

2024

Free

HUNTING

Guide



A supplement to
TIMES JOURNAL
Cobleskill, NY

What's new this hunting season?

The paper used for sporting licenses and carcass tags has changed from special stock (Valeron), to plain paper. This change modernizes the license purchasing process by allowing easier, quicker access to licenses and tags and offering at-home license and tag printing options for the in-

creasing number of hunters, trappers, and anglers who purchase their license online.

Customers will still be able to purchase their licenses and tags in-person at an issuing agent, online, or even over the phone. Licenses and tags purchased online will be emailed to the license holder so they can print from home. Licenses and tags purchased over the phone will be emailed for printing at home or printed for the customer at the point of sale.

Lifetime license holders should also expect to receive their 2024-25 license and tags on plain paper by

mail by September 1.

You will also have the option to sign up for email delivery of your lifetime license and tags by calling (866)933-2257 beginning in January 2025.

More information on this change is available at dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting.

Backtags no longer required

As a result of the law change, back tags are no longer required while hunting anywhere in New York State.

Continued
on next page.



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What's new?...

Continued
from previous page.

New Hunters: Learn to hunt

For many novice hunters, the lack of an experienced mentor can be a significant obstacle to going afield for the first time.

The challenges of learning where to go, how to hunt effectively, or what to do once you harvest an animal, prevents many potential hunters from attempting or continuing to hunt.

DEC now has a webpage dedicated to helping new hunters overcome these barriers.

The Learn to Hunt Opportunities page on the DEC website, <https://on.ny.gov/learntohunt>, includes information on Nest Step courses, the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program, sponsored pheasant hunts, and mentored hunts. These programs help new hunters develop the skills they will need to be safe and successful.

Non-lead Ammunition Rebate Program—Going Statewide

DEC is partnering with researchers to implement a multiyear study to determine the reduction in eagle deaths resulting from use of non-lead ammunition for deer hunting. Researchers are offering a rebate of up to \$60 to hunters for purchase of certified non-lead ammunition.

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Do your part to help manage state's deer herd

The two most important things you can do as a hunter to ensure effective management of New York's deer herd are to harvest at least one antlerless deer per year and to report all the deer you harvest.

DEC relies on hunters to harvest antlerless deer to help keep deer populations and wildlife habitat healthy.

Hunter reports of harvested deer are also the only source of two critical pieces of information that guide DEC's management - when and where deer are taken.

These data are used to estimate the number of deer harvested in each WMU throughout the

State which guides future management actions.

In 2022, only 46% of successful deer hunters reported their harvest even though it is critical to DEC's deer management and is required by law.

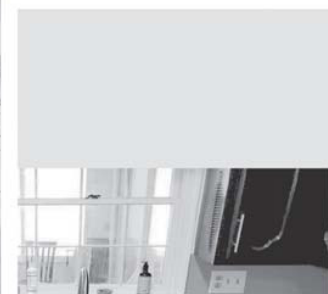
Help steward New York's deer herd by following through on your responsibility to tag your deer and report your harvests this hunting season - Take It · Tag It · Report It.

Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is spreading across the country and, if introduced to New York,

Continued
on next page.

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from previous page.

could permanently impact our deer population

and hunting tradition. CWD is always fatal to deer and is practically impossible to eliminate once established. The most ef-

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A whitetail peers through the brush in Cobleskill.

fective strategy is to prevent CWD from entering New York in the first place. Hunters can help protect New York's deer herd

from CWD by taking the following steps:

- If you hunt white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose, caribou, or other deer species outside of New York, debone the venison and follow the legal requirements for other parts of the carcass be-

fore bringing them back to New York. See CWD Regulations for Hunters. DEC will confiscate and destroy illegally imported carcasses and parts.

- Avoid natural deer

Continued
on next page.

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Brian Goodfellow photographed this buck enjoying an apple in Summit.

Do your part. . .

Continued from previous page.

urine scent lures and attractants. CWD can spread through the bodily fluids (saliva, feces, urine) of infected deer before they appear sick. CWD prions (abnormal proteins) bind to soil and plants where they can remain infectious for years. There is no way to ensure that natural deer urine products are free of

prions. Use synthetic alternatives instead.

- Hunt only wild deer and support fair chase hunting principles. CWD is commonly spread through deer transported between high-fence facilities.

- Report any deer that appears sick or is acting abnormally to DEC.

Use Non-Lead Ammunition

When lead and lead-core bullets strike a deer,

hundreds of tiny lead particles scatter throughout the tissue-up to 18 inches from the wound. Some of these fragments are too small to be seen, felt, tasted, or removed.

These lead particles can ruin the quality and yield of game meat and pose a risk to human consumers and scavenging animals. DEC encourages deer hunters to use alternative non-lead ammunition (see Ammunition: Non-lead or Lead?).

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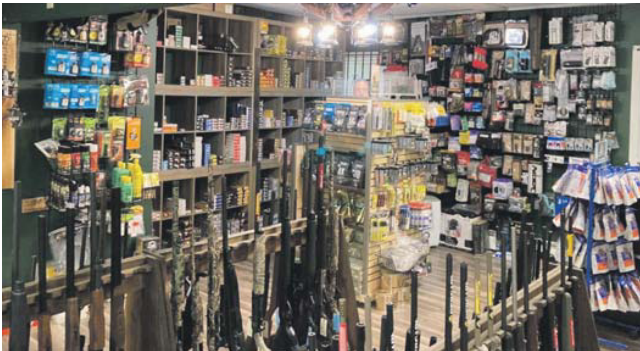




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Stats show hunting is safe, but there's still work to do

While statistics show hunting in New York is safer than ever, mistakes are made every year. DEC believes every hunting-related shooting incident is preventable, and Commissioner Basil Seggos encourages hunters to use common sense this season and to remember what they learned in their

DEC Hunter Education Course.

Firearms safety:

- Point your gun in a safe direction.
- Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
- Be sure of your target and beyond.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.

In addition to blaze orange or pink being required for hunting big game with firearms, DEC encourages small game hunters to wear blaze orange or blaze pink.

Wearing orange or pink prevents other hunters from mistaking a person for an animal or shooting in a hunter's direction. Hunters wearing blaze orange are seven times less likely to be shot.

For more information and other important safety tips, visit DEC's website and watch videos about hunter safety. For more information about getting outdoors safely and responsibly, visit DEC's website.

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Outlining basics for deer hunting

With deer hunting seasons that span four months, vastly different habitat types, and nearly 4 million acres of public land to be explored, New York State offers unique opportunities for hunters to pursue white-tailed deer.

Although natural vegetation and crops got off to a slow start due to unusually dry conditions during the months of May and June, above average levels of precipitation and temperatures throughout the month of July have improved deer forage quality across most of the state.

However, some areas of western New York and Long Island are still experiencing moderate drought conditions and a late frost in May along with localized outbreaks of spongy moth may affect the production of certain crops (ex. apples) and hard mast (ex. acorns) in some areas this fall.

In response to growing deer populations in many areas of the state, DEC has increased the availability of deer management permits (DMPs) (i.e., antlerless deer tags) or maintained them at similar

levels to last year for the hunting season.

DMPs are the primary tool used by DEC to manage deer populations and are available to hunters through an instant lottery process beginning August 1 and ending October 1.

Hunters should consult DEC's table of DMP targets and chances of selection before purchasing their license. Use of DMPs by hunters helps ensure that deer populations do not exceed habitat carrying capacity or levels of social acceptability (ex. farmers experiencing crop damage), and limits the need for DEC to use other methods to reduce deer impacts.

DMPs also provide additional opportunities for hunters to extend their time afield and fill their freezers with venison.

Statewide, DEC anticipates the total antlered buck harvest this fall will be similar to last year. However, the age distribution of bucks available to hunt-

Continued
on next page.



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Continued from
previous page.

-ters continues to improve.

Although a mandatory antler point restriction continues in a few WMUs, in the rest of the state where hunters can choose the buck they want to har-

vest, most are continuing to choose to harvest older bucks.

Based on DEC's deer population monitoring, the buck harvest has shifted from more than 70 percent yearlings a couple decades ago to greater than 60 percent 2.5-year-old or older bucks in recent years.

If you are interested in seeing more larger, older-aged bucks and experiencing greater buck activity during the breeding season, DEC recommends practicing and encouraging other hunters to Let Young Bucks Go and Watch Them Grow.

Harvesting antlerless deer instead of young bucks contributes more to deer management and can increase hunter satisfaction through increased viewing of and opportunities to harvest older-aged bucks.

Expanded Hunting Opportunities

Deer harvest data and feedback from hunters has continued to demonstrate the benefits of expanded hunting opportunities established in 2021, and deer hunters will continue to enjoy these opportunities during the 2024-25 seasons as well as new

opportunities to use rifles to hunt big game in Onondaga County.

1. Onondaga was added to the list of counties where rifles can be used to take big game during the regular season in 2023.

2. 12- and 13-year old hunters may hunt deer with a firearm or crossbow in counties that passed a local law to participate in the opportunity. See Junior Big Game Hunting for a map of participating counties.


3. Antlerless-only deer season in mid-September, using firearms, crossbows, and vertical bows in WMUs 3M, 3R, 8A, 8F, 8G, 8J, 8N, 9A, and 9F, and using only vertical bows in WMUs 1C, 3S, 4J, and 8C. Only DMPs and DMAP tags may be used.

4. Daily hunting hours for deer and bear extended to 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

5. Holiday Deer Hunt remains an extension of the late bow and muzzleloader season from December 26 - January 1 in the Southern Zone. Hunters and other recreationists are encouraged to Share the Snow.

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Season dates, bag limits and other hunting regulations for New York's small game species are available in the Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide, which can be obtained from a license-issuing agent or on DEC's website at dec.ny.gov.

Ruffed Grouse

Ruffed grouse hunting season runs from October 1 through the last day of February in most parts of the state. In Northern New York, the season opened on September 20, and runs through the last day of February.

Ruffed grouse hunters in the Northern Zone are reminded to positively identify quarry before shooting. The Northern Zone, specifically Wildlife Management Units 5C, 5F, 6F and 6J, is also home to the spruce grouse, a State-endangered species that is illegal to hunt. Loss of a single spruce grouse, particularly a female, could be a significant setback for a small local population. For tips on how to discern the two species, view the Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide or the ruffed grouse hunting information page on DEC's website.

DEC encourages ruffed grouse hunters to take part in the grouse hunting log program and submit feathers from harvested birds to assess recruit-



The habitat for gray squirrels is excellent in Schoharie and surrounding counties.

ment (number of young produced per adult female grouse) for different parts of the state. Interested hunters should visit the DEC website.

Pheasant Season

Prior to hunting seasons DEC will release adult pheasants on lands open to public hunting for the upcoming fall pheasant hunting season. The pheasant

Continued
on next page.

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Rabbit season begins October 1.

Small game...

Continued
from previous page.

hunting season begins:
October 1, in northern

and eastern portions of
New York.

October 19, in central
and western portions of
the state.

November 1, on Long
Island.

An interactive map of
statewide pheasant re-
lease sites, approximate
timing of stocking, and
number of birds stocked,
can be found on DEC's
website.

Squirrel and Rabbit

Opportunities to pursue
squirrels and rabbits can
be found throughout the
state, including on many
public lands. Squirrel sea-
sons started September 1
in Upstate New York and
begin November 1 on
Long Island. Rabbit hunt-
ing begins on October 1
in Upstate New York and
on November 1 on Long

Island. With ample oppor-
tunities and mild weather,
squirrel and rabbit hunt-
ing are great ways to in-
troduce novices to hunt-
ing.

Snowshoe hare (or vary-
ing hare) season starts
October 1 in the North-
ern Zone. Hare hunters in
the Southern Zone, where
the season starts in late
fall or early winter, are en-
couraged to report their
observations to DEC
through the DEC website.

Wild turkey

Wild turkeys can be
found throughout the
state but reach their high-
est densities in landscapes
that have a mix of forests,
old fields, and farmlands.
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bag limit is one bird of ei-
ther sex. Hunting hours
are sunrise to sunset.

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Wild game provides many culinary treats

By Moria and Keith Tidball

Our traditions, the very social fabric of who we are as a species, have been informed by our hunting heritage.

Archaeological findings show brain size of early humans increased with the adaptation of tools, social skills and cooking meat over fire.

For 99 percent of human history, hunting and angling have played an important and significant role in the social and emotional lives of people.

For many families, hunting has remained a strong family tradition passed down from generation to generation. Though techniques and methods have changed, the essence of our hunting traditions continues, providing not only food for the table but stories and histories for those gathered around the table.

Thankfully, there are mentor programs to relearn this connection to nature and our food, such as NYS DEC's Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program, 4-H shooting Sports, hiring a NYS licensed guide and DEC's special hunting opportuni-

ties for youth and veterans.

If you can, mentor a new hunter and continue our long hunting heritage and tradition. Show and teach a new hunter, young or older, how to successfully harvest and animal and how to safely process the meat.

Not only is wild game meat a way to connect with our hunting heritage and traditions, it also is an excellent source of lean, healthy protein.

Because wild game meat is lean, it requires specific cooking techniques to ensure the meat is tender and flavorful, such as brining, marinating, braising, and not overcooking steaks. Too often, people say that wild-caught meat tastes 'gamey' or is tough, yet with proper preparation, this is not the case.

We can look back to hunting and wild game cooking traditions to find ways to both overcome leeryness about wild game and to actually prepare gourmet meals.

To help accomplish this, we forged a partnership between Cornell University's Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) county associations in the Finger Lakes region.

Consistent with the motto of 'putting knowledge to work,' we created CCE's Wild Harvest Table program as an educational resource to help people prepare wild game and fish that the whole family can enjoy.

It celebrates the culinary bounty that wild game and fish represent across the state.

The Wild Harvest Table is not just another source of wild game recipes; the program provides useful and difficult-to-get nutritional information about game meat and wild game recipes.

For more recipes and nutritional for wild game and fish, go to www.wildharvesttable.com.

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First-timers: It's essential to prep kids before they take to the woods

Millions of individuals across the globe are avid hunters.

The passion many of those people have for hunting began on their first childhood hunting trip, and countless hunters fondly recall this milestone moment in their lives.

If there's a first time for everything, parents know that kids' initial forays into any activity comes with ups and downs.

Hunting is no exception to that trend, but parents can consider these measures as they prepare their youngsters to go hunting for the first time.

- Emphasize the importance of safety.

Safety is of the utmost importance on any hunting trip. Kids should be aware of all safety protocols pertaining to their guns and the hunting grounds.

Hunter's education courses can teach kids about hunting safety, but parents can quiz youngsters in the days leading up to the trip to reinforce safety protocols.

- Explain how hunting trips typically unfold.

Giving kids an idea of how a hunting trip may unfold is another good idea.

Explain the timing of the trip and why it's beginning when it is.

Kids without such knowledge may be less enthusiastic about early morning hunting excursions if they don't understand why they need to get out of bed early on a day off.

But they might be more excited if they recognize they're more likely to see wildlife and enjoy a successful trip if they're willing to sacrifice sleeping in.

- Bring some extra activities for kids to do.

Screens are a no-no, as they could deter wildlife.

But hunting requires patience, which is not exactly a virtue many youngsters possess.

So bring some books along or encourage kids to keep a diary of their first trip, describing it in detail so they have something to look back on as they get older.

- Purchase comfortable hunting attire.

Kids will likely be wearing new attire on their first trip, so parents

should have them try the clothing on prior to the trip.

When shopping for hunting clothing, make sure it meets all safety standards and is functional for hunters, but don't overlook comfort.

Hunting involves a lot of waiting, and the trip will be more enjoyable for everyone if kids

are comfortable throughout the slow periods.

- Recognize the day could be emotional.

A child's first hunting trip can be an emotional roller coaster, as kids may feel excited, bored, nervous, sad, and even guilty at any point during the day.

Parents must allow kids to

express any of these emotions during the day and emphasize that it's alright to express their emotions.

A child's first hunting trip is a milestone moment.

Parents can take steps leading up to the trip to ensure their children are ready for what's to come.

Hunting season has long, varied history

Hunting has been around a long time.

According to Britannica, hunting as many know it today began in ancient Greece. Various game were hunted to provide food, fuel and materials to make clothing and blankets.

In the Middle Ages, hunting was the privilege of nobility and linked to land ownership. Hunting is now strictly regulated in many countries and is typically used as a way to control wildlife populations that would otherwise overrun certain areas.

Hunting limits and clearly defined hunting seasons are often spelled out in detail in local hunting laws.

Wildlife commissions across states, provinces and territories set up strict time periods that govern which game can be hunted. Legislation also dictates size limits and the amount of game that can be killed.

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission breaks down hunting seasons into big game, waterfowl, small game, and webless migratory game birds.

Seasons vary depending on where hunters live.

The hunting education resource Hunter-Ed says hunting seasons are determined by the type of animal, the environment and animal characteristics like mating season.

Wildlife biologists in various regions study animal populations and make recommendations on hunting seasons.

"Open season" is when a species may be legally hunted, and tends to coincide with when the population of that species is at its highest, without interfering with breeding times.

Many hunters eagerly await "opening day" so they can start their hunting right away.

The season is "closed" when hunters are no longer allowed to go after that game. Food shortages, extreme temperatures and low population numbers may affect season duration.

Archery seasons tend to begin before firearm seasons in many states. Hunting outside of seasons is known as poaching and is punishable by law.

Turkey is typically hunted in the spring or fall. Migratory waterfowl hunting tends to open in late September and early October.

The seasons to hunt deer, and their close cousins like caribou, moose and reindeer, open in late September and early October, continuing into November for firearms hunting.

However, according to the hunting guide CleverHunters.com, deer seasons open up in the summer in Florida, South Carolina and Idaho.

Hunters will be required to obtain a hunting license.

At the time of licensure, hunters also may be given tags for their game animals.

A tag is a physical permit the hunter carries with him or her that must be attached to an animal immediately after it is felled.

Hunters are reigned in by the number of tags they have, which will coordinate with game limits.

The tag will need to be completed with the date and time of harvest and the location.

To learn more about hunting seasons where you live, contact your local fish and wildlife organization or visit www.huntingseasonhq.com for a state-by-state listing of hunting seasons.

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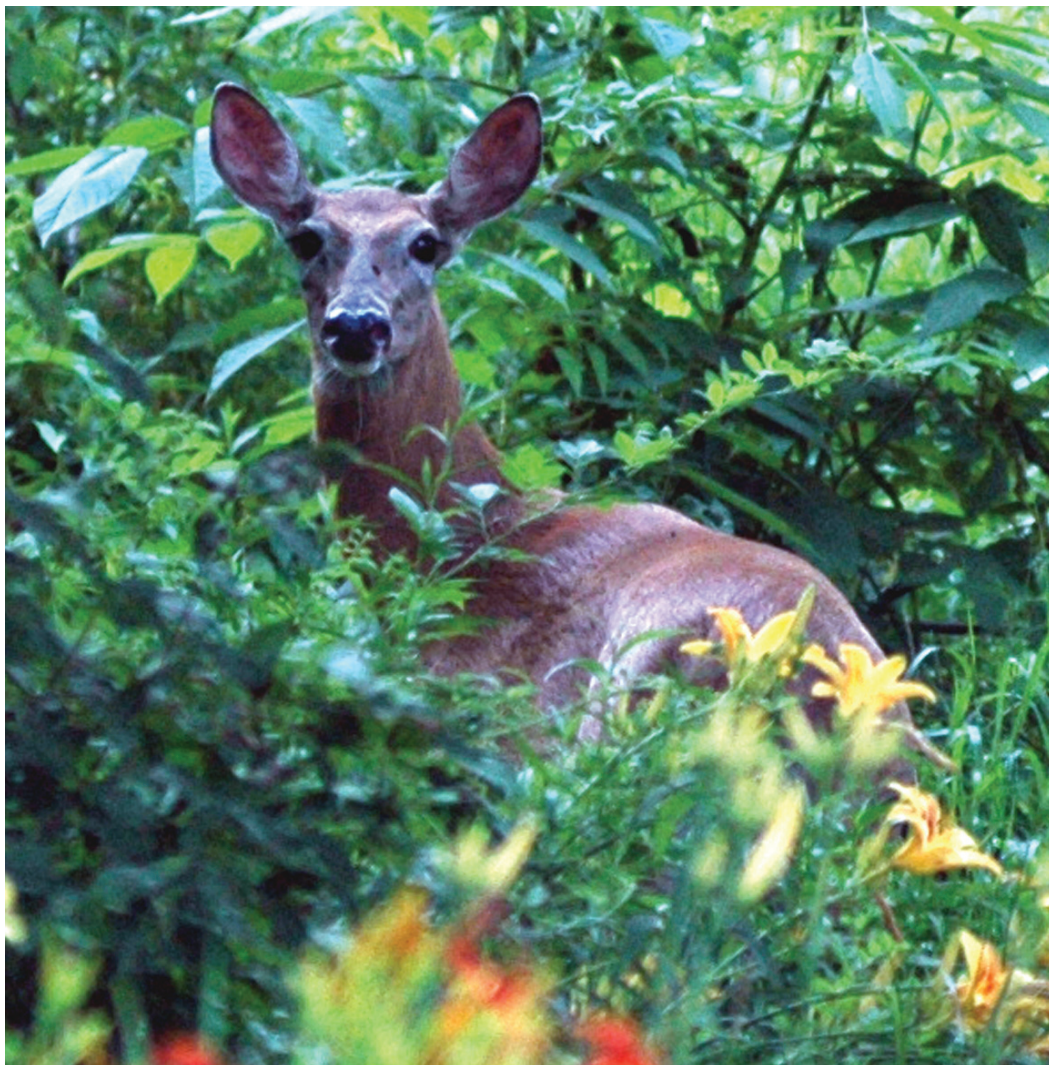
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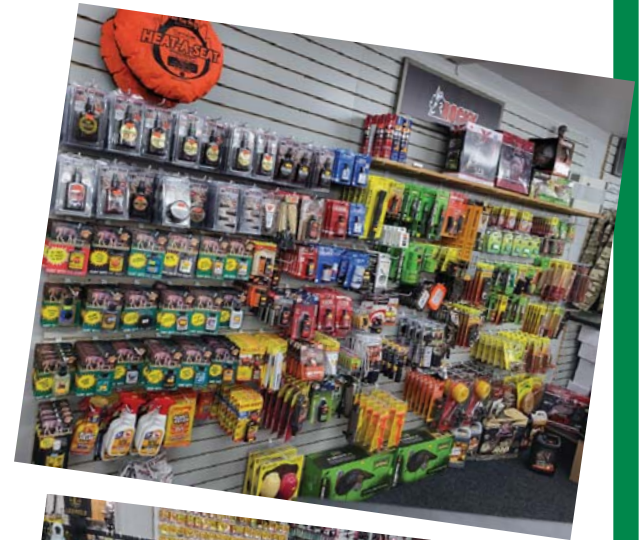
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