



Leaders and trip details are subject to change. Please check the most recent issue of the Little Gull, or the online schedule at the RBA website rochesterbirding.org, for updated information prior to departure! All field trips go rain/snow or shine unless there is a travel advisory issued. Trips run approximately 2 to 4 hours. Bring binoculars. Wear weather appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes. Registration is not required, please arrive at the designated meeting location 10 minutes before the start time of the trip. Colds, flu, and COVID are still around—if you're not feeling well, please stay home. Please carpool when possible. Enjoy your trip!

SEPT 6 Saturday

WHITING ROAD NATURE PRESERVE

This preserve includes about 240 acres of land that is made up of a variety of bird habitats, resulting in decent bird lists throughout the year. The trails are well marked and maintained, however, they can get muddy at times, so appropriate footwear is recommended based on the weather leading up to the trip date. Most of the trails are flat, but there will be a bit of up and down in some sections. Our trek will take us mainly on the Blue and Black trails. Moderate difficulty in a few spots, length about 2.5 miles. No restrooms. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Preserve parking lot on Whiting Road in Webster, 0.6 miles south of Lake Road.

Leaders: Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-362-0803 and co-leader AP Salverda 585-957-6064

Field Trips continue on page 4

PRESIDENT'S CORNER, BRIAN ROHRS

Cultural Exchange

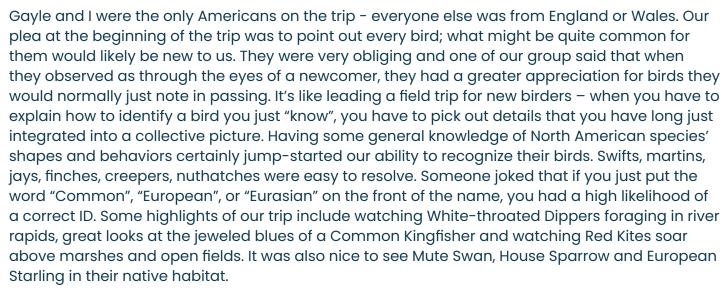
"Right around the corner here is where I killed my Peacock."

"Uh..., WHAT?!!"

"Yes, and I didn't want to waste it. It tasted somewhat like a Christmas goose."

Anyone who travels returns with new experiences and plenty of stories. This snippet of conversation occurred on a birding tour in Wales while my spouse

and I were riding in a van on a twisty road. One of the guides, Iolo Williams, a naturalist and BBC television personality, was relating an incident in his early career, and the accidental collision provided him with a unique gastronomic opportunity.



Aside from lots of new birds, the tour provided an opportunity to explore a different culture. The secondary roads in Wales can be very narrow, so oncoming vehicles are met cooperatively with both drivers seeking spots to pull over to allow the other to pass. Drivers, therefore, seemed nicer and less aggressive than here at home, although we did encounter one who gave us a two-fingered hand gesture which, we were informed, was obscene and can be traced back to the 1415 battle of Agincourt where English longbow archers taunted their French opposition, an historical fact likely not taught in school textbooks.

I always like to sample the local cuisine and so encouraged the natives to introduce me to foods that have cultural significance. It's always a great conversation starter as they share where and when you might eat it and their memories, fond or otherwise of having it themselves. Marmite, a salty spread made from yeast by-products of beer brewing and put on buttered toast, is better left in the jar. Kippers, a smoked herring, pan-warmed and eaten with a poached egg for breakfast, can be a little odiferous and off-putting for non-fish lovers. Bread-and-butter pudding is a comfort-food dessert originating from the middle-ages to use up stale bread. Sharing the other way, we explained how peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were emblematic of our childhood lunches. When we described a breakfast casserole, our guide, Alan Davies, jokingly declared it was "JUST WRONG!" A lively discussion ensued as to whether it was more "wrong" than their chip butty, a pile of chips (fries to us) between two thick slices of bread which has its origins as a cheap, filling meal of the working class. I'm not sure either side won that argument.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER, BRIAN ROHRS

The language idioms are also fascinating. At one birding site, we were told by a passerby that it was nice to see a "huddle of twitchers." What a great collective noun for a group of birders! I wonder though, if they are all milling about and blocking the path, it shouldn't be a "muddle of twitchers."

In the end, Gayle and I came away with an expanded bird list, some cultural and historical tidbits, and some wonderful new friends.

Some RBA highlights for this month:

As fall migration begins, we have several upcoming field trips throughout September, including a Beginning Birder trip on September 7th. Join your fellow birders in the field!

Our speaker at 7 pm on September 11th is Richard Fuller talking about migratory shorebirds of the East Asian-Australasian flyway. Please join us in person at Asbury First Methodist Church or on Zoom.

Finally, our Birds and Brewmaster, Nic Minetor, was able to solidify a venue for September. Join us at Three Heads Brewing on the 16th from 6-9 for some lively conversation.

Until next month, Happy Birding!

Because of your generous contributions to the *Access to Birds and Birding Fund*, the RBA continues to help fund projects throughout the Rochester area. Below is another thank you note from one of our beneficiaries.

Brian,

On behalf of the Friends of Webster Trails Board and the ReTree Webster committee, we thank the Rochester Birding Association for the \$2000 grant.

With your support, ReTree Webster will continue to improve forest habitat in the Whiting Road Nature Preserve and the Four Mile Creek Preserve, two highly productive birding areas.

We sincerely appreciate the grant that RBA has given to the Friends of Webster Trails to support the ReTree effort!

Norma Platt and Sarah White Co-Chairs of the ReTree Webster Committee Friends of Webster Trails







All images from webstertrails.org



FIELD TRIPS

SEPT 7 Sunday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP - CHARLOTTE AND TURNING POINT PARK

We'll be looking for shorebirds, warblers, and other fall migrants along the river and lakeshore. At Charlotte Beach, we'll look for gulls in many plumages and some shorebirds, too. At Turning Point Park, we will look for local resident birds and fall migrants. The Charlotte Beach area is mostly flat and paved; one long, steep grade at Turning Point Park. Length about 2 miles total. Restrooms are available at Charlotte only. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at Ontario Beach Park in Charlotte in the northeast corner of the parking lot, beside the Genesee River outlet. **Binoculars and spotting scopes are good to have.**

Leaders: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader TBA

SEPT 10 Wednesday

SANDRA L. FRANKEL NATURE PARK (BRICKYARD TRAIL)

This wide, flat, multi-use Brickyard Trail winds between Elmwood Avenue and Westfall Road in Brighton. With woods at both ends and ponds and marsh in the middle, it provides varied bird habitat. We will walk the full length of the trail and back (1.7 miles) to look for migrating fall warblers, kinglets, sparrows, wrens, and finches. There might even be a Belted Kingfisher hanging around. Dress for the weather. Insect repellent may be needed for the wooded sections. No restrooms. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in the parking area near the entrance to Temple B'rith Kodesh (2131 Elmwood Ave.); the trail entrance is nearby. Wheelchair friendly—call leaders for accessibility questions.

Leaders: Jeanne and Tom Verhulst 585-362-0803

SEPT 13 Saturday

MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We'll be looking for waterfowl and migrating shorebirds. Expect to see herons, eagles and possibly falcons. There will be a number of stops during this mostly driving trip. Restrooms are available at the Visitor Center. Meet at **10:30 a.m.** at the Montezuma Visitor Center. Pack a lunch. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

Leaders: Mike and Joann Tetlow 585-748-5838 and Dominic Sherony 585-298-4260

SEPT 14 Sunday

BRADDOCK BAY EAST SPIT

The East Spit of Braddock Bay is a well-known spot for migrating shorebirds in late summer. Herons, eagles, Osprey and early warbler migrants are also possible. The trail is a woodland path between Lake Ontario and the Braddock Bay Marshes. We will walk out to the end of the spit and back, about 1 mile. The trail is narrow and has uneven, rocky footing in places. Sturdy waterproof shoes or boots and bug spray will be needed. Crossing the channel to the barrier island will be optional and dependent on water levels. Restrooms are available next to the Marina building. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the East Spit parking lot beyond Westport Marina at Braddock Bay. **Note: You must drive through the Marina to reach the East Spit parking lot. Spotting Scopes would be very useful.**

Leaders: Neal Reilly 518-256-9147 and co-leaders Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash 585-261-6975

SEPT 20 Saturday

GANONDAGAN STATE HISTORIC SITE

This trip goes through four habitat types and has the potential for many birds including fall migrants. We will start from the parking lot and walk wide mowed or packed dirt trails through grasslands, then head down hill through shrubland and wetland, to travel

FIELD TRIPS

SEPT 20 Saturday back up the hill through hardwood forest. The round trip is about 2 miles and includes hills. Restroom facilities are available at the Seneca Arts and Culture Center (SACC) at the end of the trip. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** in the main the parking lot situated below the SACC, 7000 County Road 41, Victor, NY 14564.

Leaders: Amy Kahn 585-310-2330 and co-leader Neal Reilly 518-256-9147

SEPT 21 Sunday

IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We'll look for migrant ducks and various passerines in this "get to know Iroquois in autumn" trip. This trip is a combination of driving and walking and includes a boardwalk, forest trail, and dirt road. Length, about 3 miles total, on mostly flat trails. Port-a-john is available about midway through the trip. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** toward the rear of the Brockport Wegmans parking lot (restroom available). For those traveling from the west, meet at **9:30 a.m.** at the Upper Stafford Marsh Overlook near 5999 Albion Road, Oakfield, NY. Bring a lunch and beverages as this trip may go into the later afternoon. **Spotting scopes would be very useful for some of the stops.**

Leaders: Rick Stevens 585-689-1882 and co-leader Niki Banke 585-317-3751

OCT 4 Saturday

GANONDAGAN STATE HISTORIC SITE, A FIELD TRIP FOR ALL AGES

This trip is open to all ages (ages 15 and younger must be accompanied by a responsible adult). This trip goes through four habitat types and has the potential for many birds including fall migrants. We will start from the parking lot and walk wide mowed or packed dirt trails through grasslands, then head down hill through shrubland and wetland, to travel back up the hill through hardwood forest. The round trip is about 2 miles and includes hills. Restroom facilities are available at the Seneca Arts and Culture Center (SACC) at the end of the trip. Meet at **10:00 a.m.** in the main parking lot situated below the SACC, 7000 County Road 41, Victor, NY 14564.

Leaders: Amy Kahn 585-310-2330 and co-leader Neal Reilly 518-256-9147

OCT 4 Saturday

HAMLIN BEACH STATE PARK

We will be walking flat trails in the wooded and brushy areas of the park, looking for thrushes, sparrows, and maybe a half-hardy warbler or two. We'll stop by the lake watch to view ducks on the water and in flight, learning about the lake watch process. We will also explore the former CCC Camp adjacent to the park where there is a pond and brushy/forest areas. Dress appropriately for cooler weather along the lake and wear sturdy footwear. Restroom facilities are available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in Parking Lot 4 (note location change due to construction in Parking Lot 1), Hamlin Beach State Park. **Spotting scopes would be useful.**

Leaders: Roger Clark 505-231-7369 and co-leader Rick Stevens 585-689-1882

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

A BIG SIT AT SILVER LAKE STATE PARK BOAT LAUNCH

8:00 AM-4:00 PM. Matt Nusstein 716-446-3376. Details on RBA website.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING • Thursday, Sept 11th, 2025 @ 7 PM

Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Avenue, Rochester NY Free and open to the public. Parking and entrance at rear of church.

Connecting the USA with Australia: Migratory shorebirds of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

Speaker. Richard Fuller

Richard Fuller is a Professor at the University of Queensland. He studies how people have affected the natural world around them, and how some of their destructive effects can best be reversed. The research group works on pure and



applied topics in biodiversity and conservation, with a strong emphasis on building collaborative conservation to save migratory species. He is also an incurable birder. See www.fullerlab.org

Richard will be joining us via Zoom, although we will still gather at Asbury First Methodist for socialization before and after the meeting. If you will be attending by Zoom, look for the Zoom link in your email prior to the meeting. The Zoom Room will open at 6:45 PM. Don't wait until the last minute to sign on, you might be left out!

Birds and Brews

Join us for craft beers and conversation!

A chance to meet up and socialize with people who love birds.

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. Three Heads Brewing 186 Atlantic Avenue, Rochester



We'll be sitting outside, weather permitting, at this neighborhood favorite brew pub. Three Heads doesn't serve meals (just some limited snacks), but you are welcome to bring your own takeout. (Old Pueblo Grill is right across the street.)

www.threeheadsbrewing.com

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Barnhart's Camp and Keeney Swamp June 29, 2025

Perfect Weather, Perfect Day

When our group of 23 left the Shop-n-Save in Nunda, we had only tallied 9 species. Last year, our total at this point was 42! Our high for this trip was 93 species, but that record now seemed to be an unattainable goal. WRONG! By the time we stopped for lunch, our number had reached 83! Thanks to the ambitious, talented birders who made up our group, the day produced a perfect storm of cooperation and collaboration, and, after 13-1/2 hours, we had tied our previous high with 93 species!

Jerry and I have always looked forward to hosting this trip and introducing many birders to the awesome variety of habitats and birds to be found in Livingston and Allegany Counties. This was our 17th trip, and while all have been exhilarating and memorable, this one was almost epic! The birds which most visitors hope



to see are the Mourning, Canada, Magnolia, and Prairie Warblers. This year many of us had good views of the first three of these. (The Prairie was more elusive than usual, so fleeting glances had to suffice.) For me, I'll remember my "face to face" encounter with a Barred Owl and his "black olive" eyes as we were approaching our first Mourning Warbler stop!

Thanks to all the chefs and bakers who provided so much food for the picnic. Hopefully, our participants had as enjoyable a time as we tour leaders had, and we welcome all, and more, to return next year!

Carolyn Barnhart, along with Jerry Barnhart, Rick Stevens, Tom and Jeanne Verhulst

Conesus Inlet State Wildlife Management Area August 2, 2025

Nick Kachala, Andrew Consler, and I led the RBA field trip to the Conesus inlet swamp area. We had a great turnout of 19 participants and a good time, coming up with 70 species in all. First up was the Brown Pelican, which has been hanging around the north end of Conesus Lake, seen from Vitale Park. Interesting observations included an extended squabble between an Osprey and one of the three Bald Eagles in the inlet area, at least eight Belted Kingfishers foraging over the inlet at once, one of two Yellow-billed Cuckoos that flew in front of us then called for a while, and especially nice sunlit looks at Cedar Waxwings, Common Yellowthroats, Indigo Buntings, and others. The "swallow barn" at West Lake and Guiltner Roads has very few swallows now, no Cliff Swallows, and more than 100 Rock Pigeons. One interesting observation of note was the scarcity of Wood Ducks, with only a handful of individuals seen, unusual for the inlet at this time of year.

Jim Kimball, Nick Kachala, and Andrew Consler

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge August 9, 2025

Both of us leaders were approaching this trip with some dread. There was not much water at Montezuma and the shorebirds were scarce. One of us was preparing speeches about what people might expect to see at certain locations in better times. Turns out things were not that bad. It took our group of 17 in 8 cars over 2 hours to complete the Wildlife Drive. We saw both yellowlegs, a family of Sandhill Cranes, and, thanks to prior scouting by Neal Reilly, a Baird's Sandpiper, a lifer for most the group. We completed the tour with a visit to May's Point Pool and the Knox Marcellus overlook where the raw beginner of our group found a single Trumpeter Swan. We finished with 38 species.

Niki Banke and John Boettcher



SMASH THE CRASH:

A Community Initiative to End Bird-Window Collisions in Rochester

Dr. Richard Fadok

As you read this article in three, four, maybe five minutes, somewhere between ten to twenty thousand birds across the nation will die from a window collision. Unlike humans, birds do not recognize glass as a solid object. As a result, they fly towards our windows at breakneck speeds, pursuing images of trees that reflect off their surfaces (Figure 1) or the illusion of unobstructed passage (Figure 2).

Fast forward one year from this moment, and up to two billion birds will have perished from strikes with glass and other reflective surfaces. That's nearly four thousand birds a minute, making collisions one of the leading causes, if not the leading cause, of human-influenced avian mortality in the United States—a conservation crisis that is on par with predation by domestic cats.

It is likely that you have witnessed a collision yourself, at home or perhaps at work. You might have seen them crash or heard a THUD. You might have simply come across the aftermath: a body, their mangled remains. Many birds perish instantly. Others get up and fly away, somewhat dazed but seemingly intact. It would be wrong to assume, however, that they have emerged from their brief encounter





with glass unscathed. Most of them will later succumb to brain hemorrhaging or be picked off by scavengers like rats. The feathers they leave behind are reminders of the everyday violence that we inflict on the environment with our modern buildings.

The good news about this problem is that "bird-safe" window treatments are both widely available and highly effective; when installed properly, they can eliminate up to 95% of collisions. All across the country, homeowners have voluntarily adopted such measures, as have offices, universities, and hospitals, while over 30 cities, counties, and states have passed legislation requiring bird-safe architecture. Although New York City mandates these collision deterrents with its Local Law 15, there is currently no law in Rochester that would protect birds from collisions. This is distressing, especially when one considers that nearly 500 different bird species have been spotted in Monroe County, including several on the US Fish and Wildlife Service's List of Conservation Concern, and that millions will migrate over our city every year.

Enter Smash the Crash, a university-community initiative to end bird-window collisions in Rochester and the greater metropolitan region. I started Smash the Crash in September 2024 during my postdoctoral fellowship in the Humanities Center at the University of Rochester. A cultural anthropologist by profession, I had been conducting fieldwork for a book about the environmental politics of bird-window collisions. I began seeing dead birds—a lot of them—and hearing stories from people who had experienced and studied them. Stories of buildings with "carpets" of dead birds around them. Stories of freezers so full of collision victims that accurate body counts were hard to tally. And stories of researchers seeking therapy for all the animal death that surrounded and haunted them.

EC&-CHALLENGE Guest Article

As I conducted my research, I found myself increasingly dismayed by the sheer scale of the issue, so I began to take steps to initiate some preventative measures in my local community. To advocate for a bird-safe campus—let alone a bird-safe city—I knew I needed data. While I predicted, based on national models, that nearly 1000 birds collide a year at the University of Rochester, and tens of thousands city-wide, there was no official count.

Figure 3

With a team of student researchers, we thus patrolled the River Campus to look for bird-window collisions during migration, the time when most collisions occur. We focused on ten buildings in the fall and sixteen in the spring, circling them three times per week to find evidence of window collisions. We documented fifty-eight in the seven weeks of our fall study, such as white-throated sparrows, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, northern flickers, and Tennessee warblers, among others (Figure 3). At the end of the study, we shared our data with University Facilities and Services, who, I am happy to share, plan to retrofit the most lethal buildings we found



and revise the university's design standards to require bird-safe glass in new construction. With



funding from the Genesee Valley Audubon Society, we also plan to install bird-safe window films on the Sage Art Center (Figure 4). These were designed by students in my collaborator Mizin Shin's printmaking course, "Expanded Print Media."

Now an assistant professor of anthropology at the Rochester Institute of Technology, I am expanding Smash the Crash to include a second building-

monitoring program on campus. In partnership with the Rochester Birding Association, we are also piloting a monitoring study downtown and launching a new citizen science program for anyone in Rochester to report a collision. Over the next year, we will also be introducing educational outreach programming to raise public awareness around this environmental topic, including lectures, workshops, and discussions. Ultimately, we aim to petition City Council to pass our own bird-safe laws.

In North America, populations of birds have already declined a third since the 1970s. To prevent further loss, we have to end bird-window collisions; we have to smash the crash. If you want to protect these birds, our website www.SmashTheCrashROC.com has more information, including steps that you can take to install deterrents or come work with us. By ending bird-window collisions, we can ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to admire the birds as we do.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: HELP MONITOR BIRD-WINDOW COLLISIONS IN DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER If you're interested in volunteering for this project, we're looking for people who can commit to surveying buildings for bird strikes one day a week.

Dates: August 25 - mid-October

Time Commitment: I day per week. Surveys may take an hour or more. Volunteers will follow a set route, surveying buildings located close together.

Experience: No experience needed. Surveys will be completed using a phone app, and training will be provided.

If you have any questions, please contact Charlie Plimpton at plimptonc@gmail.com

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Helping Grassland Birds on Agricultural Lands Demonstration Project at the George B. Taylor Memorial Wildlife Marsh

Lynn Braband

Obligate grassland nesting bird species have been in rapid decline over the last half century (Rosenberg et al. 2019) including in New York State (McGowan and Corwin 2008). Agricultural landscapes (pastures, hayfields) have historically and currently been important to grassland nesting birds in the Northeast (McGowan and Corwin 2008; Shustak et al. 2010). To be successful in encouraging management for nesting birds, the importance of agricultural income on these working landscapes needs to be recognized (www.bobolinkproject.com – accessed 1 March 2021).

Around 1935, the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society (BSPS) was organized to protect the flora and fauna of Bergen Swamp in Genesee County (www.bergenswamp.org/history.html). Best known for designated National Natural Landmarks Bergen Swamp and Zurich Bog (Wayne County), the BSPS also owns three other properties, including the George B. Taylor Memorial Wildlife Marsh north of the village of Honeoye in Ontario County.

In 2019, the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society received a donation of land (Cameron/Alford tract) from the Shirley Cameron estate. This property, continuous with the George B. Taylor Memorial Wildlife Marsh, includes a field which had been managed for hay production by Richard Knight. Richard agreed to work with the BSPS in managing for grassland birds and hay. For three years, the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society and the Mueller Field Station of the Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC) monitored breeding grassland birds at the site. The goal was to time hay harvest after most young birds have fledged.

On September 12, 2023, a capstone event for the project was held on-site and attended by 22 people from BSPS, the Taylor Property Committee, FLCC, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the DEC, NYS Parks, NYS IPM of Cornell University, and several landowners and neighbors. BSPS President John Adamski and FLCC's Maura Sullivan gave welcomes from the BSPS and FLCC's Mueller Field Station, respectively. BSPS's Lynn Braband gave a brief overview of the status of grassland birds and the project. Maura and FLCC interns presented the results of their bird monitoring and Richard Knight gave his perspective as the collaborating farmer. This was followed by a lively discussion by all participants.





SPECIAL ARTICLE

We worked with graphic artist Amy Slentz to design an interpretative sign which was installed in 2024. The sign is located along Allens Hill Road at the project site and includes a QR code linked to grassland bird resources on the BSPS website.

Van Dyke (2025) argued that "conservation can no longer be primarily about preserving nature but must adapt its efforts to promote changes through which humans create a landscape that is neither abandoned nor degraded but used well by humans and non-humans alike." Hopefully, this grassland bird demonstration project can help toward this end.



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Shustack, D. P., A. M. Strong, and T. M. Donovan. 2010. *Habitat use* patterns of Bobolinks and Savannah Sparrows in the northeastern United States. Avian Conservation and Ecology 5(2):11.247-302.

Van Dyke, F. 2025. Conservation in the Anthropocene; *Reshaping Interaction with Nature*. Routledge, Oxfordshire, UK.





WELCOME TO THE FLOCK

Please welcome our new members:

Bethany Brinson Javier Fuentes
Anne Burroughs Sandra Glantz
Heidi Clinefelter Carolyn Maruggi

As of August 15, total 2025 membership is 381

Individual Members: 244 Family Members: 97

Supporters: 4 Sponsors: 3

Corporate Sponsors: 1 (The Bird House)
Complimentary Memberships: 32

Doug Rabjohns, RBA Membership Data

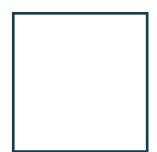


Ruddy Turnstone on Summerville Pier.
Photo by Eunice Thein.



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