

# Annual report 2024



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**Miriam Monterroso**  
General Director

The year 2024 was a period of significant challenges for Guatemala and for conservation in our country. Political instability, forest fires, and other environmental threats tested our resilience. However, at ARCAS, we have demonstrated that, with commitment and teamwork, we can continue advancing our mission to protect biodiversity.

Throughout this year, we achieved important milestones that fill us with hope and motivation.

We are thrilled to share that we are taking on a new challenge as co-managers of El Rosario National Park. This park encompasses 1,000 hectares of forest, representing a key refuge for biodiversity in the region. This commitment reaffirms our mission to conserve natural resources and work together with communities to ensure a sustainable future.

We signed multiple agreements with partner organizations, strengthening our collaborative networks for education and conservation. We celebrated the release of 19 scarlet macaws. We established a forest nursery. We educated thousands of people.

We continued to build our institutional capacity, remaining a benchmark in the rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife. These achievements would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our donors, allies, and friends. Thank you for believing in our work and for sharing our vision of a more sustainable future for Guatemala's wildlife.

“ Thank you for being part of ARCAS! ”



# A year of commitment and action for wildlife.

**We signed a cooperation agreement with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of San Carlos of Guatemala (USAC)**, opening up opportunities for academic collaboration. Thanks to this alliance, new generations of veterinarians can pursue internships and professional practices, learning about the health, management, and protection of wildlife in Guatemala.

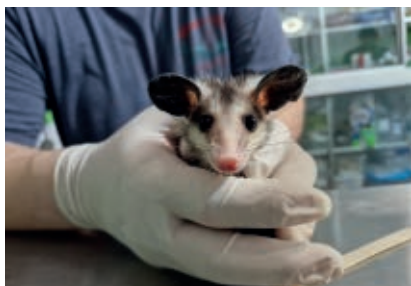
Also, **we signed a co-management agreement with the National Forest Institute (INAB) for El Rosario National Park**. This partnership gives us the opportunity to actively participate in the conservation of this important protected area.

A framework cooperation agreement was established with INAB, which will allow INAB and ARCAS to implement technical cooperation actions to meet forest policy objectives and develop actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Guatemala.

As part of the organization's growth and expansion, **work continued on the development of the new headquarters in Cerro Alux**, completing the veterinary medical facilities. The new facilities include a clinic, a surgical suite for minor procedures, and a heated area for newborn care.

Another significant advancement was **the launch of the Continuing Education Program for the ARCAS team**. This program seeks to strengthen staff capacities through training in various topics relevant to their area of expertise.

# Education and conservation





**Juan Tejada**  
South Coast Director

2024 was a year of great challenges and significant progress in strengthening ARCAS Costa Sur. Thanks to the invaluable support of our donors and partners, we have strengthened our efforts to protect wildlife, restore ecosystems, and foster community development within the protected area.

We strengthened our community veterinary clinic and implemented a spay/neuter training program. We promoted the creation of a forest nursery for native dry forest and mangrove species.

Also, we develop our social and environmental education programs, supporting initiatives from the Hawaiian youth ecotourism group and women coconut artisans.

For 2025, we will continue monitoring these programs and observe the first-year harvest of the forest nursery. This will allow for the reforestation of degraded areas and the expansion of our community programs to ensure ecosystem sustainability. We will expand monitoring, restoration, and environmental education efforts while strengthening the ARCAS Hawaii turtle hatchery and its impact on sea turtle conservation.

The mangrove forest is a haven for life, a refuge for biodiversity, and an essential natural barrier for coastal communities. It is severely threatened.

**“ We believe in its resilience and its ability to recover when we join forces. ”**



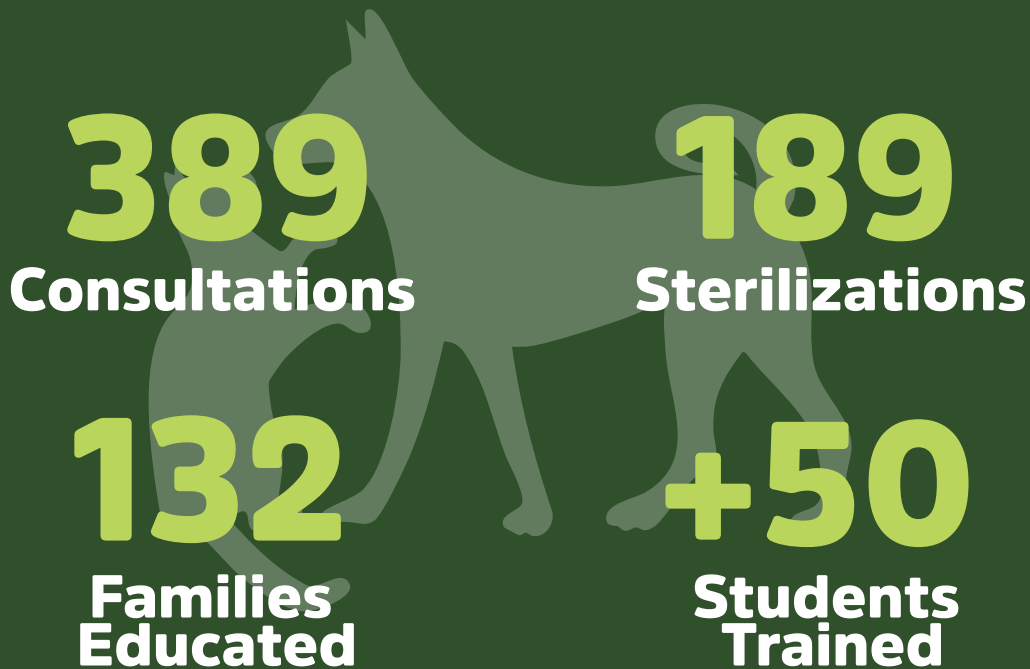
## Spay/neuter and community veterinary clinic

Since its launch in 2023, our **low-cost spay/neuter program has been a crucial response to the growing population of stray dogs and cats**, which are responsible for the predation of endemic wildlife. This project's primary objective is not only to promote responsible pet ownership but also to educate the community about the risks of not neutering their animals, both for wildlife and for themselves.

In addition to providing high-quality spay/neuter services at affordable prices, these programs represent a valuable learning environment for veterinary students, who, under supervision, can apply and learn new techniques. **Building their knowledge of individual patient and ecosystem health in the impacted area.** At **ARCAS**, we are committed to wildlife through a One Health approach, fostering a positive interaction between wildlife, the environment, and our communities.



**Prevention** of approximately **1,236** new animals becoming homeless in one year.



Preventing the predation of nearly **56,000** wild animals, **contributing to the conservation of local fauna.**



**15,477**

**Olive ridley  
eggs rescued**

**13,953**

**Turtle hatchlings  
released**

**90.15%**

**Hatching percentage**

## AUMH

Forestry work within the Hawaii Multi-Purpose Protected Area: Monitoring and patrolling within the protected area, maintenance of permanent plots (research), restoration of degraded areas (conservation). Establishment of new chinampas (resource access).

**24 monitoring events in permanent plots and new restoration points (2 monthly), 6 multi-institutional patrols**

5 restorations (3 mangrove ecosystems, 2 dry forest).

**4,000**

**Hectares of protected area, including mangrove forests**

**+30**

**New monitoring plots**

## Forest nursery

Active operations for search and selection of native species seeds. Currency working with: Mahogany, southern mahogany, matilisguate, red mangrove, black mangrove, buttonwood mangrove, etc. Search for new restoration areas.

**3,000**

**Red mangrove seedlings in the first months of the nursery**

## Environmental Education

Activities in six schools that operate within the protected area. One session per month. 48 talks in schools of all six communities in 2024.

**350**

**Girls and boys participated in environmental education activities**



## Garfish

The alligator gar (*Atractosteus tropicus*) is considered a living fossil as it has undergone minimal changes in its anatomy, making it almost identical to its fossil ancestors. This beautiful fish has an elongated body, bony scales, and a jaw with sharp teeth adapted to its diet. Natural populations have been declining due to habitat loss and overexploitation, which is why it is considered a Vulnerable species in Guatemala.

In 2024, we launched a restocking program in collaboration with the Center for Marine and Aquaculture Studies (CEMA). Thanks to this effort, we managed to harvest 4,000 fingerlings, which were released into the Chiquimulilla Canal, far from human activity. This initiative also involved local schoolchildren, encouraging their involvement in conservation and environmental awareness.

## Women's artisan group

Strengthening the work and product lines. Elaborating coconut bread, obtaining the raw materials for coconut oil, fiber, and handicrafts.

The production of coconut products not only supports households economically, but has also created a sense of unity that goes beyond the days of baking.

# 35

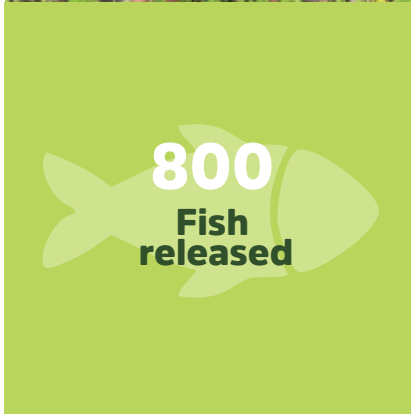
Artisan women

# 96

Yearly batches  
(8 a month)

# Parlama Rally

Once again, we were delighted to witness the success of this activity. Each of the participating children rescued 96 turtle eggs, took part in responsible pet ownership workshops, learned about the 5 freedoms of animals, actively participated in reforestation activities, and released alligator gar fingerlings. We concluded the activity with a trip to a recreational park with children and teachers.





**Fernando Martínez**  
Petén Director

The ARCAS rescue center in Petén continues to grow, both in terms of infrastructure and professional development. Over time, we have become educators, offering more and more courses and workshops for national and international professionals. At the Biodiversity Education Center (CEBIO), we have surpassed 25,000 visitors. Each of them carries with them the ideals of protecting our natural resources and preventing illegal wildlife trafficking.

We released more than 150 animals, including 19 scarlet macaws born at the rescue center, strengthening the population, which is in grave danger of extinction. We reached an important milestone: 40 scarlet macaws have been released into the Mayan Biosphere Reserve; according to estimates, this represents more than 12% of the wild population.

We have taken on a new challenge: the joint administration of El Rosario National Park with INAB. This natural area has a direct impact on the La Pasión River and is of vital importance to southern Petén.

The future holds new plans. We're launching courses for biology professionals, sharing our expertise in this important field. We'll share our experience in wildlife care, rehabilitation, and research.

Thanks to the staff, volunteers, interns, donors, and friends, together we give animals a second chance to return to their natural habitat.

“**Each released animal represents a new hope for the survival of the species.**”



## Humane World for Animals.

**With a relationship spanning nearly 20 years**, Humane World for Animals (formerly known as Humane Society International - Latin America) and ARCAS continue to work together. We conducted joint releases, **returning more than 100 wild animals to the wild.**

The construction of a new primate rehabilitation enclosure was funded, **a very ambitious project (10,000 m<sup>2</sup>)** an important and necessary upgrade to improve the rehabilitation process for rescued spider monkeys.

Likewise, CONAP wildlife technicians were trained. The objective was to strengthen their knowledge and mastery of current regulations on wild animals, technical knowledge on human interactions with wild animals, and wildlife management. **Our staff provided three days of training to more than 20 technicians nationwide.** During this event, they were also provided with equipment for the proper capture and handling of wildlife.

# ZAAC Conference

Our biologist, Anna, was selected to attend the ZACC (Zoos and Aquariums Committed to Conservation) conference in May 2024 in Salt Lake City, Utah. This conference, held every two years, offers zoos in the United States the opportunity to learn about different conservation projects around the world.

It also provides them with a platform to present their work and network and establish bilateral relationships. Anna spoke about the importance of women in conservation, using her career within ARCAS as an example.

At this meeting, our education department presented and won funding for a productive reforestation project.



# OAKLAND ZOO

The Oakland Zoo and ARCAS have maintained a long and incredibly important relationship in recent years. While it's usually zoo staff who visit us, in 2024 it was bilateral.

Zoo staff participated in marine conservation activities at the South Coast, and our biologist, Anna Bryant, visited Oakland for several days.

She presented ARCAS's work to staff and donors, participating in multiple meetings where both parties exchanged ideas on animal care, enclosure design improvements, and animal behavior.

When Oakland received their first spider monkey babies confiscated from illegal wildlife trafficking, ARCAS was able to contribute by sharing knowledge about rearing, medical care, and infant development, strengthening conservation ties across borders.

Likewise, camera traps were purchased to strengthen our role as co-administrator and biological researchers of El Rosario National Park.

# GOING BACK HOME

We work tirelessly to return to the wild those who should never have left it.



**MAY**  
Yaxha  
National  
Park



**JUNE**  
Mirador Rio  
Azul  
National  
Park





© Arcas Guatemala



# JULY

Yaxha  
National  
Park



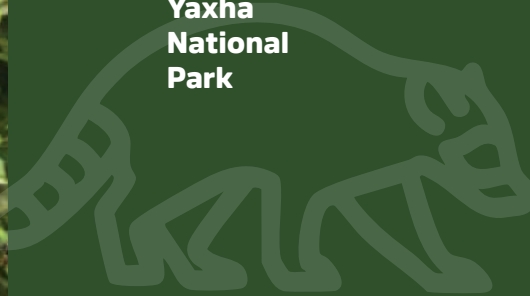
# SEPTEMBER

Sierra del  
Lacandon  
National Park



# OCTOBER

Yaxha  
National  
Park



# Centro Educativo de la Biodiversidad

(Biodiversity Education Center)

## Community Cleanup Train

Together with our neighboring community and more than 60 elementary school students and their parents, we celebrated Wildlife Day by cleaning up the community of waste that affects animal health and pollutes the environment.

Celebrating World Ecology Day, more than 40 families from the community planted 250 fruit trees. This supports the efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, promote food access, economic sustainability, and a healthy environment.

## Achievements and plans

**Agreement with the Municipality of Flores:** Students from different levels of public schools will visit the Educational Center, fulfilling our mission to educate and serve the population that coexists with biodiversity.

Seguir trabajando de la mano con la comunidad vecina y lograr que sea una comunidad modelo de coexistencia con la naturaleza.



**26,857**  
Visitors

**22,533**  
Adults

**4,324**  
Children

# Macaw festival

# +150

Participants



Macaw Festival

Activity realized in the island of Flores, together with the municipality.

# Participation in fairs and activities

Providing information to an average of 50 people in each activity. Involving local media channels.

# +11

Events



Promotion

# PANER

**(El Rosario National Park)**

In the first months of co-administering the park, we have initiated patrols, animal roadkill control, biodiversity research, educational activities, and outreach to local authorities.

**1,000**

**Hectares of protected tropical rainforest**

**3,000**

**pounds of collected trash (cleanup train)**

**24**

**Wildlife monitoring stations**

**16**

**Control and protection patrols**



**Start of the annual census of bird diversity**



98

Species  
managed

# ARCAS in numbers



## VOLUNTEERS

**165** 13 days  
average  
stay

## STUDENTS OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

**63** 57 Foreigners  
6 Nationals

## INTERNS

**14** 7 Veterinary  
7 Biology  
2 Aquaculture  
2 Engineering  
environmental

## CENTRAL

Intakes: 87

Rescues: 26

Donations: 45

Confiscations: 16

Birds: 55



Reptiles: 10



Mammals: 22



Releases

4

## SOUTH COAST

Intakes: 76

Rescues: 56

Donations: 7

Confiscations: 0

Birds: 29



Reptiles: 23



Adult hawksbill sea turtle: 3



Mammals: 20



Hatchlings: 13



Releases

34

## PETÉN

Intakes: 269

Rescues: 199

Donations: 29

Confiscations: 27

Birds: 130



Reptiles: 32



Mammals: 107



Macaws Hatchlings: 14

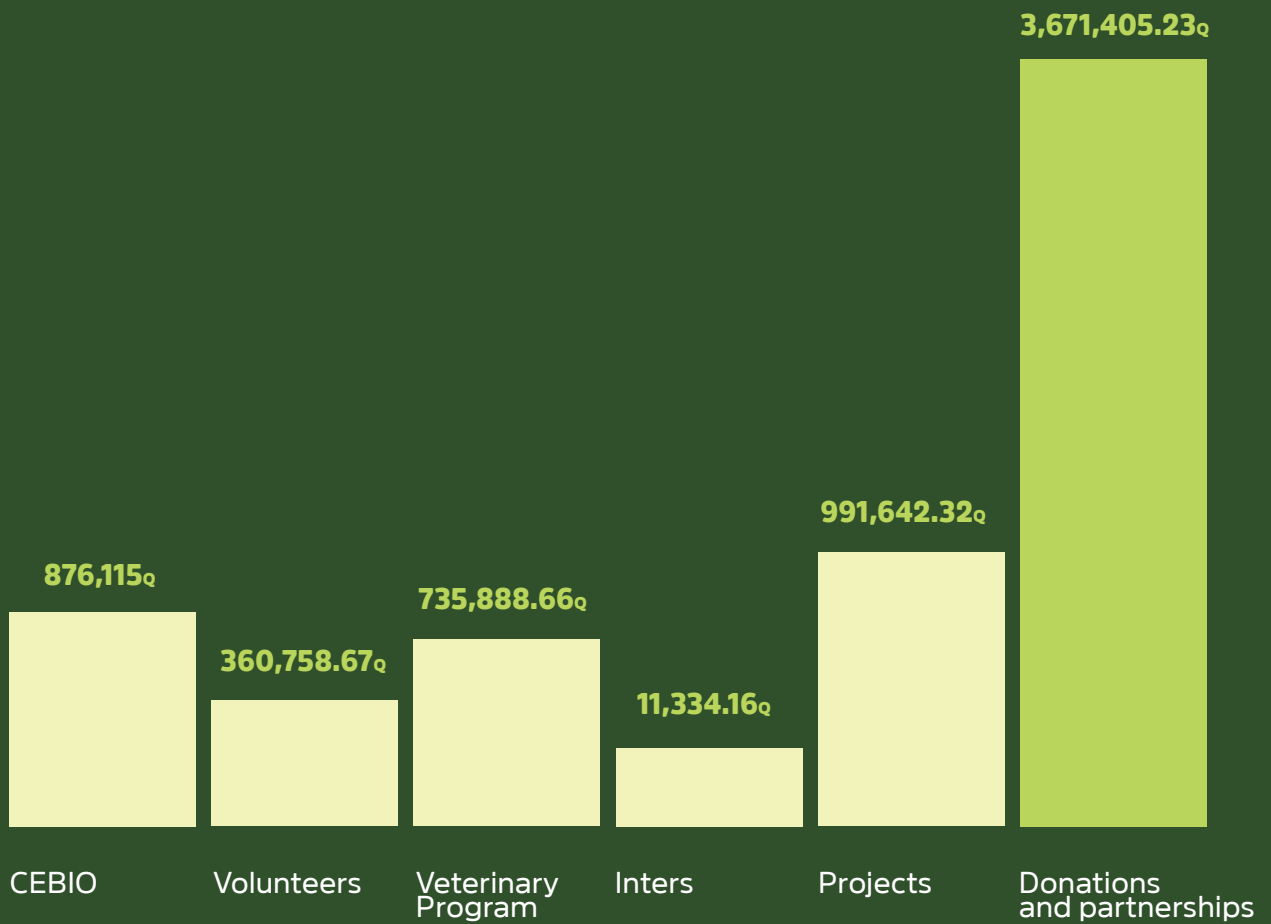


Releases

151



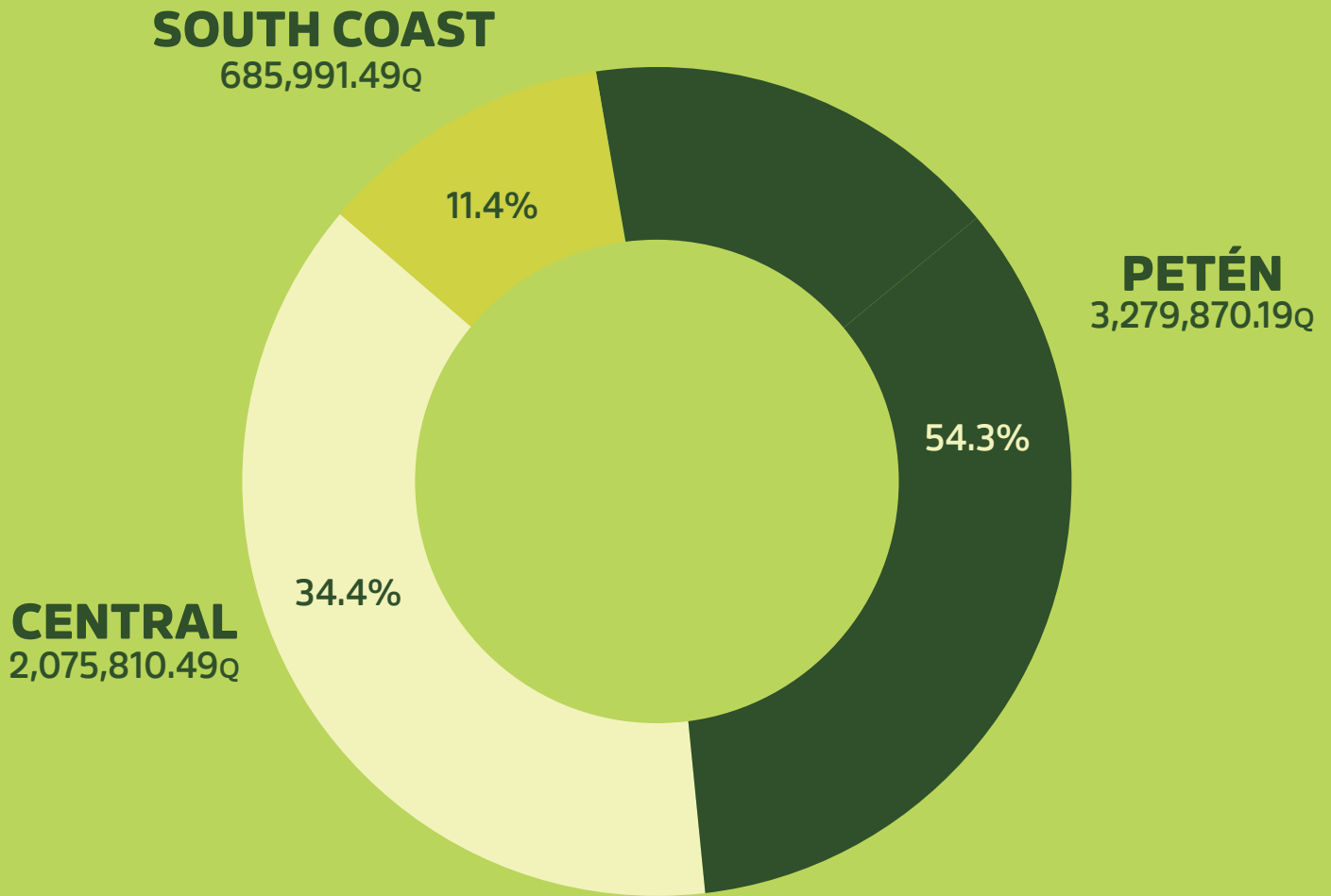
These funds were essential for wildlife conservation, animal rehabilitation and our educational programs.



**In 2024, total  
income \$ 867,161.58**



These funds were key to the development of our programs.

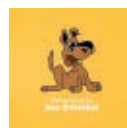


**In 2024, total expenses \$ 784,632.74**

# Thank you.

## Partners and donors

Luis von Ahn  
FOUNDATION



Alma Lemus Guerra  
Arlene Thiessen  
Clay Massey  
Holly Frost  
Jean Blezinski  
Jeremy White  
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Melanie Mastin  
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Sandra Rosenhouse  
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Zeeshan Sardar  
Zoe gardiner  
Coleen Barry  
Sandra Lyu

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