



Viva la Tortuga!

NEWSLETTER OF THE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK

A Year After the BP Oil Spill Sea Turtles Remain at Risk

One year ago, on April 10, 2010, the horrific BP oil well explosion triggered a massive gusher of crude oil that blackened the heart of the Gulf of Mexico, taking the lives of eleven men and thousands of sea turtles, sea birds, and marine mammals.

The BP oil spill forever changed our world and that of the people living in Gulf coast communities who witnessed close-up the nation's worst environmental disaster. The troubled memories of sea turtles burned alive and oil-soaked nesting beaches fuel the Sea Turtle Restoration Project's ongoing

campaign to overhaul oil and gas regulations to ensure real and specific protections for endangered sea turtles and our oceans.

During the peak of the oil spill crisis, STRP took swift action to protect sea turtles, with the help of thousands of our members and activists, and conservation allies. We took BP to court, halted the "controlled burns," and put independent wildlife observers trained in sea turtle rescue on cleanup vessels.

Now, STRP is working to ensure these critical sea turtle protection measures become permanent policy in all U.S. Coast Guard oil spill response and wildlife rescue plans.

A year has passed, but this is only a fraction of the time we expect to be monitoring the oil spill's effects on sea turtles, seafood safety, and the long-term harm to the Gulf marine ecosystem. At least 1,145 sea turtles were impacted during the spill, and the official total of 473 dead Kemp's ridleys is a wake-up call about the true, deadly dangers that oil and gas operations pose to these critically endangered sea turtles.

Federal agencies let down the American people through their failure to acknowledge that offshore oil could pose such an

continued on page 2

SEA LIFE IN THE GULF



Deep under the warm surface of the Gulf of Mexico, cold water wells up from an underwater channel called the Sigsbee Deep, and attracts small fish, squid, and shrimp. These small animals, and the Gulf's rich habitats of sea grasses, reefs and coastal wetlands, support over 200 varieties of fish. Larger wildlife species including sea turtles, sawfish, sturgeon, dolphins, and whales also thrive on these diverse offerings.

But the abundance also means more fishing. STRP is working to increase protections for wildlife from commercial fishing gear, and to halt and reverse the devastation caused to the entire ecosystem by the Gulf oil spill and other pollutants.



STRP is working to make sure the Gulf of Mexico is safer for Kemp's ridley sea turtles, like these hatchlings.

Letter from the Director



Changes must be made to protect sea turtles from harmful oil spills and increase the number of turtles saved in an oil spill's aftermath.

ONE YEAR AFTER BP

continued from cover

enormous threat. Until the BP oil spill, oil and gas regulators estimated that over a 40 year period, oil spills would kill *only one single adult Kemp's ridley sea turtle*. Now they must come to grips with reality and revamp the environmental rulebook in order to prevent any and all harm to imperiled sea turtles from oil drilling and operations.

The Sea Turtle Restoration Project's bold new strategy for safeguarding sea turtles from oil and gas operations before and after a spill demands that the responsible agencies:

- 1) Double or triple the number of qualified wildlife rescue teams on-call;
- 2) Prioritize sea turtle nesting beaches for placement of offshore oil booms;
- 3) Ban chemical dispersants and "controlled burns" where endangered species are present;
- 4) Prohibit any new or renewed oil drilling platforms in sea turtle habitat;
- 5) Establish protected swimways through the Gulf of Mexico where existing operations are phased out;
- 6) Protect sea turtles from noise, lighting, pollution, invasive species, dredging and ship strikes;
- 7) Monitor and report impacts from drilling, vessel traffic, and small oil spills on sea turtles and marine life.

Through continued advocacy made possible by the support of our members and donors, STRP is holding BP fully accountable for complete cleanup and restoration in the Gulf. We remain fully committed to protecting sea turtles from deadly oil and gas operations and the next horrific oil spill. Read more at www.SeaTurtles.org

This year, for the first time ever, the International Sea Turtle Symposium (ISTS) will be held on the West Coast of the United States from April 12 through 15 in San Diego, California.

As I review the Symposium agenda, I am struck by the richness and diversity of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project's participation, and am grateful for this opportunity to encourage the community of biologists and conservationists from around the world to be advocates for sea turtles and the oceans.



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I have been asked to present at the opening panel for the more than 1,500 participants, called *Finding Common Ground in Fisheries Management* to discuss the Sea Turtle Restoration Project's point of view along with representatives from the fishing industry and government.

Our STRP presentations will be led by staff members who are gathering from around the globe.

Randall Arauz, STRP's Central American director will attend from Costa Rica and present updated research data on Cocos Island sea turtles.

Sea Turtles will be the talk of the town at the International Sea Turtle Symposium in San Diego, CA

Carole Allen, our Gulf of Mexico director, will be there from Houston to present and screen our brand new documentary—*Heartbreak Turtle Today*.

Program Director Teri Shore and I will lead a session on our efforts to gain greater legal protections for loggerhead sea turtles and Pacific leatherbacks under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Teri will also address why Sustainable Seafood Cards are not "sustainable" for sea turtles and the impacts of the current "fossil fuel frenzy" on sea turtles in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Gulf of Mexico.

STRP toxicologist Dr. Chris Pincetich will participate on a panel discussing the impacts of the BP and other oil spills to sea turtles, as well as plastic pollution. Got Mercury Campaigner Buffy Martin Tarbox will present on the connection between protecting human health and sea turtles in a session on mercury levels in swordfish. Development Director Erica Heimberg will provide nuts and bolts tips to other sea turtle groups on engaging people and raising funds to save the sea turtles.

With colleagues from South Carolina and Costa Rica, we will present a poster on the late Sinkey Boone, the inventor of the turtle excluder device (TED) that has helped to save millions of sea turtles. We also nominated Sinkey for a special ISTS award posthumously. We eagerly await the decision of the awards committee.

To save the sea turtles, we all need to take action, so we will be encouraging our colleagues in a special session on the "Science of Advocacy" with biologist and board member, Dr. Wallace J. Nichols.

I hope you'll consider attending this exciting conference. Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering, and please come by our table and say hello.

TODD STEINER

5

Simple Ways to Save Sea Turtles

Every day, we each make choices about what we eat and buy, and how we spend our time. Read on to learn five simple ways that you can help sea turtles, today!

Reduce Your Plastic Use

Maddie McKenna, STRP Intern

By reducing the amount of plastic we release into our oceans we can decrease the number of sea turtles that die due to ingestion of plastic material or entanglement. Bring reusable bags to the grocery store, choose paper instead of plastic bags at checkout, and carry a reusable water bottle instead of buying plastic bottles. These are simple actions that could make a world of difference. For information on STRP's low-cost Sustainability Kit with reusable bags and water bottle, visit the shop at www.SeaTurtles.Org.

Choose Seafood Wisely

Buffy Martin Tarbox, Got Mercury Campaigner



Avoid eating swordfish, tuna and shrimp. Longlines set for swordfish and tuna, and nets set for shrimp, catch devastating numbers of sea turtles and other wildlife. On top of that, shrimp, tuna and swordfish provide a low amount of nutritious protein when compared to the amount of fuel that is used up to catch them, and that contributes to climate change.

Finally, eating swordfish and tuna could be hazardous to your health. In fact, *Good Housekeeping* magazine and



Consumer Reports agreed with us and issued advisories that women and children should limit consumption of canned tuna or just stop eating it. Visit www.GotMercury.Org to learn more.

Eat Healthy to Curb Climate Change

Teri Shore, Program Director

You can help save sea turtles by eating healthy! Global warming is already heating up and flooding sea turtle nesting beaches. Growing vegetables, grains, beans and fruit emits far less greenhouse gases than producing meat or dairy. In fact, conventional meat is the number one cause of global warming in our food system. If you like seafood, choose frozen fish over fresh (which is sent by airplane overnight!) unless it is locally caught. By eating less meat and fish, choosing local foods and, of course, driving less, we can reduce our contribution to the climate change problem and feel healthier, too!

Exercise your Civic Muscle—Become An Online Activist!

Todd Steiner, Executive Director

If you haven't already, sign up for email alerts at www.SeaTurtles.Org. Once a week, send messages to government officials, corporate leaders and others who need to know that we are watching their actions—and that we expect them to do the right thing.

And don't stop there! Sea turtles and the oceans need more friends—yours! Add the action to your Facebook and Twitter accounts and invite your friends to join us.

Tax-deductible donations, gift memberships, and other ways to give are a few clicks away at www.SeaTurtles.org/Donate. Let your online friends know as well.

To learn more ways to become a sea turtle and ocean activist, visit www.SeaTurtles.Org or send a quick email to sea turtle campaigner Chris Pincetich at Chris@SeaTurtles.org. Remember, the oceans need all the help they can get!

Educate Young People

Carole Allen, Gulf Office Director



My first success in protecting sea turtles was working with my daughter's elementary school class to successfully gain federal funding for an important Kemp's ridley protection program. Today, you can help grow the next generation of wildlife advocates! STRP has information online, DVDs, teacher guides and a staff ready to answer questions and help you inspire your children, grandchildren or students to take action, write a letter, tell a friend or make a telephone call. And if you know a college student or recent grad, encourage them to consider interning to gain skills and help save the sea turtles. Contact STRP at info@SeaTurtles.org for more information.

Global Scientists Reject Proposal to Weaken Las Baulas National Park

Sea turtle researchers and concerned scientists from 48 separate countries and territories recently signed the Sea Turtle Restoration Project's letter to Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla opposing the legislation that would weaken protections for leatherback sea turtles in Las Baulas National Park. Dr. Sylvia Earle's lead signature was followed by 478 supporters in the letter, hand-delivered in Costa Rica by Randall Arauz, director of STRP's sister organization PRETOMA.

Las Baulas National Park is one of the last nesting areas left in the world for critically endangered eastern Pacific leatherbacks. The proposed legislation would allow developers to build beach houses, hotels and other structures along these sensitive beaches already suffering from light pollution, sea level rise, and poaching.

Costa Rica has a reputation for protecting leatherback turtles, preserving the rare wildlife in its national parks, and planning for climate change. But that is changing under the constant challenges from beachfront developers who are hoping to turn a profit at the expense of the environment. Playa Grande at the south end of Las Baulas National Park was once a safe, peaceful beach for sea turtles and is quickly becoming a bustling tourist destination with condos, bars, and a golf course adjacent to the sands, although we are trying to prevent this.

Populations of endangered eastern Pacific leatherback sea turtles that nest in Costa Rica have crashed by at least 95 percent over the past two decades and are not recovering. Without increased protections, leatherback sea turtle nesting on the Pacific Ocean side of Central America is in danger of disappearing entirely.



DAVID PALANGE



ALEXANDER GAOS

Without national park protection, all the valuable nesting beaches for the endangered Leatherback sea turtle at Las Baulas could become bustling tourist destinations.

Protecting Sea Turtle Hatchlings through Beach Monitoring

Under a dark night sky, a group of people walk quietly along a Costa Rican beach. They look for female sea turtles crawling from the waves to lay eggs and return to the sea.

They are volunteer nesting beach monitors. Since 1989, the Sea Turtle Restoration Project has helped monitor sea turtle nesting beaches in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, Australia, Papua New Guinea, and along the Texas Coast.

Currently, STRP works in partnership with PRETOMA, our Central American sister organization, to monitor four crucial Costa Rican nesting beaches. Volunteers prevent poaching of sea turtle eggs, track population changes and tag mother turtles to learn their migrations. In some locations,

eggs are moved to protected hatcheries near the beach. This program returns more than 60,000 hatchlings to the sea each year.

In Texas, STRP recruits dedicated volunteers to protect Kemp's ridley sea turtles along the north coast. When a mother turtle or nest is found, volunteers keep it safe and contact wildlife authorities. Today, all the eggs are transported and hatched in a lab at Padre Island National Seashore. STRP and its partners are working to develop plans to keep eggs and hatchlings from North Texas in a local hatchery to strengthen the success of the species.

STRP is also involved in monitoring flatback sea turtles threatened by liquefied natural gas development in Western Australia. Currently, there is

little data on the "forgotten flatback". Beach monitoring provides critical information to aid their protection.

To learn more, become a volunteer or give to support these efforts, please visit www.SeaTurtles.org/Monitor.



Populations of nesting endangered sea turtles have significantly declined. Beach monitoring helps track sea turtle populations and establish extra protections.



Volunteers from STRP's Shark and Turtle Tagging expedition in the waters of Cocos Islands watch as a Whale Shark cruises by.

Protecting the Marine Life Treasure of Cocos Island BY TODD STEINER

Four years ago my colleague and Goldman Prize winner Randall Arauz invited me to join his expedition to tag hammerhead sharks in Cocos Island National Park, 200 miles off Costa Rica's coast.

What I found then and experience each time I visit Cocos Island is the richest marine environment I have ever encountered. Almost every dive into the blue waters presents an amazing spectacle of life, including hundreds of sharks and rays, tens of thousands of fish, and an abundance of sea turtles.

The shark research was designed to determine if Cocos hammerhead sharks migrate to the Galapagos and vice versa. If they do, we hope to eventually safeguard their migratory path through establishment of a protected "swimway."

I immediately realized that the research program should be expanded to build understanding of the abundant sea turtle community. We launched the Sea Turtle & Shark Tagging Expeditions in 2009 to involve STRP members as we sought to discover the origin and migratory paths of the area's sea turtles.

Since that first trip, STRP has launched four sea turtle research trips (two in 2009, two in 2010). We have three trips scheduled in 2011 and 2012. We have tagged 37 Pacific green turtles and one hawksbill and collected tissue samples for genetic analysis. Of these, 16 turtles were fitted with satellite or acoustic tags that allow ongoing monitoring. One adult male green turtle from Cocos was

tracked to the coast of Panama in Central America 42 days later.

Preliminary data indicate that Cocos Island's waters support resident juvenile and adult green turtles and a lower number of juvenile hawksbill turtles. We see many green turtles along the north face of Cocos Island on each research trip, which suggests that there is enough food to maintain a resident population.

Yet we also know that at least part of the population is "just passing through" and may be migrating to key foraging and nesting areas. Nonresident green turtles, perhaps from the Galapagos, Central America, or even the west Pacific, feed here between nesting seasons. Genetic analysis of our tissue samples and additional satellite tracking will eventually help determine where these turtles start their migrations. By creating migratory corridors that limit long-line fishing in this area, we will reduce the capture of these traveling turtles as accidental "bycatch."

We plan to increase the number of additional turtles equipped with satellite tags on future trips. A few "volunteer research assistant" spots remain for the September 2011 trip, and 2012 trip dates will be announced soon. For more info, visit www.SeaTurtles.org/Expeditions.

Whether you join us on a dive trip, or follow this important research on the website, as an STRP member and supporter, you are a critical part of this important work.

Cocos Raffle Winner Greg Holzer Lives to Dive

For STRP supporter Greg Holzer, diving into the deep blue waters of Cocos Island is a world away from the familiar seascape of the California coast, which often sees him donning his wetsuit to count abalone and conduct marine life surveys among the rocky reefs of Northern California. As the lucky winner of STRP's Cocos Island dive trip raffle, he will be part of STRP's newest Cocos research expedition, diving among sea turtles, hammerhead sharks and manta rays in the richly biodiverse waters of Cocos

continued on page 7



STRP raffle winner Greg Holzer completes a transect on a REEF dive survey at South Monastery Beach in Monterey Bay.

Shop at the Sea Turtle Store!

Host a sea turtle film screening at home this season! Our newest DVD, "Heartbreak Turtle Today," is now being offered at our Sea Turtle Store for only \$5 plus \$2 shipping. This half-hour documentary tells the story of the recovery of the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle in the Gulf of Mexico. The devastation and uncertainty for the future of the Kemp's ridley following the BP oil spill in the Gulf are captured in vivid footage, photographs, and interviews.

You can also purchase T-shirts, hats, tote bags, jewelry, books and fine art, all featuring sea turtles! All net proceeds of sales benefit STRP. Some of these items have been donated to us by dedicated supporters so virtually all of the proceeds go directly to fund our programs. Go to www.SeaTurtles.org and click on "Shop" to view and purchase all of our items. You may also purchase by phone or send us a check. Call 1-800-859-7283 for more information or to place an order.



Name _____

email _____

Address _____

the heartbreak turtle today dvd	\$ 7	qty _____	total _____	grand total: _____
brass pendant	\$17	qty _____	total _____	
pewter pendant	\$17	qty _____	total _____	
canvas tote bag	\$16	qty _____	total _____	

all prices include shipping & handling

Mail to: SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT, P.O. Box P.O. Box 370, Forest Knolls, CA 94933



Adopt a Nest of Sea Turtles for Moms, Dads and Grads (or for yourself!)

Adopt a nest of sea turtle hatchlings for Mother's Day, Father's Day or Graduation and support our work to make the oceans safe for sea turtles and other endangered marine species. Your gift will allow your loved ones to take part in the movement to save sea turtles and their habitat. The Adopt-a-Nest Program is tax deductible.

THE ADOPT-A-NEST PACKAGE INCLUDES: • A personalized certificate of adoption • A color photograph of your hatchlings emerging from their nest • Fact sheets about the sea turtles • A one-year membership in STRP including a subscription to our newsletter, *Viva La Tortuga!* • An optional sea turtle pendant or charm bracelet.

When you order online, you can download a gift certificate immediately to give your loved one so they know their Adopt-a-Nest package is on the way.

Adopt-a-Nest \$45 (\$55 outside U.S.)

Special Nest with Sea Turtle Pendant \$60 (\$70 outside U.S.)

Special Nest with Sea Turtle Charm Bracelet \$75 (\$85 outside U.S.)

Order online at www.SeaTurtles.org/Adopt or send a check with honoree's name and address to STRP, PO Box 370, Forest Knolls, CA 94933.

Leave a Legacy for the Sea Turtles

Through a bequest to the Sea Turtle Restoration Project in your will and other estate plans, you can leave a legacy for sea turtles.

Visit www.SeaTurtles.org/Bequests or call 1-800-859-SAVE for information on including a bequest to STRP in your will, adding a simple codicil to your existing will, and other ways to give through your estate. Any information discussed is confidential.

A professional financial advisor may be able to help you identify additional ways to provide you with tax benefits, as well as help protect the earth's oceans and wildlife. Thank you for considering this important way to give.

GREG HOLZER *cont. from page 5*

Island National Park, located in the Eastern Pacific Ocean halfway between Costa Rica and the Galapagos Island, Ecuador.

Holzer won the raffle for a spot on STRP's March 2011 Cocos Island expedition to study hammerhead sharks and endangered sea turtles. Cocos Island is famous for its large population and diversity of sharks such as hammerheads, white tips, tiger sharks, Galapagos sharks and whale sharks, as well as other marine wildlife including eagle rays, marbled rays, manta rays and sea turtles.

"Truly, this is an opportunity of a lifetime," says Holzer, an experienced diver who volunteers his scuba skills to marine labs, state agencies and ocean groups to help study and protect marine life. "I've known about Cocos Island by its reputation as one of the most incredible underwater places on the planet, and am thrilled that I will get to experience it firsthand." Holzer says it is "an honor and a privilege" to be able to help STRP gather data for its important research at one of Jacques Cousteau's favorite dive sites.

When he is not underwater, Holzer works as a mechanical engineer in San Francisco specializing in building commissioning. As an active AAUS (American Academy of Underwater Science) Scientific Diver, Holzer brings a large set of skills to share with the other marine scientists and volunteer research assistants on the 10-day expedition tagging hammerhead sharks with acoustic tags and placing satellite transmitters on endangered green sea turtles. Besides tagging, expedition participants help count sharks and rays, and download tracking information from permanent receivers placed around the waters of Cocos Island.

Cocos dive trips are planned for Fall 2011 and Spring and Fall 2012. For more information on how you can join future Cocos Island expeditions, visit www.SeaTurtles.org/Expeditions.

A Young Girl's Love of Gulf Wildlife Helps STRP

When 13 year old Meagan Bethel of Tucson, Arizona read about the plight of oiled sea life in the Gulf after the tragic BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, she desperately wanted to help. Meagan, who has long been passionate about animals, started researching the oil spill after she saw images of oil-drenched animals in the news. That's when she decided she'd respond to the disaster and the toll it has taken on Gulf Coast wildlife.

So Meagan got to work and started her Coins for the Coast campaign to raise funds for nonprofits like the Sea Turtle Restoration Project. Her campaign collected coins and other small amounts of money to send to organizations protecting wildlife in the Gulf.

Meagan used her social media networks—Facebook and emails—to spread the word and ask for support. Meagan's passion for animals inspired others to donate to the cause. She



raised over \$1,800 for STRP! In total, Meagan gave \$4,950 to wildlife rescue organizations. Your work for sea turtles and wildlife is an inspiration, Meagan. Thank you!

Your Home Sale Can Save Turtles



If you—or someone you know—is thinking about buying or selling a home, you can generate a big donation for Sea Turtle Restoration Project at zero cost.

My Broker Donates raises funds by matching our supporters with real estate professionals who agree to donate 15% of their fee to STRP. You don't write the check—the broker does. It's no different from any other real estate transaction except that it generates funds that help us advance our efforts.

My Broker Donates is located near our headquarters in Marin County, California, but they can recommend participating Realtors anywhere in the U.S.

Our supporters know that sea turtles are besieged on almost every imaginable front. *My Broker Donates* represents a small step that can create a large difference for STRP. We invite you to learn more about this innovative fundraising mechanism for non-profits. You can visit their website at www.mybrokerdonates.com.

Turtle Island Restoration Network
Sea Turtle Restoration Project
P.O. Box 370
Forest Knolls, CA 94933

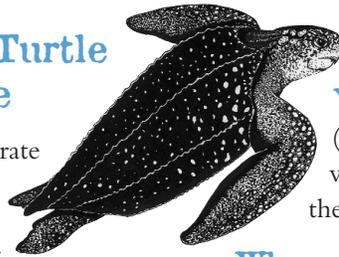


June 16th Event—World Sea Turtle Day at Cal Academy NightLife

World Sea Turtle Day is a time to recognize, celebrate and support sea turtle science and conservation efforts all over the world. We invite San Francisco Bay Area residents to come learn about these magnificent, gentle creatures and discover ways that you can help protect their dwindling populations from extinction. The Sea Turtle Restoration Project will host interactive displays, expert speakers, and short films.

See more about Cal Academy Night Life at www.SeaTurtles.org/Nightlife

If you would like to help STRP and volunteer, send an email to info@SeaTurtles.org.



When: Thursday, June 16, from 6pm to 10 pm

Who: Ages 21+, with valid ID. Tickets are \$12 (\$10 for Academy members). Buy your ticket by visiting www.SeaTurtles.org/Nightlife and clicking the link to the Academy site!

Where: California Academy of Sciences, 55 Music Concourse Drive, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118.

Can't make this event? Host your own house party to celebrate World Sea Turtle Day! Have dinner with your friends—but no sea turtle party is complete without a viewing of our new documentary on Kemp's ridley sea turtles, *The Heartbreak Turtle Today*. Just \$5 and under 30 minutes, this documentary is perfect for any World Sea Turtle Day celebration. See page 6 to order your DVD.

in this issue: One Year After the BP Oil Spill

Five Simple Things to Save Sea Turtles

Costa Rica Updates: Las Baulas

Protecting the Marine Life Treasure at Cocos Island

13 year-old Donates \$1,800 to Help Sea Turtles!

ABOUT THE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT

The Sea Turtle Restoration Project is a project of Turtle Island Restoration Network, a nonprofit organization. STRP works to protect sea turtle populations in ways that meet the ecological needs of sea turtles and the needs of the local communities who share the beaches and waters with these endangered species.

We used a multi-faceted approach which includes grassroots action, multi-media campaigns, hands-on conservation projects, environmental action and litigation. We rely on tax-deductible donations from individuals, private foundations, and progressive companies, as well as the pro bono service of numerous supporters. We are grateful for our contributors' help and support, and welcome your input and assistance.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Todd Steiner, President; Carole Allen, Randall Arauz, Andy Harris, Donna Howe, Steve Katz, Rick Misuraca, Wallace J. Nichols, Susan Sakmar, Debbie Sivas.

Layout and design: Daniela Sklan | Hummingbird Design Studio

Viva la Tortuga!

Issue No. 1, 2011

Newsletter of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project

A project of Turtle Island Restoration Network



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