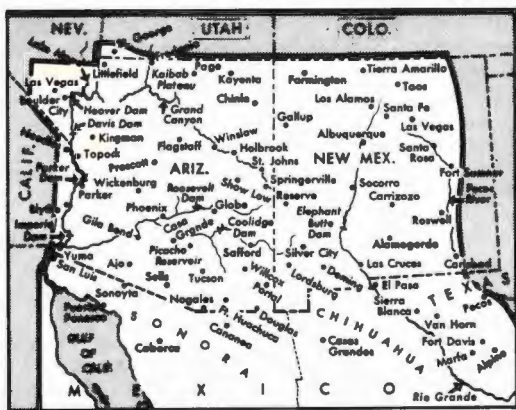


SOUTHWEST REGION

/ Gale Monson

The winter was the wettest one since 1941 in all parts of the Region except possibly the lower Pecos Valley—this on the heels of an unusually rainy autumn. Storm followed storm, with only an occasional sunny interim. Near-record depths of snow amounted to nearly six feet at Flagstaff, Arizona, and on the higher part of the Santa Catalina Mountains, Arizona, for example. It was even deeper on the White Mountains of east-central Arizona. The water content of snow on the Gila River watershed in Arizona and New Mexico was 330 percent of average!

The cold accompanying these storms was not severe, but it stayed unusually late—Las Vegas, New Mexico, had a low of only 4°F on Mar. 31, following a 21-inch snowfall, and it was so cold at this late date that the same storm left snow at Albuquerque, an unprecedented 10.5 inches of it, and snow came down to below 3500 feet Mar. 29 in the Tucson area!



In the Lower Sonoran section of the Region, all the moisture meant an unusually green desert, with spectacular wild flower shows in Southwestern Arizona. The accompanying protracted cold delayed the leafing and flowering of most plants, so that mesquites at Tucson, for example, showed no sign of green at the end of the period.

As was the case during the fall, the winter was noteworthy for invasions by a number of birds in virtually unprecedented numbers. The cause of these incursions was apparently, for most species, a failure of pine nut and juniper berry crops to the north of this region and in the north part of this region.

GREBES THROUGH HERONS—An ad. Pied-billed Grebe at Arivaca Jct., Pima Co., Ariz., Mar. 10 was accompanied by 3 small young on an unusually early date (Anne Alden, SR). Three Double-crested Cormorants were at ponds on the San Bernardino Ranch, Cochise Co., Ariz., Feb. 24 (DDa, CM). An ad. Little Blue Heron was at Tanque Verde Ranch e. of Tucson Dec. 7-21 (CC, Don Lamm *et al.*) for an unusual winter record, and one (age?) was at El Paso Dec. 30 (*fide* GW). Cattle Egret numbers were up, with as many as 16 during January at Clint, El Paso Co., Tex. (Faye Surratt), 23 in December at Phoenix (BB, RW), 20 in March at Tempe, Maricopa Co., Ariz. (Hugh Hanson *et al.*), and at least 30 Winterhaven, Imperial Co., Calif., Mar. 26 (DE *et al.*). A Least Bittern at Blue Pt., on the Salt R. in Maricopa Co., Ariz., Mar. 17, was in a new wintering locality (RJ, JS).

WOOD STORK—One of the most remarkable records of the season was provided by a **Wood Stork**, satisfactorily photographed in flight over the highway not far e. of Tombstone, Cochise Co., Ariz., Dec. 24 (Don Schmoltdt, Gerry Lasser, Roger Willmarch). There are no winter records for this region since 1903.

WATERFOWL—A **Black Brant** was found at Tucson Dec. 29-30 (HF *et al.*), while another was seen on the Arizona side of the Colorado R. about 5 miles n. of Topock, Mohave Co., Mar. 20 (Robt. Karges, Anthony Moskos). These are the third and fourth

records for Arizona. Seventeen White-fronted Geese were observed at the Las Vegas, Nev., Country Club pond Jan. 8-9 (Don Baepler, CL). An astonishing 45 Mexican Ducks in a new area for them were reported on the Davis Mts., Tex., C B C Dec. 29 (*fide* FW). Seventeen Wood Ducks in the Farmington, San Juan Co., N. Mex., area Dec. 16 (*fide* AN) were a surprising total.

VULTURES, HAWKS—Twelve to 14 Black Vultures were soaring at San Bernardino Ranch, Ariz., Feb. 24 (DDa, CM). A new bird for Arizona is the **White-tailed Kite**—one was seen at Blue Pt., Feb. 25, by two veteran observers (RJ, JS); it should be mentioned here that one was reported in the Dragoon Mts., Cochise Co., last Nov. 6 (DDa). Individual Goshawks were seen in lowlands throughout the region, some 20 records in all; 3 were observed in the Farmington, N. Mex., area Dec. 16 (AN *et al.*). A Harlan's Hawk was seen repeatedly at Phoenix Dec. 14-Mar. 25, and another was there Feb. 17-Mar. 25 (DT, RW, RN *et al.*). The ad. Red-shouldered Hawk found last September at Mormon Farm, near Las Vegas, Nev., was perhaps the same one observed there Dec. 2-Feb. 17 (CL, VM *et al.*).

On Mar. 30, RJ and JS witnessed a record number of Zone-tailed Hawks in Maricopa Co., Ariz.—6 in all at Blue Pt. and Ft. McDowell, including a flight of 3. For the second winter, an unusual number of Rough-legged Hawks was reported, including a possible first record for Mexico, one on Feb. 16 less than a mile n. of Cananea, Sonora (WR). Quite a few Bald Eagles were reported region-wide—at least 22 in singles or pairs plus as many as 11 at Conchas L., San Miguel Co., N. Mex., in February (Lyle Berger) and 5 adults about 18 miles n. of Farmington Feb. 25 (HLe). They were also seen in dry-land locations, including one adult e. of Nogales, Santa Cruz Co., Ariz., Dec. 13 (Dick & Bea Smith) and one immature about 20 miles n.e. of Douglas, Cochise Co., Ariz., Dec. 26 (Walter Spofford). A dozen Peregrine Falcons were reported, a few more than usual; Merlins were also seen more often.

SANDHILL CRANES—Some maximum winter counts were 51 at Albuquerque Dec. 17 (*fide* AE), 10,500 on Bosque del Apache N.W.R., N. Mex., Jan. 2 (GZ), about 6500 near Columbus, Luna Co., N. Mex., Dec. 10 (RF, Tom Brake), and 800 in Kansas Settlement, Cochise Co., Ariz., Feb. 10 (BH). About 25 were seen just n.e. of Lordsburg, Hidalgo Co., N. Mex., Feb. 1 (RF), a new wintering location. About 45 were at Elephant Butte Marsh, Sierra Co., N. Mex., Jan. 9 (CH, BE) and nearly 200 near Cliff, Grant Co., N. Mex., Mar. 11 (RF). Four hundred were migrating over Bandalier Nat'l Monument, Sandoval Co., N. Mex., Feb. 25 (Marjory Swain), and flocks (maximum, 470) were sighted over Albuquerque Feb. 18-Mar. 11 (Pat Basham). Although the last ones left Bitter Lake N.W.R., N. Mex., Mar. 16, flights of 20-25 were seen overhead there through Mar. 31 (LK).

RAILS, GALLINULES—One each of Virginia Rail and Sora were noted near Kirtland, San Juan Co., N. Mex., Feb. 4 (AN), and a Com. Gallinule was at the same marsh Jan. 30-Mar. 3 (CS).

SHOREBIRDS—Unusual for spring were Snowy Plover in Maricopa Co., Ariz.—one s. of Chandler Mar. 28 (Roland Shook *et al.*) and one at Phoenix Mar. 29-30 (RB, BB). Eight Long-billed Curlews were in an alfalfa field near Las Cruces, Dona Ana Co., N. Mex., Mar. 24 (Debra Hickman). Two Greater Yellowlegs were wintering at Farmington Dec. 16 (Donna Thatcher). A Red Phalarope was identified at Sierra Vista, Cochise Co., Ariz., Dec. 7 (DDa, CM).

GULLS—The Glaucous Gull reported from Boulder Beach, Nev., on L. Mead Nov. 30 was probably the same one seen at the Las Vegas dump Dec. 16 (CL). An imm. Glaucous-winged Gull was seen in the Las Vegas area Dec. 16 & 28 (CL). A surprising total of 31 Herring Gulls was counted at Lakes Avalon and McMillan, Eddy Co., N. Mex., Dec. 23 (*fide* SW). An ad. Bonaparte's Gull in winter plumage was flying along U.S. 1-8 near Sentinel, Maricopa Co., Ariz., Mar. 26 (DE *et al.*), 4 were near Loving, Eddy Co., N. Mex., Dec. 24 (*fide* SW), and 2 were at Phoenix Dec. 5 (Zona Brighton).

DOVES, ANIS—A White-winged Dove was listed on the Davis Mts., Tex., C B C Dec. 29 (*fide* FW). A Ground Dove was seen, usually with an Inca Dove, at Tule Springs, Nev., near Las Vegas, Feb. 18-Mar. 5 (CL, VM). Six were listed on the C B C at Bosque Ref., Dec. 16 (*fide* CH). Two or 3 Inca Doves were at a Boulder City, Nev., residence Dec. 17-Mar. 31 (L. Brose, *fide* PL). Five were reported from the Sedona, Coconino Co., Ariz., vicinity Dec. 20 (*fide* Will Osborn). Two that appeared at Bayard, Grant Co., N. Mex., last Oct. 25 stayed throughout the period (RF). Two were counted at Big Bend Nat'l Park, Tex., Dec. 31 (*fide* FW). A nest with young was found as early as Feb. 26 in the Tucson Mts. foothills (Seymour Levy). Two Groove-billed Anis were in Phoenix from at least Dec. 21 to the end of the period (RW, JW *et al.*).

OWLS, NIGHTJARS, SWIFTS—A Barn Owl already 6-7 weeks old was banded at Tucson Feb. 19 (HF, Steve Dubrot). Two Screech Owls were at Farmington Mar. 5 and later (JN), and at least 2 others were reported (AN). A Saw-whet Owl was found in Juan Tabo Canyon n.e. of Albuquerque in mid-December (Tom Smylie), and one was at Bitter Lake Ref., Dec. 31 (DB). A Whip-poor-will was seen on four occasions, Jan. 20-Mar. 17, at Blue Pt. (Ann Simpson, JS, RJ). Five White-throated Swifts were seen in Farmington Dec. 22 (AN) and 4 at Jackson L., San Juan Co., N. Mex., the same day (HLe). Fifteen were counted at Carlsbad Caverns Nat'l Park, N. Mex., Dec. 17 (*fide* SW). One was at El Paso Dec. 30 (*fide* GW). Four were at Portal, Cochise Co., Ariz., Dec. 31 (RW, JW), and 5 were seen there Jan. 4 (SSP).

HUMMINGBIRDS—Remarkably early returning hummingbirds, considering the weather, were reported at Portal, Ariz., by Isobel Hicks: Broad-tailed Mar. 4, Rivoli Mar. 4, and Blue-throated Mar. 8. A ♂ Anna's Hummingbird was in e. El Paso for the fourth consecutive winter (Roberta Wilcox), and a ♀ was also present in another part of town Jan. 14-Feb. 2 (GW). A nest found in Tucson Feb. 12 fledged young; another nest "across the street" from the first was being built on Mar. 4 but was abandoned (HF, WB); a nest in Phoenix fledged young Jan. 7 (*fide* JW). A ♂ was seen in Globe, Gila Co., Ariz., Dec. 16 & Jan. 12 (Sallie Harris).

KINGFISHERS, WOODPECKERS—A Green Kingfisher was noted below L. Patagonia, Santa Cruz Co., Ariz., Mar. 3 (Mark Robbins *et al.*). A few Lewis' Woodpeckers were scattered throughout s.e. Arizona; they were relatively common in Phoenix, but absent at Corrales, Sandoval Co., N. Mex., where usually present (RT). As many as 6 (all ♂) Williamson's Sapsuckers were found on the e. side of the Chiricahua Mts., Ariz., Mar. 27 (Allen Crockett), as one was in Phoenix Dec. 23-Jan. 7 (Kenn Kaufman *et al.*). Four Hairy Woodpeckers were noted at Elephant Butte Marsh, N. Mex., Jan. 9-10 (CH, BE).

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS—An odd record indeed was that of a **Thick-billed Kingbird** at Laguna Dam, Yuma Co., Ariz., Dec. 17-Jan. 4 (and later?) (SBc, DT *et al.*; photographed by DT). A Coves' Flycatcher was heard calling repeatedly at Tanque Verde Ranch e. of Tucson Dec. 14 (SR). This was an unusual winter for swallows in s. Arizona: 5 Violet-greens at Tucson Jan. 1 (Phil Norton, RN *et al.*), one at Nogales Dec. 16 (RW), 2 at Phoenix Dec. 23 (SBc), one at Tucson Jan. 11 (GMO), an astonishing 150 on the Colorado R. n. of Laguna Dam Dec. 17 (*fide* JRH), 124 Tree Swallows at Phoenix Dec. 23 (m. obs.), 2 **Bank Swallows** at Phoenix Dec. 23 (Dwain & Gloria Warner) and 7 on the Colorado R. n. of Laguna Dam Dec. 17 (SBc, DT), and one Cliff Swallow at Phoenix Dec. 23 (BB).

CORVIDS—Steller's Jays were scattered throughout the lowlands Region-wide, but were particularly noticeable in cities like El Paso, Phoenix, and Las Vegas, where there were feeders and other inducements. They were common at Bosque Ref., Jan.-Feb. (GZ), and as many as 16 were seen at Elephant Butte Marsh Jan. 9 (CH, BE). Scrub Jays were present in even more unprecedented numbers, at least in s. Arizona; one was even seen at the California side of Laguna Dam in Imperial Co., Jan. 7 (GMC). **Black-billed Magpies** were building nests at Teec Nos Pas, Apache Co., Ariz., Mar. 25 (Vernon Mayes); it is a new breeding bird for Arizona. From 30 to 60 Com. Crows were found in the Mohave Valley, Mohave Co., Ariz., n.e. of Needles, Calif., at least Jan. 12-Mar. 5 (SBt).

A few large flocks of Piñon Jays were scattered in s.e. Arizona, but they had largely disappeared by late February; none were seen farther west than the Nogales area, nor farther north than the Dragoon Mts. Their numbers were fewer than usual in at least parts

of n. New Mexico (PS). As many as 150 were counted in the Davis Mts., Dec. 29 (*vide* FW). Clark's Nutcrackers, common during the fall in s. Arizona mountains, had quite disappeared again by the first of the year, although 17 were still at a Portal feeder Mar. 31 (SSp), and an occasional single bird was seen in places like Patagonia, Santa Cruz Co., Ariz., and Tucson until late February. One was seen even along the Colorado R. above Laguna Dam, Ariz., Dec. 17 (*vide* JRH). Unprecedented numbers were found at Prescott, Ariz., through the winter (RJ). In New Mexico, they were abundant at Los Alamos, where at least one juvenile was seen Mar. 25 (BL), and they were found south to the Roswell, Chaves Co., area Dec. 17 (3-*vide* LK) and to Bayard Dec. 17 (1-RF). At least 3 were in El Paso most of the period (*vide* GW), and 7 were reported from the Davis Mts., Dec. 29 (*vide* FW).

TITMICE THROUGH THRASHERS—Up to 5 or 6 Mountain Chickadees at Blue Pt. during the winter were an unprecedented number (RJ, JS). More than usual were seen in Albuquerque (PT), one or 2 were present at Bayard, N. Mex. (RF), and 3 were at Elephant Butte Marsh Jan. 9 (CH, BE). Unusual records of Plain Titmice came from Redington Pass, e. of Tucson, where 2 were seen Dec. 20 (Ross & Bette Chapin) and 3 on Jan. 15 (Bernard Weideman). A Com. Bushtit nest was found at an unusual date, Feb. 24, and in an unusual site, a palo verde tree, near Blue Pt.; young in the nest were being fed Mar. 30 (RJ, JS). A Brown Creeper was seen between Laguna and Imperial Dams, Imperial Co., Calif., Jan. 7 (GMc). A Gray Catbird, very rare in s. Arizona, was observed at Tanque Verde Ranch Jan. 8-9 (CC). Sage Thrashers were more widespread than usual.

THRUSHES—From mid-December to early January, large flocks of Am. Robins descended on El Paso, Tucson, and Phoenix, where they fed mainly on pyracantha berries in company with numbers of Cedar Waxwings; they thinned out in early March and by Mar. 31 nearly all had left (m. obs.). Only a few were in Albuquerque (DDe), they were common in Roswell (Jodi Corrie), and abundant at Silver City, N. Mex. (RF). Following last fall's unprecedented invasion of **Varied Thrushes** in Arizona and Nevada, more records were obtained: 7 in the Las Vegas, Nev., area, including 3 at one feeder in Boulder City (*vide* CL), one at Tucson Dec. 8-Mar. 5 (TP, SSt *et al.*), 2 at Phoenix Dec. 11-17 (David Stejskal *et al.*), one at Nogales Dec. 15-16 (sev. obs.), one in lower Sabino Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., Ariz., Feb. 10 to at least Mar. 31 (Wm. Calder *et al.*), and one in Madera Canyon, Santa Rita Mts., Ariz., Mar. 27 (Dan Popper). A possible first record for New Mexico was one seen on the Silver City C B C Dec. 23 (no details available—Chancie Snyder). Unusually large numbers of Mountain Bluebirds invaded s. Arizona and s. New Mexico in December-February, sometimes feeding in the cities with robins on pyracantha berries; there were flocks in El Paso also. Townsend's Solitaires were seen almost everywhere in s. Arizona, s. New Mexico, and at El Paso in considerable numbers.

WAXWINGS—A considerable invasion of Bohemian Waxwings occurred in s. Nevada and n. New Mexico; none were seen in Arizona. Numerous records were reported for the Las Vegas area, the largest number seen being 65 on Mar. 18 (VM). In New Mexico, most of the reports came from Albuquerque, where a maximum of 150 were found Mar. 5 (Rita Nicklas); the earliest report was of 40 on Feb. 18 (DDe). Other reports included small flocks at Los Alamos (PS), where the first seen were 20 on Dec. 8 (L. Hawkins), small flocks up to 40 seen to mid-February at Farmington (AN), 76 at Santa Fe Dec. 28 (*vide* Roland Wauer), and about 15 at Taos, Taos Co., Mar. 15 (Dixie Gillett). They were also at Cedar Crest, Sandia Mts., Bernalillo Co., where up to 50 were seen Jan. 24 (BM).

SHRIKES, VIREOS, WARBLERS—A N. Shrike was seen at Bitter Lake Ref., Mar. 16 (DB), and another was found in the upper Rio Grande Valley near El Paso Jan. 13 & 17 (Louise & Wendell Yerby, GW *et al.*). An immature was at Corn Creek, Desert Wildlife Range, Nev., Dec. 30, and an adult was there Feb. 18 (both VM). Two Solitary Vireos were seen at Bonito Well, Organ Pipe Cactus Nat'l Monument, Ariz., Feb. 18 (BM), and one was at Buckhorn Marsh, near Buckhorn, Grant Co., N. Mex., Jan. 14 (RF). A Yellow Warbler was found at Boulder City, Nev., Feb. 9 (PL). An Ovenbird was found in Phoenix Dec. 23-24 (JW *et al.*), and a N. Waterthrush was there Dec. 23 (RN).

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS—A Northern Oriole (Bullock's) was seen at Tule Springs, Nev., Feb. 27 & Mar. 5 (CL). About 15 Com. Grackles were identified at Kirtland, N. Mex., Mar. 9 (CS), as were 2 at San Antonio, Socorro Co., N. Mex., Jan. 25 (RT). A ♂ Western Tanager was photographed at Portal Dec. 16 (SSp) and one was at Phoenix Dec. 27 (SD, HLo). A Hepatic Tanager was found at Youngtown, near Phoenix, Feb. 2-Mar. 31 (*vide* JW). A ♂ on Feb. 18 and a ♀ on Feb. 25 were seen at La Morita, Sonora, Mexico, s.e. of Naco (WR).

FINCHES, SPARROWS—Several Pyrrhuloxias wintered in a thicket e. of the Dragoon Mts. (WBA), and 6 were seen at Bonito Well, Organ Pipe Cactus Monument, Feb. 18 (BM). Four Dickcissels were found in the upper Rio Grande Valley, at El Paso, Dec. 30 (*vide* GW). A good many more Evening Grosbeaks were about than usual; mostly in small numbers, seldom more than 50. They were especially widespread and numerous in n. New Mexico, including Farmington (AN, JN), Embudo, Rio Arriba Co. (Ellen Espinoza), Las Vegas (WH), and especially Espanola, Rio Arriba Co. (*vide* BL) and Albuquerque (m. obs.) and the Sandia Mts. (*vide* RT). Fourteen were at Socorro, Socorro Co., N. Mex., Mar. 17 (Marvin Wilkening). About 18 were in Phoenix in December (Gene Bauer *et al.*). Small numbers were in the Las Vegas, Nev., area throughout the winter (CL). Purple Finches staged a minor invasion in s. Arizona, where small numbers were found in the Tucson and Phoenix areas, as well as at Globe (maximum of 14, Feb. 22-BJ). Five

were at Bard, Imperial Co., Calif., Jan. 7 (GMc). Cassin's Finches were likewise found in s. Arizona, mostly at Portal (SSp), but also 3 at Globe Jan. 24 (BJ) and one at Phoenix Jan. 7 (HLo). In n. New Mexico they were plentiful, nearly 3200 being counted at Española Dec. 30 (BL *et al.*), and reported as numerous at Farmington (AN) and Albuquerque (PT). Five were at a feeder in the Davis Mts. area Dec. 29 (*fide* FW). Two Pine Grosbeaks were seen in the Sandia Mts., Dec. 30 (AE, Virginia Fedder), and one was at San Cristobal, Taos Co., N. Mex., Mar. 11 (WH). About 75 Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were seen just n. of Farmington Dec. 29; the flock included at least one Black Rosy Finch (AN). At Sunset Crater Nat'l Monument, Coconino Co., Ariz., 24 were present Dec. 30 (Don Magee), and 3 were seen there Feb. 10 (RW *et al.*). Red Crossbill numbers in the s.e. Arizona mountains dropped off in January. About 80 were in Tucson through January (GMo *et al.*), with a few still present into March (WB). "Many" were reported at Phoenix through the winter (SD, RW *et al.*), and a flock was also at Nogales (BH). They were even present in s.e. New Mexico lowlands, with 23 reported in the Lakes Avalon-McMillan area Dec. 23 (*fide* SW). Rufous-sided Towhees came into the cities to eat at feeders, especially Phoenix and Tucson, and they were more numerous than usual in Albuquerque (PT).

A Grasshopper Sparrow was collected at Bosque Ref., Mar. 14 (GZ). Rufous-winged Sparrows became well-scattered in s.c. Arizona, where many sightings were made on the outskirts of Tucson and the birds often sang. Cassin's Sparrows were singing near the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center n.e. of Tucson Mar. 15 (WBA), and at least one was singing in n.w. Tucson Mar. 17-27 (Wilma & Wm. Meter). Certainly one of the most spectacular aspects of the season was the large number of Harris' Sparrows. They were found almost everywhere! Some of the larger numbers were: 7 at one place in Farmington (JN), at least 4 at Kirtland Dec. 1-Mar. 31 (CS), 4 at Havasu N.W.R., Mohave Co., Ariz., Dec. 12-Mar. 13 (SBt *et al.*), at least 10 at Pipe Spring Nat'l Monument, Mohave Co., Ariz. (Richard Wilt), 7 (6 banded) at Scottsdale, Ariz. (BC), 9 at Corn Creek on the Desert Wildlife Range Jan. 31 (CL), 8 at Tule Springs Nev., Feb. 27 (CL), and 4 at Boulder City Feb. 7-Mar. 31 (PL). Only in the Pecos Valley and in El Paso were they unreported. White-crowned Sparrows continued to be very scarce in n.e. New Mexico (WH). Fox Sparrows were seen in yards in the Tucson and Phoenix vicinities, including 4 (3 banded) at Scottsdale Jan. 2-Feb. 13 (BC). The first Nevada record for McCown's Longspur was obtained when 3-4 were located at Tule Springs Feb. 21 (CL; details to be published elsewhere). A Lapland Longspur was found at Tule Springs Dec. 10 (VM). Two to 3 Chestnut-collared Longspurs at Tule Springs Jan. 28 provided the second Nevada record (CL—photo).

CORRIGENDUM: The ♂ Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Am Birds* 27:101) reported as the first documented record for Nevada was actually the second (see Johnson, N. and R. Banks, 1959, *Condor* 61:303).

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