer influx of white herons did not occur, with fewer Great Egrets than normal and no Snowy Egrets or Little Blue Herons reported. As many as five Black-crowned Night-Herons were at Boone L., TN, all season (RK). Other reports came from P.I.S.P. June 2 & 13 (JM) and Waynesboro, VA, July 28 (RS). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was seen in Augusta, VA, July 15–21 (YL).

A Tundra Swan was at the Pymatuning Fish Hatchery, PA, July 12 (RFL, RCL). A Mute Swan was at L. Somerset, PA, most of June (AM, RCL, RM), and another was at Pymatuning L., PA, June 29 (RCL). Eighty-seven Wood Ducks at the Little Beaver wetlands, Lawrence, PA, July 25 represented an unusual concentration (BD).

American Black Duck chicks in Venango July 6 made the 2nd county record (JS). Green-winged Teal were at Pymatuning G.M.A. in late July (RFL et al.) and in Venango July 27 (first county summer record; JS). Blue-winged Teal nested at Conneaut Marsh, PA (JF), and a pair was at G.B.W.M.A. in June (HS). Hooded Mergansers nested in Trumbull, OH (D&JH), Imperial, PA (CT), and Venango, PA (JS), with other summer records coming from Pymatuning Fish Hatchery, PA (RFL), and

Shady Valley, TN (WC, JSh). There was an unusual number of straggling waterfowl: Canvasback was at P.I.S.P. to June 6 (GR); Ring-necked Duck at *Washington*, TN, July 7 (RK); Lesser Scaup at P.I.S.P. to June 13 (JM) and *Washington*, TN, July 27 (RK); Surf Scoter at M.L.W.A. June 4-9 (D&JH); White-winged Scoter at P.I.S.P. to June 13 (JM); Com. Goldeneye at P.I.S.P. through June (JM); Ruddy Duck at L. Arthur, PA, June 29 (DD), Newville, PA, June 17 (DHe), and *Dillard*, GA, June 1 (JF); and Red-breasted Merganser at P.I.S.P. to June 13 (JM).

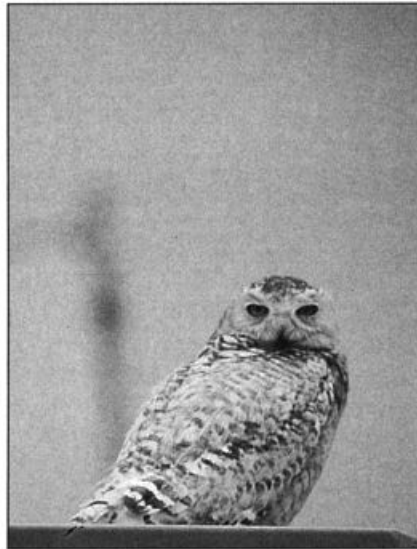
RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS

A Black Vulture nest was found at Michaux S.P., PA, in June (DC, DHe). A Black Vulture in *Allegheny*, PA, June 30 (TF) was well n. of the usual range. Ospreys had successful nestings at *Wood*, WV (JE), and Chickamauga L., TN (RSh), but the L. Arthur, PA, nesting was unsuccessful (*fide* PH). Other sightings came from *Carroll*, VA, June 11 (JB) and *Augusta*, VA, July 10 & 15 (2nd & 3rd summer records for the county; AL, RS, YL).

A **Mississippi Kite** was seen at Grove City, PA, July 12 (RSt). The nesting of Bald Eagles in *Butler*, PA, fledged two young (*fide* PH), and the 6 nests in West Virginia produced 11 fledglings (CS). Other sightings came from *Erie*, PA (JM et al.); *Pymatuning L.*, PA (RFL); *L. Arthur*, PA (DD, DY); *Belle Vernon*, PA (DK); *Swoope*, VA (YL); and *Pulaski*, VA (*fide* LM). Northern Harrier nestings in *Allegheny*, PA (CT), and *Venango*, PA (JS), provided the first records for those counties.

In the *Allegheny N.F.*, PA, there were 4 confirmed and 2 probable nestings of N. Goshawk (DW, AT). Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, and Red-shouldered hawks were generally thought to be in good numbers, and several nestings were reported for each. Very few Red-tailed Hawks were reported, however, and Broad-winged Hawks were thought to be in low numbers in w. Pennsylvania, with only 4 locations in *Indiana*, 2 in *Allegheny* (*fide* PH), and none in *Venango* (JS). An imm. Golden Eagle was sighted at *Pipestem S.P.*, WV, July 22 (*fide* JP).

In *Warren*, PA, Am. Kestrels occupied 41 of 52 nest boxes, and 30 boxes fledged 132 young birds (DW). A Merlin was sighted in *Christiansburg*, VA, July 26 (RC). Peregrines nesting at a historic eyrie site in G.S.M.N.P. for the first time since 1942 fledged two young (*fide* RK). Another Tennessee nesting occurred at *Chickamauga Dam*, but the chick disappeared after July 3 (*fide* KC).



A bizarre sight for summer was this Snowy Owl in northeastern Erie County, Pennsylvania, on July 26, 1997. Photograph/Jean Stull Cunningham

Reproduction of Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkeys in e. Tennessee was thought to be low, possibly the result of the cool wet spring (RK), but in n. West Virginia turkey nestings seemed successful. There were a few more reports of N. Bobwhite than in recent years.

More summering rails were reported than usual. King Rails were found at *Conneaut Marsh*, PA, June 27 (JF); G.B.W.M.A. to July 5 (WA); and *Meigs*, TN, June 24-July 31 (KC). Virginia Rails and Soras were reported from *Conneaut Marsh*, PA, (RFL, JF); G.R.W.A. (CB); *New Castle*, PA (B&GD); and G.B.W.M.A. (nest found; WA, HS). Downy young Com. Moorhens were seen at G.B.W.M.A. (WA, HS), and moorhens were also found at *Conneaut Marsh*, PA (RFL, IF), and *New Castle*, PA (B&GD). A few Am. Coots left over from the spring flight disappeared in early June, but reports of summering came from *Conneaut Marsh* June 27 (JF) and *Shenandoah L.*, VA, July 15 (MGS).

The nesting pair of Sandhill Cranes in *Lawrence/Mercer*, PA, raised one young (*fide* PH), and another crane (possibly a young of a previous year) was in the neighborhood (BD). The crane reported in *Centre* in May remained at least until June 2 (*fide* JPe).

A few shorebirds were still going north in the early days of June. At P.I.S.P., a storm-blown concentration of 200 birds June 1 contained six Whimbrels and 24 Red Knots, as well as many of the commoner species (JM). Other late records were of

White-rumped Sandpiper and Dunlin at M.L.W.A. June 1 (J&DH); Dunlin at *Donegal L.*, PA, June 21 (RCL); Short-billed Dowitchers at B.E.S.P., June 2 & 3 (PR, AF, EZ); and Wilson's Phalarope at M.L.W.A. June 4 (D&JH).

More locations than usual reported Upland Sandpipers: *Ashtabula*, OH, July 20 (D&JH); *Shippensburg*, PA, until July 21 (DHe); *Rockingham*, VA, June 17 (MGS); on surface mines at *Somerset*, PA, June 10 (AM); *Butler*, PA, June 14 (JF, DHo); and *Venango*, PA, until July 21 (JS). A Com. Snipe was seen at *Imperial*, PA, June 30 (TF), and several were found at *Conneaut Marsh*, PA, July 20 (RFL) and *Pymatuning L.*, PA, July 20 (E&CK). An Am. Woodcock near the *Skyline Drive* in *Shenandoah N.P.* June 4 (MGS) was noteworthy, but one seen above 5700 ft near the summit of *Mt. Rogers*, VA, July 13 (PS, LM) was more so.

Southbound shorebirds began to arrive in the first week of July, although a Greater Yellowlegs arrived at *Imperial*, PA, June 30 (TF). No large numbers had passed through by the end of the period. The more unusual records were of Willet at B.E.S.P. July 13 (6th local record; JF); White-rumped Sandpiper at *Stuart's Draft*, VA, July 22 (YL); and Stilt Sandpiper at *Pymatuning L.*, PA, July 20 (RFL, IF) and *Erie N.W.R.*, PA, July 27 (JS).

At P.I.S.P., Ring-billed Gulls built 50 nests and laid 38 eggs, but the colony was totally abandoned by June 12 (JM). Ring-billed Gulls summered at S.H.L. for the first time (LM, RK). Two **Gull-billed Terns** at B.E.S.P. May 25 (AF et al., ph.), if accepted by the Pennsylvania Records Committee, would furnish the first modern record for the state. Caspian Terns have never been common in this Region, so interesting were reports from *Mosquito S.P.*, OH, June 10 (D&JH); *Pymatuning Fish Hatchery*, PA, July 20 (E&CK); B.E.S.P. June 1-16 (m.ob.); Y.C.S.P. June 13-July 15 (MH, GC); *L. Somerset*, PA, July 28 & 29 (RCL); and *Huntington*, WV, June 10 (HS). Forster's Terns were reported at P.I.S.P. June 29-July 4 (JM), Y.C.S.P. June 3-21 (MH, GC), and S.H.L. July 30 (LM). Most unusual for the Region were Least Terns at *Huntington*, WV, June 1 (HS) and *Hamilton*, TN, June 1 (first county record; J&CW). Black Terns were seen at B.E.S.P. June 14 (DB); *Hartstown*, PA, July 2 (RFL); and *Pymatuning Fish Hatchery*, PA, July 20 (E&CK).

CUCKOOS THROUGH SWALLOWS

Black-billed Cuckoos were in good numbers at most places, but missing at

others, while Yellow-billed Cuckoos were in low numbers at most places. It is not yet clear if the Black-billed is replacing the Yellow-billed at lower elevations.

Three Barn Owls were seen at Conneaut Marsh, PA, June 27 (JF); the only other report came from Lyndhurst, VA, June 14 & 20 (RS). The most remarkable record of the summer was a **Snowy Owl** in *Erie*, PA, July 23 through the period (ph. JSC). The nesting Long-eared Owls in *Indiana*, PA, reported in the spring, fledged one young (MH). Short-eared Owl nestings in Pennsylvania were confirmed for *Lawrence* (SB) and *Venango* (JS, GE), and probably occurred in *Elk* (*vide* LC). The species nested in an unprecedented 4 counties in w. Pennsylvania. The only confirmed nesting of N. Saw-whet Owl was in *Warren*, PA (JPI), but the species was reported from Cheat Mt., WV (WA); Natural Tunnel S.P., VA (BR, CL); and Mt. Rogers and Whitetop Mt., VA (RP, PS).

Common Nighthawks had almost totally disappeared at Pittsburgh (KP), were completely absent at Morgantown, WV (GB), and were in low numbers in *Elk*, PA (LC). A Chuck-will's-widow was heard in *Rockingham*, VA, June 18 (MGS). There were more reports of Whip-poor-wills than in recent years, but the species remains in low numbers.

The 4 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker nests found on Mt. Rogers, VA, were in the n. hardwoods rather than in the spruce belt (RP), while a sapsucker was found June 19 at a low elevation in *Westmoreland*, PA (DBy). There were at least 5 sites for Red-headed Woodpeckers in *Washington*, TN (RK), but only 5 sites in the 5-county area around Pittsburgh (PH). The species was also reported from 2 locations in *Crawford*, PA (RCL, G&KM). At Edinboro, PA, a Cooper's Hawk was seen eating a N. Flicker which was found to have both red and yellow primaries and rectrices (DS).

Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported from St. Marys, PA, June 1 (LC) and *Venango*, PA, June 7 (JS). As often happens, a few Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were seen after June 1, but the singing male and a silent bird seen at 3800 ft in the Dolly Sods region of West Virginia June 29 (DC) provided only the 3rd summer record for the state. Acadian Flycatchers were thought to be in high numbers in the Pittsburgh region (PH). Alder Flycatchers are doing well at the s. extremity of the range, with more than usual in the recently occupied Mt. Rogers/Whitetop region of Virginia (RP), and four on Roan Mt., TN (RK). Alder Fly-

catchers in *Cumberland*, PA, July 31 (DHe) and Shady Valley, TN, June 26 (ES) were at low elevations for those latitudes. Willow Flycatchers were below normal at P.N.R. (RM, RCL), but records from *Hamilton*, TN, June 1 (KD) and *Rabun*, GA, June 1 (JFI) were s. of the usual range. Least Flycatchers were also found farther south and at lower elevations than normal.

A pair of Horned Larks in *Washington*, TN, June 30 was noteworthy for that area (RK). The only comment on nesting Purple Martins came from *Greene*, PA, where numbers are improving (RB). Several places reported migrant flocks in late July, with a high count of 125 in *Mahoning*, OH, July 28 (D&JH). Tree Swallow populations are increasing in *Augusta*, VA (YL), and in the s.w. Virginia/n.e. Tennessee region (LM, RK). On July 30 at Elkton, VA, 283 N. Rough-winged Swallows were counted at 4 locations (MGS). Bank Swallows nested at Elkton, VA (MGS), and in *Wood*, WV (JE). Cliff Swallows continue to increase in n.e. Tennessee (RK) and s.w. Virginia (LM). The Cliff Swallow colony at L. Arthur, PA, had 58 nests (CT), and 2 locations in *Venango*, PA, had 59 nests (JS).

CORVIDS THROUGH VIREOS

Six Com. Raven nests, mostly at abandoned mines, were found in *Somerset*, PA (AM). Young ravens begging for food were seen away from the mountains in *Greene*, PA, June 27 (RB). Sightings on Rabun Bald, GA, June 21 and Brasstown Bald, GA, July 5 were noteworthy (JFI). Red-breasted Nuthatches were common in the Galax, VA, region, as low as 2800 ft and usually in hardwood forest (JB). There were a number of reports away from the spruce forest or at low elevations: Imperial, PA, June 28 (TF); Greensburg, PA, through June (DSm); and Watoga S.P., WV, June 24 (FR). Oddly, they were scarce in the usual stronghold in the spruce belt of the Cheat Mts., WV (GAH).

Carolina Wrens have made a partial recovery, but numbers are not yet up to normal. House Wrens were reported to be in low numbers at most places. A major development of the summer was the extensive presence of singing male Winter Wrens at lower-than-normal elevations. In Pennsylvania, away from the mountains, a nest at Moraine S.P. was a first for *Butler* (DD), and a summer record came from *Venango* (JS). In West Virginia, reports came from Tomlinson Run S.P. in the Ohio Valley (ARB) and from the Bluestone R. in *Summers* (JP). One was reported at low elevations in Shenandoah N.P., VA (MGS), and

in s.w. Virginia they were found as low as 2020 ft. (RP). The species was generally in high numbers in its normal range. A Sedge Wren was found in *Crawford*, PA, July 12 (RFL, RCL), and Marsh Wrens were seen at Conneaut Marsh, PA, July 12 (RFL, RCL), Canfield, OH, July 19, and G.R.W.A. July 24 (J&DH).

On Mt. Rogers, VA, the recently established population of Swainson's Thrushes had declined to two males, where 2 years ago there were eight (PS). The Hermit Thrush population was stable there (RP), and elsewhere in this Tennessee/Virginia region they were doing well. There were five singing male Hermit Thrushes on Roan Mt., TN, but no nesting verified (RK). Hermit Thrushes bred in *Venango*, PA, at about 1500 ft (JS).

Northern Mockingbirds reported from *Warren*, OH (CB), and *Crawford*, PA (RFL) were n. of the usual range. An Am. Pipit at Imperial, PA, June 4 (PM) was unusually late for this species. White-eyed and Yellow-throated vireos were thought to be in low numbers at most places, but Red-eyed Vireos were doing well. Blue-headed Vireos were unusually common in their normal range, and as with other northern forms, they were found at lower than normal elevations.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Migrant warblers were still moving N as late as June 10. It appears that many northern birds never reached their normal nesting grounds, since many "northern" species were reported summering farther south or at lower elevations than normal—for example, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, and especially Blackburnian and Canada warblers. The Magnolia Warbler continued its southward expansion, becoming quite common on Mt. Rogers, VA, where it was thought to be responsible for a decline in Blackburnian Warblers (RP), and with four singing males on Unaka Mt., TN (RK). The Yellow-rumped Warbler continues to expand its range through Pennsylvania, with territorial males sighted in Heart's Content, *Warren*, June 14 (PY) and Tamarack L., *Crawford*, July 3 (RCL). In the south, one male was found on Roan Mt., TN (RK), and one on Elliott Knob, VA, July 12 provided the first summer record for *Augusta* (YL). The Mourning Warbler showed some sign of range expansion, with reports from Tamarack L., PA, July 3 (RCL) and *Giles*, VA, June 7 (CKE).

Some southern species continue to expand northward. Yellow-throated

Warbler numbers are increasing in its recently acquired range; there were five singing males at Buttermilk Nature Preserve, Venango, PA (JS). Several new records for singing Prothonotary Warblers were made at Meander L., OH, June 11 (CB); Butler, PA, June 14 (JF, DH); and Youghiogheny Res., PA (SS), and Newville, PA, in mid-June (DHe). A Kentucky Warbler was on territory in Warren, PA, June 4–July 5 (DHi).

Blue Grosbeaks were in good numbers in s.w Virginia (LM) and n.e. Tennessee (RK), and there were more records than usual in the Cabell-Mason region of West Virginia (WA). Northward movement was indicated by the two males and a female at Imperial, PA, in July (TF). Dickcissels were present all season at Washington, TN (RK); R.C.B.L. (WA); and Newburg, PA (DHe), all locations where they nested in last year's major influx.

The grassland sparrows did well, particularly on the recovered surface mines. A singing male Clay-colored Sparrow was at Imperial, PA, July 18 (MH). The small population of Vesper Sparrows at the s. extremity of the range in n.e. Tennessee (RK) is holding on. Singing male Savannah Sparrows were at 3 sites each in Johnson and Washington, TN (RK); Grayson Highlands S P, VA, July 31 (RL); and at R.C.B.L. all season (WA, HS). All 3 populations represent recent southwestward extensions of the breeding range. Grasshopper Sparrow seems to be in better shape than in recent years. Large numbers of Henslow's Sparrows occupied the surface mine areas of Venango, PA (JS), and Indiana, PA (M&RH), and other sightings came from Crawford, PA, July 12 (RFL, RCL) and Pulaski, VA (CKe). A singing male White-throated Sparrow near Elkton, VA, June 24 (MGS) and a singing Dark-eyed Junco at or below 2000 ft. in Pulaski, VA, June 6 (CKe) were out-of-range.

Bobolink populations were high in the PN R. region of w. Pennsylvania (RCL), and the birds were numerous in s.w. Virginia (LM). A female Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen in Crawford, PA, June 29 (RFL, RCL). Purple Finches with fledglings were seen at Columbiana, OH, July 11 (D&JH), and at feeders at Chalk Hill (AC) and Clarksville, both PA (RB). These were slightly out of normal breeding range, but a singing male on Mt. Rogers, VA (RP), would suggest a possible major range extension. Red Crossbills were reported from Roan and Unaka mountains, TN (RK); Mt. Rogers, VA (RP); and other highlands in

s.w. Virginia (LM). Small numbers of Pine Siskins were reported from St. Marys, PA (LC); Whitetop, VA (RP); Roan Mt., TN (RK); and Rabun, GA, June 1 (JFI).

CORRIGENDUM

In NAS *Field Notes* 51:55 (1997), the following should read: Small numbers of Bank and Cliff swallows were seen flying...

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