

Ash Dieback Disease

Ash Dieback Disease (*Chalara fraxinea*) has been making the headlines all over the UK. The disease is a fungal infection affecting Ash trees and has already caused extensive damage to trees in mainland Europe since it was first identified in 1992.

C. fraxinea infection starts primarily on leaves, and is progressive over time, with dieback and stem lesions usually manifesting in the next growing season. Leaf symptoms can be detected within two months of infection.



Symptoms of Ash Dieback. Photo: Fera

The fungus spreads naturally by producing windblown spores from fruiting bodies on infected fallen leaves and could have come to Britain by this route. However, its spread can be assisted by human influence such as the movement of infected young trees for use in planting schemes or infected leaf litter being moved between sites on clothing, animals or machinery.

Ash tree dominated woodland accounts for some 5.5% of British woodlands (130,000 hectares), With a further estimated 12 million Ash trees outside of woods and forests. This pattern is reflected in the woodlands of Pembrokeshire.

At the time of writing, the disease has not been identified in Pembrokeshire, but that is no reason to be complacent. A ban on the import of Ash trees is in place across the UK and although woods are not being closed to visitors, those visiting woods for any reason are asked





PEMBROKESHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



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to take a few simple precautions:

- do not remove any plant material (firewood, sticks, leaves or cuttings) from the woodland;
- where possible, before leaving the woodland, clean soil, mud, leaves and other plant material from footwear, clothing, dogs, horses, the wheels and tyres of bicycles, baby buggies, carriages and other vehicles;
- follow the instructions on any signs.

It is hoped that populations of Ash which are resistant to the disease will be identified. There is no evidence that *C. fraxinea* can affect other tree species or poses any threat to human or animal health.

Up to date information and advice can be found on the Forestry Commission website at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-8zklv5>.

A useful phone App to identify the disease can be downloaded here if you have the technology: <http://www.ashtag.org/>

Suspect cases can be reported to: plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Ant Rogers

Biodiversity Implementation Officer

Osprey Platform at Teifi Marshes

Teifi Marshes, a nature reserve managed by the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales in North Pembrokeshire, has a new addition to its site infrastructure. An artificial osprey nest has been erected within the centre of the marsh to help nesting and hopefully breeding opportunities for the osprey in this part of the country. It aims to replicate the success Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust have had with their artificial nest at Cors Dyfi nature reserve, with their first breeding pair recorded there in 2011.

Ospreys have been seen migrating over Wales for many years yet it was only in May 2004 that a pair of ospreys were found nesting near Croesor in the Glaslyn Valley and another pair near Welshpool in mid-Wales. This was the first time that the species had been officially recorded as breeding in Wales. Since then, records of breeding pairs are on the increase. The artificial nest at Teifi Marshes was made by Wildlife Trust volunteers and consists of a 1m wide nest created with twigs and branches, infilled with moss and leaves, fixed to a wooden pallet. This wooden pallet was then fixed to a 35ft telegraph pole and transported on a tracked dumper truck to its location on the marsh. A 7 tonne digger was used to raise and fix the pole which was then tethered via ratchet guy ropes to the base of surrounding willow trees.

Our efforts here go some way in providing a suitable nesting site for the osprey although it remains to be seen as to if and when an osprey decides to take residence. Every



Erecting the Osprey Platform.
Photo: Tommy Evans



little helps and a breeding pair would certainly make a great addition to the reserve.

The nest can be seen from the reserve's car park and other locations on site, protruding above the willow on the marsh. A single male osprey had been seen flying up and down the river Teifi during the spring of 2012 looking for a potential nesting site so the hope is that when they start migrating up through wales again this spring, a pair may just be tempted to take up residence on the reserve. Fingers crossed.

The installation of the osprey platform was funded by the Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion Bird Groups and the mid-Pembrokeshire local branch of the Wildlife Trust.

Nathan Walton

Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales

Marine Education Camp 2012

Teachers and environmental educators of Pembrokeshire and beyond were invited to join the Marine Biological Association(MBA) at Dale Fort Field Study Centre on the weekend of 16th -18th November 2012. The weekend was jam packed full of networking, site visits, rock pooling and interactive learning about the unique Marine Life that has been studied around offshore Wind Turbines of UK.



With plans for more courses to be run in Pembrokeshire, look out for more information on the MBA website : www.mba.ac.uk
Dale Fort FSC website www.field-studies-council.org/centres/dalefort
or closer to home PCF Website : www.pembrokeshirecoastalforum.org.uk

Jodie McGregor

Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum

Greater Horseshoe Bats at Stackpole

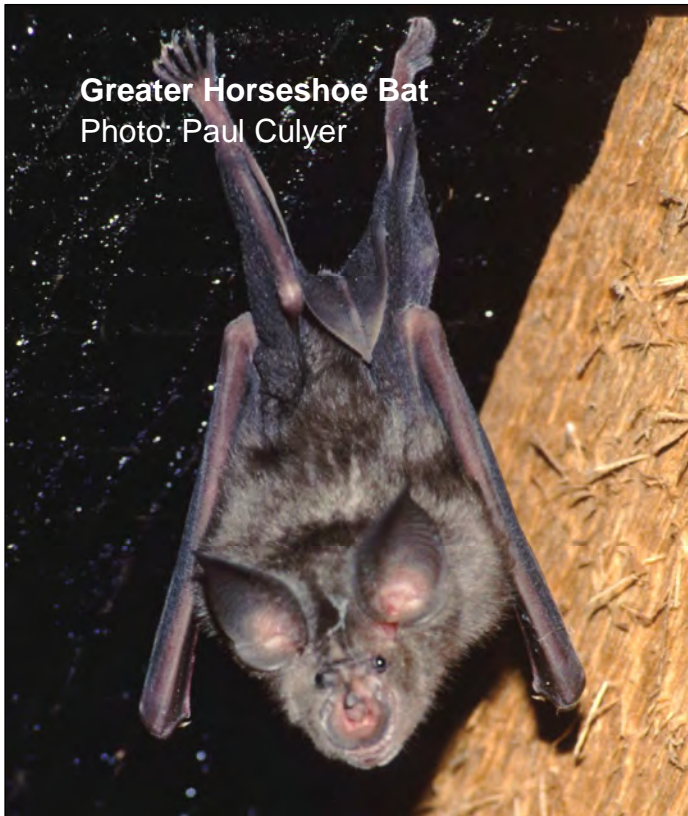
Stackpole National Nature Reserve (NNR) is a wonderfully diverse site and this is reflected in the plethora of historical, archaeological and nature conservation designations the site has. Bats are an important feature here at Stackpole and twelve of Britain's seventeen resident bat species have been recorded here. Significant among these are two species of horseshoe bat. Lesser horseshoe bats have been known to be here since at least the early C.20th however the presence of greater horseshoe was not discovered until the National Trust acquired the estate in 1977.

There are just five greater horseshoe bat maternity roosts currently confirmed in Wales. Three of these are in Pembrokeshire (near



Stackpole Court
Photo: Paul Culyer





Greater Horseshoe Bat
Photo: Paul Culyer

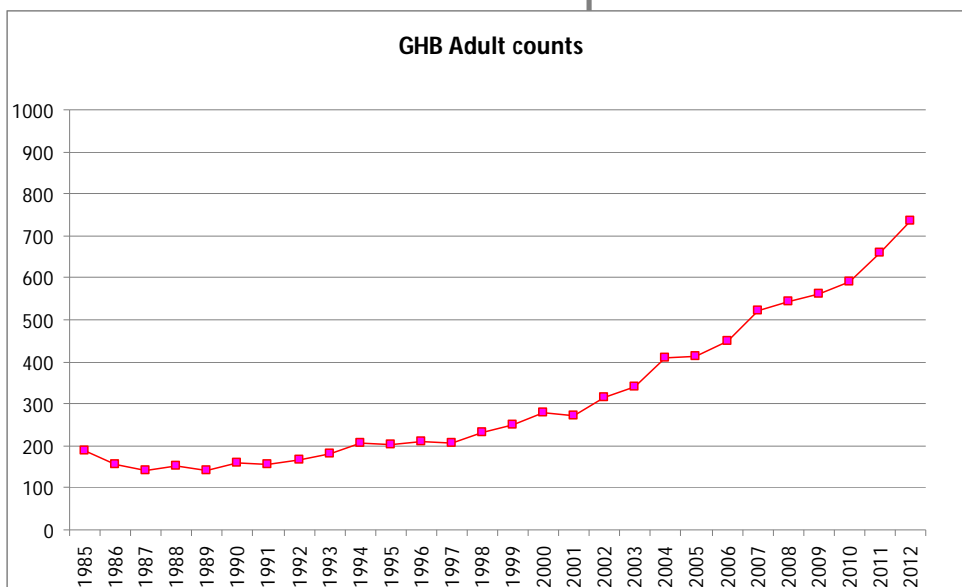
importance. These roosts are all SSSI and form important components of the “Pembrokeshire Bat Sites” Special Area of Conservation.

To reach their feeding grounds the bats use an extensive network of sheltered feeding corridors, linked to their roosts by tall shrubs and other woody vegetation, including ancient shallow wooded valleys, copses and mature hedgerows. The bats are probably seldom far from well-structured cover. The majority probably feed within just a few metres of edge habitats, such as tall hedges or tree lines, but they also feed along Pembrokeshire’s indented sea-cliff coastline and vegetated coastal slopes. The presence, structure and juxtaposition of suitable cover with potential and favoured feeding areas, together with the proximity of suitable night feeding-roost sites, has an important bearing on their foraging and roosting behaviour.

Newport, Haverfordwest and Pembroke) collectively accounting for possibly as much as 15% of the total UK greater horseshoe population. It is also the most north-westerly population in Europe.

All three breeding sites, and a transitory roost to the east of Pembroke (used by significant numbers of non-breeding bats in spring and autumn), are considered to be of European

The adult count and productivity data shows a steady increase in numbers since the late 1990’s. The Stackpole roost is now probably the second largest maternity roost in the UK. The colony is recovering from a low point in the 1970’s when roost disturbance and cold winters were an issue. The success here at Stackpole is testament to the partnership between the National Trust and the Countryside Council for Wales. Our



knowledge about the bats and their ecology is thanks to a number of dedicated bat workers over the years not least Bob & Annie Haycock, Tom McOwat and Peter & Maggie Andrews.

Paul Culyer
CCW Senior Reserve Manager -
Pembrokeshire

2012 on West Williamston Nature Reserve

West Williamston SSSI, has a great diversity of habitats. It has limestone grassland with rocky outcrops, woodland, meadows, saltmarsh and foreshore. These habitats all need to be monitored and managed when necessary.

On the limestone ridge, 87 species of wildflowers have been identified. Some, such as the bee orchid and autumn gentian are monitored annually. We were pleased to find 7 bee orchids in 2012 after several years of its absence. Autumn gentians were also present.



Autumn Gentian
Photo Jean Hambly

In three meadows there were over 68 species of wild flowers excluding grasses. Unfortunately bracken has encroached in the field nearest the river. Since 2010 we have been bashing the young growth in the Spring but although we have bashed as often as possible we have not made much of an impression. It is obvious that we either need more frequent bashing or an alternative method of destroying the bracken. Any suggestions?

Pembrokeshire Wildlife Trust officer, Nathan Walton, continued to implement the Management Plan to coppice designated sections of blackthorn each year so that there are always young shoots available on which the brown hairstreak butterfly can lay its eggs. The annual egg count along the foreshore transect in December 2011 was 154. Because of the dismal Summer, sightings of female brown hairstreak butterflies were infrequent in 2012 but Nikki Anderson had West Williamston's first close-up sighting of a male brown hairstreak in a small tree on the edge of the car park. As they spend most of their time in the treetops, males are very elusive.



Silver Washed Fritillary
Photo Jean Hambly

There were fewer sightings of even the common butterflies last summer. We saw peacock, red admiral, small tortoiseshell, gatekeeper, speckled wood, holly blue, green veined white, large white, small white, meadow brown, comma and silver-washed



fritillary. Wall brown and dingy skipper (there are small colonies on the Limestone Ridge) were not found in 2012 and this is of concern.

At the time of writing, the annual count of brown hairstreak eggs is imminent.

It will be interesting to find out how egg numbers have been affected by the unusual weather in 2012. We will also need to be particularly vigilant checking ash trees for ash die-back fungus.

Nikki Anderson

Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales

A Tiny, But Rare Puffball

A recent visit to the National Nature Reserve at Stackpole produced yet another interesting mycological find.

Some small, almost spherical, fungi - not much larger than rabbit droppings, and not too dis-



similar in colour - were spotted on thin sandy soil over limestone. The specimens were collected and checked by microscopy and found to fit the description for *Bovista limosa* (The Least Bovist). The specimens were dried and sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for retention as voucher material.

This rarely recorded species is listed as Near Threatened in the UK Red Data List and is known from only a handful of coastal sites in Wales and north-west England. This is the first

record for Pembrokeshire and adds to the impressive inventory of fungal species so far recorded at the National Trust's Stackpole site.

David Harries

Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network

Dormice discovered in South Pembrokeshire



Following an initial dormouse nest tube survey in south Pembrokeshire in 2010, we can finally report that dormice have been positively identified at a site near Begelly.

During an ecological survey of the site for a planning application, several hazel nuts consistent with being opened by dormice were discovered. As this was potentially the first new record for approximately 30 miles, a nest tube survey was recommended to confirm the record.

100 tubes were deployed around the site in early June, and although several nests were found in a September check, during November, a total of six dormouse nests were discovered.

The habitat is a mixture of broadleaved woodland with hedgerow linked off site to potential habitat beyond.



Dormice are a European Protected Species, so where they are identified on development land, a special licence from the Welsh Government is required before planning permission can proceed. Any development will then include mitigation incorporated into the scheme to allow the dormice to continue to utilise the site post-development.

Hopefully this new record will be the first of many in south Pembrokeshire!

Sian Williams
Kite Ecology

Pembrokeshire Heathland Beef

Hereford cattle from East Farm Tretio have been grazing parts of Tretio Common, St Davids again this summer. When they're ready, some of these cattle will be going into the Cig Tir Comin – Pembrokeshire Heathland Beef scheme

(www.pembrokeshireheathlandbeef.co.uk).

This is a local, high quality beef scheme that helps to look after a priority habitat. The beef is on sale at Gwaun Valley Meats, Letterston. For doorstep delivery throughout Pembrokeshire and West Carmarthenshire, it can also be ordered online at Pembrokeshire Produce Direct

(www.pembrokeshireproducedirect.org.uk).

National Trust Welsh Black beef is in stock at the moment, from cattle that have grazed the coastal heath at Treseissyllt, St Nicholas and Goodhope near Strumble Head.

Andrew Tuddenham
National Trust Area
Warden, North & Mid
Pembrokeshire



Skomer Marine Nature Reserve Atlantic Grey Seals

Atlantic Grey seals range widely throughout, and beyond the population's breeding and feeding range. Therefore the population dependant upon the Skomer MNR can only be realistically assessed by monitoring breeding success. Seal pup numbers have been recorded in the Reserve with consistent methods since 1993 providing a long term data set of 20 years. Pup production numbers have fluctuated over the years but have remained above 250 for the last three years. As a feature of the Skomer MNR management plan the seal population is considered to be favourably maintained.



Atlantic Grey Seal Pup
Photo: David Boyle

David Boyle working for the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales has been contracted by Skomer MNR to complete the survey work at the Skomer Island sites. In addition to the seal pup recording David has expanded the work on adult seal identification. For many years systematic drawings of adult seals with distinctive marks and scars were completed as there was a good chance of being re-identified in the future. In 2001 photographs were also taken of these seals and then in 2007 an attempt was made to photograph pupping cows and dominant bulls around the Island during the season. The aim of the photographs was to increase



Stackpole Bioblitz

the number of breeding seals that could potentially be re-identified and should increase our understanding of site fidelity, frequency of pupping and longevity. This photography has continued and there have been some interesting results. 315 different cows are now known to have pupped on Skomer in the four years 2008-2011. Considering that an average 29% of pupping cows each year have not even been identified this is a surprising number, especially considering that the number of pups born is fairly consistent at 150- 160 every year. In 2011, 124 (79%) pupping cows were photographed, but only 58 (47%) are known to have pupped on the Island in previous years. There had been assumptions that there was going to be a 'resident' Skomer breeding population. The truth is proving very different!

Another exciting development has been collaboration with Sue Sayer of The Cornwall Seal Group, who has maintained extensive catalogues of seals photographed in Cornwall since 2000. Sue has managed to identify 20 seals photographed in both Cornwall and Skomer. Most of the seals seem to be spending the breeding season on Skomer, returning to Cornwall for the winter and spring, but disappearing during the summer presumably going off somewhere else to feed up before the next breeding season.

A continuing concern is the entanglement of monofilament line and netting on adult seals. In 2011, 29 different seals seen around Skomer showed obvious signs of being entangled in nets at some time in their lives, most commonly a deep scar around their necks, sometimes with a small amount of netting still embedded.

Kate Lock

Countryside Council for Wales



Atlantic Grey Seal Entangled in Fishing Waste
Photo: David Boyle

July 2012 saw the first ever BioBlitz held on the National Trust Stackpole Estate. A BioBlitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all living species within a designated area and time. The Stackpole BioBlitz took place between 11am on the 21st July to 11am 22nd July and that 24 hour period was packed full of events that local people and visitors could attend for free.



The events took place at two locations; The Stackpole Centre was the hub for all the terrestrial research including butterflies, dragonflies, hedgerow, bat and moth surveys, mammal trapping, otter spotting, bush crafts and foraging sessions. Stackpole Quay hosted all the marine research which included Seine netting and rock pooling, while the sea search divers recorded the marine life just offshore.

Around 380 species were recorded during the 24 hour period, but we are hoping to record lots more during Stackpole BioBlitz 2013.

If you fancy learning about the local wildlife and plant life that you have on your doorstep, then please come and attend the next Bioblitz here in May.

Rhian Sula

National Trust, Stackpole Estate



Breeding Bird Survey 2013

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) organise annual volunteer surveys to help to build a picture of the state of bird populations in the UK. Planning for the 2013 survey is underway and volunteers are always welcome. If you'd like to get involved in Pembrokeshire, contact the breeding bird survey organiser for the County, Annie Haycock at: rushmoor1@tiscali.co.uk or take a look at the BTO website at: <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys>

Ant Rogers

Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership



Juvenile Blackbird
Photo: Trevor Theobald

Keep Wales Tidy Join The Partnership!

A warm welcome to Keep Wales Tidy (KWT), who have just become members of the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership. KWT have worked closely for many years with the Partnership on community events, volunteer days and tackling invasive non-native species in Pembrokeshire.

KWT is an environmental charity that works to encourage local action to protect and

enhance the environment of Wales. They support volunteers to "adopt" their local area and carry out a wide variety of small scale improvements including;

- litter picks and clean-ups
- path maintenance
- clearing invasive species
- dune management
- improving disabled access
- habitat management and biodiversity
- developing community gardens and allotments
- churchyard improvements

As well as the community group insurance scheme, KWT also runs a garden centre voucher scheme whereby constituted community groups can apply for up to £300 per year to help cover the costs of materials, tools, safety equipment and native plants and shrubs.

For the past two years KWT has run "Have a Wild Weekend for Wales" which aims to improve biodiversity by helping people to undertake small projects to benefit native species and create new wildlife havens. In 2012 around £27,000 worth of Homebase vouchers and garden centre vouchers were distributed among successful applicants in Wales. In Pembrokeshire, many projects were aimed at 'Section 42 species' (those deemed important in Wales) as well as planting wildflowers, native trees and shrubs to attract butterflies, moths and bees.

For more information about KWT go to www.keepwalestidy.org or contact Mari Williams on 07824 504816.

Ant Rogers

Pembrokeshire Biodiversity
Partnership



Biodiversity Events January - April 2013



Date	Title	Information	Contact
15th Jan 19:30 - 21:30	Bird Ringing	Local voluntary warden, John Hayes, will be talking about 'The Millponds complex & bird ringing on the Upper Pond'	Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales (WTSWW) 01656 724 100
19th Jan 11:00 - 15:00	A walk along Fishguard breakwater	A walk along the outer breakwater. Looking for cetaceans, purple sandpipers etc. Meet 11a.m. at the Parrog car park	WTSWW 01656 724 100
21st Jan 19:30 - 21:30	Teifi Marshes and other Pembrokeshire reserves	A talk by Nathan Walton, Wildlife Trust Pembrokeshire Conservation Officer at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
06th Feb 19:30 - 21:30	Teifi Marshes and Water Buffalo	The Teifi Marshes and the Buffalo, a talk with Nathan Walton, the Wildlife Trust Officer for Pembrokeshire. Catholic Church Hall, Cardigan.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
18th Feb 19:30 - 21:30	A Journey Through the Red Centre	The birds and other wildlife of the Northern Territories of Australia with Peter and Rosemary Royle at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
19th Feb 19:30 - 21:30	Welsh Marine Life & Marine Conservation	A talk by Dr. Lou Luddington on our rich marine wildlife at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
16th March 10:30 - 13:00	A Walk Along the Coast Path	A walk along the Coastal Path from Monkhaven to St.Ishmaels. Meet 10.30 am. at St.Ishmaels church car park SM830066. Bring packed lunch.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
18th March 19:30 - 21:30	Woodland Management for Biodiversity	A talk by Matt Ridley, Coed Cymru Officer at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
19th March 19:30 - 21:30	Taking us 'out & about	A talk by Trevor Hallet at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
14th Apr 10:30 - 15:30	A Spring Walk in the Gwaun Valley	A spring walk in the Gwaun Valley. Meet at Cilrhedyn Bridge car park SN005348 10.30 am. Bring packed lunch.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
15th Apr 19:30 - 21:30	The Wildlife of the Stackpole Estate	A talk by Bob Haycock at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	WTSWW 01656 724 100
16th Apr 19:30 - 21:30	The Kruger National Park	Annie Haycock will be talking about her adventures in the 'The Kruger National Park' at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	WTSWW 01656 724 100



Biodiversity Newsletters

Mae'r cylch-lythyr hwn ar gael yng Nghymraeg, cysylltwch â Ant am gopi cymraeg.

PBP would like to thank all those who contributed to this newsletter. If you would like to write an article for the next newsletter please contact Ant.

PBP Contact Details

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anthony.rogers@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Pembrokeshire Biodiversity website:

www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk (search - biodiversity)

Wales Biodiversity website:

www.biodiversitywales.org.uk

PBP Members

County Landowners Association		Pembrokeshire County Council	
Countryside Council for Wales		Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust	
Environment Agency Wales		Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
Farmers Union of Wales		Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development	
Forestry Commission		Prince's Trust Cymru	
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group		Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	
Keep Wales Tidy		The National Trust	
 MANOR HOUSE Wildlife Park		 Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government	
National Farmers Union – Wales		The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales	
Pembroke 21C Community Association Limited			



PEMBROKESHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership

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Organization
Several organizations work together in Pembrokeshire to protect and enhance biodiversity. Together, they form the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership.

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