



Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education Center



VOLUME 23, NO. 2

FALL 2017

The Mission of TWREC

Our mission is to help Pennsylvania wildlife by

- Caring for injured, orphaned or ill wildlife in order to enable their return to the wild.
- Promoting appreciation and understanding of wildlife through education.

Admissions

At present time Tamarack is able to admit birds of prey (all species and ages of eagles, hawks, falcons, owls and vultures), small birds (all ages song birds, wood peckers, etc at our North East location), turtles and opossums. This is subject to change depending on case load.

For more information, call
814-763-2574

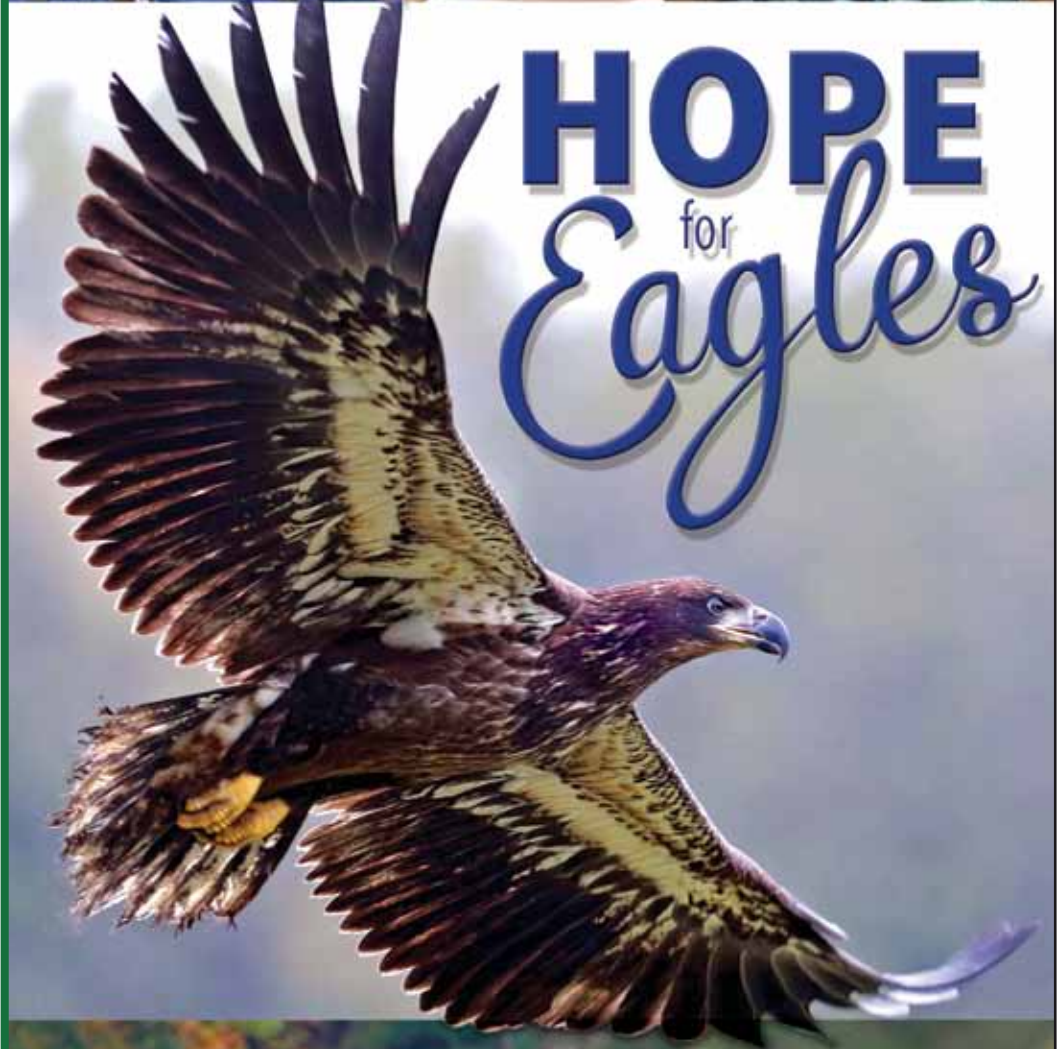
Hours

September to May
by appointment



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Information of T.W.R.E.C. may be obtained
from the Pennsylvania Department of State
by calling toll-free within PA:
1.800.732.0999
Registration does not imply endorsement.*





The news banner at Pittsburgh International Airport heralds the news of "Kiski", a 30-year-old eagle treated at Tamarack.

Hope for Eagles

By Ben Haywood, volunteer medic and Allegheny College Professor of Environmental Science.

If you've read or tuned in to the local news in recent weeks, you've likely seen headlines heralding the work of Tamarack treating a spate of ill bald eagles admitted with lead poisoning. In fewer than six weeks, the center admitted six eagles with blood lead levels that exceeded the capacity of our equipment to register. This was unusual, given that the center only admits 8-10 eagles, on average, in recent years. In response, volunteers enthusiastically dedicated hundreds of hours, pitching in above the call of duty, and to assist licensed rehabilitator Carol Holmgren in providing professional, loving and humane care for each of the ill birds we received. Although five of the six admitted eagles did not pull through, we celebrate the inspiring release of the surviving bird, and through education, hope to make our state safer for all raptors.

A Poignant Reminder

These six eagles are a poignant reminder that, despite the growing populations of the species in our state, avian scavengers like eagles face challenges as a consequence of interactions with humans. A recent national wildlife health center study based on the examination of carcasses from across the country found that, among 3,000 eagles evaluated, approximately 25% had perished due to lead toxicity. Lead is a neurotoxin, and Bald eagles are particularly sensi-

tive to it due to the presence of a muscular gizzard and highly acidic digestive tract that quickly breaks down lead and absorbs it into the bloodstream. Eagle mortality due to lead poisoning is even higher than 25% in some parts of the country. At Tamarack, 32% of the 76 eagles treated since 2009 had elevated blood lead levels. Of those admitted with poisoning, only five have survived.

Diagnostic tests and procedures, including radiographs and gastric lavage (or stomach flushing), of our eagle patients, confirm what many recent scientific studies have also



Above: an eagle is xrayed to check for metal.
Left: Metal fragments removed from the stomach of "Kiski" through gastric lavage, with a penny for size comparison.



Half of the eagles admitted with lead poisoning, still have the toxic metal in their digestive tract.

discovered: one significant source of lead is upland game activities, such as hunting woodchucks. Such activities can create opportunities for avian scavengers or other non-target wildlife to ingest lead when bullets or shot fragment in an intended target. Like other avian scavengers, eagles can consume lead from ammunition or fishing found in an animal carcass.

From Challenge to Opportunity

While it is difficult to witness the suffering of lead poisoned animals, and we grieve for those that did not survive, our recent eagle patients provide an opportunity to increase citizen's awareness of this problem and to educate about it's prevention. We have worked hard to spread the stories of our recent patients, including the dramatic one of Kiski, a 30-year-old eagle who was brought from Saskatchewan as a nestling in the 1980s and helped repop-



News articles about Tamarack patients helps educate about prevention.

ulate eagles as part of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) reintroduction program. In total, we are aware of 15 recent newspaper or journal articles and 6 video news stories about these patients. Facebook posts about Kiski alone quickly became viral, with one post having over 120,000 views. Each of these public news pieces is an avenue to educate and make the world safer for eagles.

Recognizing that the vast majority of game sportsmen and women across the state are dedicated to the stewardship of natural resources and preservation of critical habitats and species, we have sought to form alliances with these communities.

State Action and Central Messaging

At the state level, the PGC Board of Commissioners has taken note of the issue, asking for information from state



Carol Holmgren draws a blood sample from "Kiski" to test for lead.

currently considering options to increase education about the problem among common-wealth hunters. Tamarack applauds these efforts as it is our belief that education has the potential to be much more powerful and effective than other options like legislation.

Our central message to state officials and local citizens has been that mortality associated with lead poisoning in avian scavengers is highly preventable and easy to solve. With many alternatives available, one way to help wildlife like eagles is for sportsmen and women to limit or eliminate the use of lead

ammunition or fishing sinkers. If this is not feasible, a little extra attention to the task of burying or adequately covering animal carcasses or parts that may contain lead fragments in the field can help prevent the problem. One or both of these voluntary actions can help reduce the rates of lead poisoning among our eagles to ensure a bright future for a species that was once nearly extinct.

A Message of Hope and Survival

One eagle who will likely benefit from such education is young Griffin, the only patient of the six recent admissions that survived. Arriving at the center with high lead levels, the likelihood for his survival was low, especially for a juvenile bird who was just hatched this past spring. Defying the odds, Griffin pulled through two rounds of chelation therapy and regained his full stamina and health, earning him his name. With the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle, the griffin is thought to be an especially powerful and majestic mythological creature.

Released on restricted game lands near Pymatuning on October 10th, Griffin's chances of encountering lead in his environment may very well be diminished because of the renewed vigilance and education spurred by our recent patients. Since eagles can live 25-30 years, Griffin will serve as a messenger of his species for decades, joining a chorus of eagle patients that continue to warn us of our impact on the natural world. We are grateful for his survival and for the opportunity to turn sadness and grief into messages of hope and optimism for both humans and our wildlife neighbors.

veterinarian Dr. Justin Brown about the problem and requesting that he continue to invest resources into the ongoing surveillance of lead poisoning to better understand the risks to non-target wildlife and potential solutions. In a recent presentation to the commissioners, Dr. Brown confirmed the significance of this statewide issue and, with numerous appeals from our supporters and other wildlife rehabilitators across the state, the commissioners are

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Sarah Sargent

What a summer we have had here at Tamarack, with lots of patients, education programs, volunteers to train, and projects. Carol, our talented Director, is a blur of constant motion, it seems to me. We are so fortunate to have her at the helm of our daily operations. Meanwhile, the board is undertaking a serious planning process with the help of Robert Humphreys, an Architect and professional Planner based in Meadville. The planning work will help us think through how we want to grow over the next few years so that we make good decisions on how we develop our property, and equally importantly, how we grow our staff and other critical components of our organization. We have high hopes for improving and strengthening our ability to deliver care for patients as well as our unique education programs, without stretching anyone too thin (especially Carol)! If you are interested in helping with our planning process or have ideas to share, please

contact me (treasurer@tamarackwildlife.org) or Carol.

Tamarack relies on help in many forms, from many people. Our dedicated volunteers, such as Janelle, our opossum specialist featured in this newsletter, are absolutely essential to our ability to help wildlife and teach people about it. We always need more volunteers, so please consider taking our next training class if you think you can fit helping wildlife into your schedule. And you don't have to start out with 2 AM feedings! We also need people to help with office tasks, if you are more inclined toward data entry and that sort of work. Please let us know you'd like to help!

Lastly, a big thank you to all who help us financially. All gifts, memberships, proceeds from fundraisers, and other donations you send to us help us keep the doors open. We aren't a big, fancy operation. We do a lot with a little. Thank you for helping us.



Erie Gives Day 2017 is a Wonderful Success!

Thank you to the 119 donors who contributed to Tamarack through Erie Gives Day! Including the pro-rated match, Tamarack received a wonderful \$12,580! These gifts support our ongoing wildlife rehabilitation and education work, and also help us prepare for Tamarack's "next steps". Save the date for next year's Erie Gives: Tuesday August 14, 2018.

***Janelle with "Pippin",
a disabled opossum
that will soon be placed
in the Elmwood Park Zoo
in Norristown, PA.***

a mother's

love



It's two a.m. as the alarm goes off. Rising from her make shift bed, Janelle warms formula, draws it into a syringe and picks up a tiny 25 gram infant. Threading a catheter through the petite mouth, she feels for the tube entering the baby's stomach before expressing the formula. In the night time hush, she tucks the baby back with its siblings and picks up the next: 10 more to go before Janelle lies down again, making sure the alarm is set for 4 a.m.

Since 2014 Janelle Harrawood, professionally an artist and musician, has dedicated herself as Tamarack's volunteer opossum specialist to raising orphaned and injured opossums. From April until September, she feeds the youngest orphaned babies every 2-3 hours around the clock. Opossums have two litters during the breeding season. Soon after the last of the first litter are eating independently, the second round is coming in. Mother opossums can be injured on the road, caught by dogs, or the babies can

become accidentally separated from their mother and young opossums are not ready to be independent until 7" long from nose to base of tail.

Before she took our Wildlife First Responder class, Janelle never thought about how many opossum orphans there are. "They need their mother for 4-5 months!" Once involved with their care, Janelle shared "I was surprised by their sweet, gentle demeanor". When hungry, the babies make a sneezing sound and clench their fists. They groom themselves like a cat and can express when they are particularly happy, just as a cat may purr when content.

Most years 40-50 young marsupials are admitted, but in 2017 the litters have been large and over 100 have received care. Once eating on their own, and fully furred, the nocturnal youngsters are moved to pre-release caging at our center where they exercise, learn to forage and eat a varied diet until ready for release.

Despite a poor public image, as part of their omnivorous diet nomadic opossums clean up carrion and are like vacuum cleaners for ticks, including those that spread Lyme's disease. Fastidious groomers, opossums ingest 90 percent of the ticks that climb onto them! When threatened, they prefer to avoid conflict, and as defense may run, growl, hiss or "play 'possum".

Reflecting on the opossums she has known and treated, Janelle shares "The results are worth it." "It's hard to release them...I wish they would send a letter and tell me how they are doing, but ... I give them a chance and I know they are grateful."



Ancient ones:

Fossils reveal opossums have been around for 70 million years, and roamed with dinosaurs.

'mazing marsupials:

North America's only! The young are born in an embryonic state and nurse in their mother's pouch for two to three months!

Playing Possum:

When frightened, heart rate slows, they stiffen, and release a scent.

To a predator they look and smell dead.

This uncontrolled seizure can last a few minutes to several hours.



Tick eaters:

Opossums can eat up to 5-7,000 ticks a year, as part of their omnivorous diet.

Thumbs up! Like humans, opossums have opposable thumbs for grasping.

Tails have it! Opossums use their prehensile tail to collect leaves for a nest, and for balance.

Rarely rabid:

Due to their extra low body temperature, it is unusual for opossums to carry rabies.

What nice teeth you have! With 50 teeth, they have more than any other land animal!

Nature's garbage collectors:

Opossums are omnivores and can eat carrion, insects including ticks and slugs, leaves and fruit.

2018 Wildlife First Responders Courses

Back by popular demand! Have you ever wished you'd known how to handle a wildlife emergency? A hawk hit by a car on a roadside? Ducklings stranded away from their mother? This year, to meet demand, our Wildlife First Responder will be held in a larger space on the campus of Allegheny College in Meadville, PA. It will be Saturday, February 24 from 9am-5pm, with a snow date of Saturday, March 3. Tamarack's live ambassador raptors will be available for participants to meet during the class.

This course will teach you when to intervene and when not to, and how to capture, stabilize and transport injured wildlife. In addition to learning how to respond when encountering wildlife in need, past participants have gone on to become phone helpline volunteers, transporters and onsite volunteers.

The course cost is \$40 and includes lunch.

Those wishing to volunteer answering phone calls on our helpline will be given a priority in registration until January 1 and will receive a rebate of \$20 when they begin volunteering in that capacity following the course.

Registration information and forms are available at www.tamarack-wildlife.org, or call the center at 814-763-2574. Previous participants are welcome to attend for a refresher at no cost if there is room (\$10 if having lunch), but should register. Early registration is recommended.

Help Wildlife Using Your Phone!

Are you looking for a rewarding way to help wildlife? Do you enjoy problem solving and talking with people? Consider joining our team of Wildlife Helpline Volunteers! Team members take one or two weekly phone shifts (morning, afternoon or evening shifts are available) and then using their phone, remotely retrieve Tamarack messages hourly during their shift, answer questions people have about wildlife and arrange for admission if appropriate. Taking the Wildlife First Responders class is a prerequisite and volunteers are given a manual and are assigned a mentor for when questions arise. For more information call the center 814-763-2574.

Summer into Fall at the Center

Carol Holmgren

As sunlight filters through leaves, glowing with red, orange, yellow and green, like a resplendent stained glassed window, we breathe in the sweet smells of fall. Phone calls and patients are coming in less frequently and we are starting to catch our breath after an intense and rewarding summer.

Just yesterday we had the thrill of releasing an eagle, appropriately nicknamed "Griffin", that beat the odds and survived acute lead toxicity. Other patients have gone free in recent days: Barred and Great Horned Owls, Red-tailed Hawks, Blue Jays, Cedar Waxwings, Opossums and turtles.

Looking over our admission records, we see that 452 patients were admitted at our Saegertown center so far this year. This is over 100 more than last year, and includes record numbers of Bald Eagles (14), Red-tailed Hawks (45), Eastern Screech Owls (17), Great Horned Owls (15), and Opossums (125!). Another regional rehab center was closed much of the busy season, which may have led to the increased numbers. The beginning of the summer was full of youngsters: American Kestrels, Eastern Screech Owls, Red-shouldered Hawks as well as Cottontail Rabbits, and Virginia Opossums. The end of the

summer was dominated with the demanding treatment of lead-poisoned Bald Eagles, and patients struggling with West Nile Virus, including many Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks, and more orphaned Opossums.

In North East, licensed songbird specialist Gina Kron treated smaller birds (or avian species) including spunky Robins, curious Blue Jays, Cedar Waxwings, Mallard ducklings, and delicate Chimney Swifts among others.

We had the privilege of sharing our ambassador raptors with nearly 8,000 people, young and old, this year.

Beyond the numbers, our memories are full of patients and people who touched our lives: the fledgling Screech Owl "Precious" we didn't think would survive the night but with time and care made a full recovery; the young opossum with facial wounds that trusted Janelle to gently give daily wound care; the gentleman who fell in love with an orphaned young robin and made a generous donation for Gina's work with songbirds; the woman who cried at the beauty of ambassador Barred Owl "Sophia"; each of the eagles we treated and all the volunteers who stepped forward to assist with their medical treatments; and yesterday we had the thrill of releasing a young eagle and seeing him fly strongly into the sky where he belongs.

Thank you to all our members, on-site and helpline volunteers, educators, and medics for making this possible!

Thank you to our summer and fall helpers: Allegheny College Bonner leaders Brittany Claassen, Meric Islam, Gabi Ramos, Lee Streshenkoff and Jacob Walters; volunteers Allison Beck, Morgan Calahan, Martha Consla, Cathy Davis, Chris Green, Janelle Harrawood, Beth Irwin, Katie Kuzma, Melanie McClearn, Daniele Moffat, Brittany Osborne, Hannah Price, Laryssa Rote, Jodi Sipos, Vetta Stepanyan, Deborah Thompson, and Isaac Wilbur; and Allegheny College students George Ackerman, Arden Delphay, Lauren Erdman, Victoria Force, Will Harrod, and Graham Johnson.

Our fabulous Wildlife Helpline Volunteers, coordinated by Lynne Martin are: Diann Bolharsky, Carol Brown, Lynne Kaseimer, Jim Fitch, Joe Goertz, Bob Hartman, Julie Hirt, Denise Hudson, Marc Johns, Nancy Kerr, Lynne Martin, Tammy Rodgers, Marcella Smith, and Sharon Wesoky. Substitutes are Rita Gannoe, Jane Levin and Susan Scholz.

Honorarium

In Honor Of

Jess Schombert & her devotion to the animal kingdom

from Linda Schombert • Bill Lamont from Karen Kaiser

Jeff Freeman from Kathleen Freeman • Erin from Kathleen McGlaughlin Sowers Family from Darla Held & Family

In Memorium

In Memory Of

Lou Wagner from David Reithoffer • Louis Wagner from Richard Friedberg

Louis Wagner from Kelly Levis • Karen from Marie Moffat

Lou Wagner, from Adrian Wagner • Arlene Shultz from Kip & Cathy Mostowy & Family

Marge Van Tassel from James Van Tassel • Louis Wagner from Jean Young

The Eagle, Beauty from Jane Levin • Kiski from Aundra Zack

Her dog, Tiny, & Marshall Sowers from Darla Held & Family

Lou Wagner from Maria Herrera de la Muela

Louis Wagner, a truly exceptional teacher from Sinclair Rzasa

To make a contribution in honor or memory of someone, donations can be made on line or mailed to: TWREC, 21601 Stull Rd, Saegertown, PA 16433. Be sure to include: whether this is in honor or memory; name/address for TWREC to send acknowledgment; your (donor) name/address.

All members and contributors (except those desiring to be anonymous) will be listed in an annual report and are therefore not included in this newsletter.

Summer and Fall 2017 In-Kind Contributors

- Alan Johnson
- Animal Friends Cremation
- Betsy Schruers
- Brenda Reibel
- Chris, Sam and Jesse Green
- Donna Werle
- Dr. Lindstrom of Animal Clinic Northview
- Drs. Ramey of Animal Kingdom Pet Hospital
- Drs. Consla, Stanton and Waid of Conneaut Lake Veterinary Hospital
- Erie Zoo
- Greener Pastures Veterinary Clinic
- H and H Supermarket
- Jack Mahoney
- Janelle Harrawood
- Jenna Wagner
- Kate Arkwright
- Larry and Linda Slomski
- Linda and Bob Gleeson
- Melissa McCracken
- Michelle and Steve Curtze
- Pat and Jen Knapp
- Renee Rice and family
- Ridge Road Taxidermy
- Rita Gannoe
- Tom and Kathy Schruers
- Wyman Family
- Yvonne Ceslak

*If we neglected to include you - please let us know!
We appreciate all our supporters and do our best to remember you all.*

Wish List

Go to AmazonSmile.com and look up Tamarack Wildlife Center's wish list for more great ideas!



Broad-winged hawk release

- Paper Towels
- Bleach
- Dawn Dish Detergent
- Liquid laundry detergent for High Efficiency Machines (HE)
- Trash bags, 30 gallon
- Forever Stamps
- Cohesive Bandage, 2"
- Flat Sheets (clean, used), Pillow cases
- Surgical drape (unused from hospital surgeries)
- Sterile Saline or Lactated Ringers IV bags
- Wood Pine or Ash shavings for bedding (not cedar)
- Gently used stuffed animals to adapt and reuse for ambassador raptor enrichment



Orphaned Chipping Sparrow raised by Gina

Sponsorships Make Great Gifts

You can give a sponsorship of an ambassador raptor for \$25.00 per year. Sponsors receive a certificate of sponsorship, a 5x7 photograph and a brochure about the bird they are sponsoring.

Sponsorship funds help us provide food and medical care for these special ambassadors.

Indicate which ambassador(s) you would like to sponsor and whether this is a gift.

Send this form, along with a check for \$25 per animal per year to: **TWREC, 21601 Stull Road, Saegertown, PA 16433.**

- ☐ Lady Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk
- ☐ Willow, Eastern Screech Owl
- ☐ Spirit Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk
- ☐ Jedi, Merlin Falcon
- ☐ Vincent, Great Horned Owl

- ☐ Sophia, Barred Owl
- ☐ Jasper, Eastern Screech Owl
- ☐ Alice, Cooper's Hawk
- ☐ Apollo, Peregrine Falcon

Apollo, Peregrine Falcon



Name of Sponsor: _____ Gift Recipient's Name: _____

Address of Sponsor: _____ Gift Recipient's Address: _____

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 Phone: 814-763-2574

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Fall 2017 Newsletter



Yes! I want to help wildlife!

Become a member of TWREC and help wildlife. Members receive two newsletters per year and are invited to our annual open house. Your donations are tax deductible and give you the satisfaction of helping our native wildlife. If your membership is not up for renewal but you wish to provide extra financial support, your additional donation or memorial contribution is always welcome.

Send contributions to:

Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center, Inc.
21601 Stull Road, Saegertown, PA 16433

Annual Membership:

- ☐ Individual/Chickadee.....\$20
- ☐ Family/Kestrel.....\$30
- ☐ Great Horned Owl.....\$100
- ☐ Peregrine.....\$500
- ☐ Golden Eagle.....\$1000
- Other Amount.....\$_____

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 the newsletter via:**

☐ Mail ☐ E-Mail

*(If e-mail,
 please list below)*

All Contributions are Tax Deductible!

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 incorrect,
 please let us know.*

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