

Glendye Wind Farm Overhead Line Grid Connection Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Volume 4 | Appendix 7.1

**Ecology Desk Study
October 2025**



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APPENDIX 7.1: ECOLOGY DESK STUDY

- 1.1.1 This data summary outlines data obtained via consultation with the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC) and using freely available (for commercial use) data sets from the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas website¹. All records relate to species identified within a 2 km buffer of the Proposed Development boundary and registered within the last 10 years, with the exception of wildcat for which records were obtained for the previous 20 years. The Proposed Development boundary is provided in **Figure 3.1** within **Chapter 3: The Proposed Development**.

1.2 External Data Request

Conservation Value

- 1.2.1 For reasons of brevity, the external data consultation summarises those species attributed with a level of conservation value only. More common and widespread species have been excluded in this summary. Levels of conservation value are attributed by those listed as one or more of the following:
- European Protected Species (EPS) 2. Those listed as such receive full protection under Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)³ (i.e. the “Habitats Regulations”) and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended)⁴;
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)⁵;
 - Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011⁶;
 - Scottish priority species listed on the Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL) 7; and
 - The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004⁸.

External Data - Results

- 1.2.2 The desk study identified records of fifteen protected and / or conservation value species within 2 km of the Proposed Development within the last 10 years. Of these protected and/or conservation value species, twelve were attributed two mammals, and two as herptiles. Records are listed below in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Records of Protected and / or Conservation Value Species occurring with the Study Area within the last 10 years

Name	Scientific name	Conservation status	Description
Brown hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Partially protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). SBL priority species: Conservation actions needed.	Eleven records between 2017 and 2022, the closest of which was 1.02 km south of the Proposed Development.
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Protection of Badgers Act 1992, as amended by the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.	Five records between 2015 and 2023, the closest of which

¹ National biodiversity Network atlas (online) available at: <https://nbnatlas.org/> [last accessed 17/07/2025]

² NatureScot (2019) Protected Species List – Habitats Regulations 1994: Schedules 2, 3, and 4. (online) Available at: Protected Species List - Habitats Regulations 1994 | NatureScot [last accessed 17/07/2025]

³ Council directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (online) Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj/eng> [last accessed 17/07/2025]

⁴ Nature Conservation (Scotland) act 2004 (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/6/contents> [last accessed 17/07/2025]

⁵ Wildlife and countryside Act 1981 (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents> [last accessed 17/07/2025]

⁶ Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/6/contents> [last accessed 17/07/2025]

⁷ NatureScot (2025). Scottish Biodiversity List (online). Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy/scottish-biodiversity-list> [last accessed 17/07/2025]

⁸ Nature Conservation (Scotland) act 2004 (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/6/contents> [last accessed 17/07/2025]

Name	Scientific name	Conservation status	Description
			was 0.93 km northwest of the Proposed Development.
Red squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Fully protected under Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Additional protection provided under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. SBL: Priority species – conservation action needed; avoid negative impacts.	Seventeen records between 2016 and 2023, the closest of which was 0.88 km south of the Proposed Development.
Otter	<i>Lutra Lutra</i>	Fully protected as an EPS under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species – conservation action needed; avoid negative impacts.	Seven records in 2015, the closest of which was 0.57 km north of the Proposed Development.
Mountain hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>	Included on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Listed as a species of “community interest” under Annex V of the Habitats Directive and so has some protection under the Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species – conservation action needed; avoid negative impacts.	Seven records between 2015 and 2023, the closest of which was 0.05 km north of the Proposed Development.
Pine Marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	Included on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Certain methods of killing or taking pine martens are illegal under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species – conservation action needed; avoid negative impacts.	Fifteen records between 2015 and 2024, the closest of which was 0.31 km north of the Proposed Development.
Scottish Wildcat	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	Fully protected as a EPS under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species – conservation action needed; avoid negative impacts	One record in 2019, 0.44 km south of the Proposed Development.
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Fully protected as EPS under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species – avoid negative impacts.	Eleven records between 2018 and 2023, the closest of which was 0.15 km north of the Proposed Development.
Other Pipistrelle bat species	<i>Pipistrellus spp.</i>	Fully protected as EPS under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species –avoid negative impacts.	Three records between 2019 and 2023, the closest of which was 1.87 km south of the Proposed Development.
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Fully protected as EPS under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species –avoid negative impacts.	Eighteen records between 2018 and 2023, the closest of which were 0.16 km northwest of the Proposed Development.

Name	Scientific name	Conservation status	Description
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Fully protected as EPS under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL priority species: avoid negative impacts.	One record 0.11 km north of the Proposed Development, recorded in 2021.
Natterer's bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Fully protected as EPS under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). SBL: Priority species –avoid negative impacts.	One record in 2021 which was 0.12 km north of the Proposed Development.
Common lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). SBL priority species: avoid negative impacts.	Two records, in 2018 and 2023, 1.59 km south and 0.5 km north of the Proposed Development respectively.
Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>	Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). SBL priority species: avoid negative impacts.	Two records in 2023. Both of which are approximately 2 km from the proposed OHL route to the North and South of the Proposed Development respectively.
Common toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	Partially protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). SBL priority species: avoid negative impacts.	One record 1.69 km south of the Proposed Development, recorded in 2023.

1.3 External Data Sources

Wildcat Priority Areas

- 1.3.1 As part of the Scottish Wildcat Conservation Action Plan⁹, NatureScot commissioned a study to identify areas in Scotland that are likely to be the most suitable for protecting and supporting the recovery of existing wildcat populations (SNH, 2014)¹⁰. The project aimed to secure a minimum of nine stable wildcat populations. The report studied nine candidate areas and identified six areas that were most suited to be established as priority areas for wildcat conservation.
- 1.3.2 Following this, five wildcat priority areas were designated. **Table 2** below shows the approximate distance and direction of the designated wildcat priority areas in relation to the Proposed Development (see **Figure 7.1.1**). The Proposed Development lies outwith these designations, with Angus Glens located within the closest proximity, approximately 21.73 km to the southwest, separated by existing road networks and managed farmland.

Table 2 Wildcat Priority Areas

Area name	Distance and direction from OHL route	Main habitat types within priority area, in order of % cover
Angus Glens	21.73 km southwest	Grassland, moorland and conifer woodland.

⁹ Scottish Natural Heritage (2013) Scottish Wildcat Conservation Action Plan. (Online). Available [Scottish Wildcat Conservation Action Plan](#). Accessed August 2025

¹⁰ Littlewood, N.A., Campbell, R.D., Dinnie, L., Gilbert, L., Hooper, R., Iason, G., Irvine, J., Kilshaw, K., Kitchener, A., Lackova, P., Newey, S., Ogden, R. & Ross, A. (2014). Survey and scoping of wildcat priority areas. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 768.

Area name	Distance and direction from OHL route	Main habitat types within priority area, in order of % cover
Strathbogie	46.49 km northwest	Grassland, conifer woodland, clear-fell and moorland.
Strathavon	49.05 km northwest	Grassland, moorland and coniferous woodland
Dunlain/ Northern Strathspey	76.64 km northwest	Moorland, conifer woodland, grassland and mixed/ deciduous woodland.
Strathpeffer	128 km northwest	Conifer woodland, moorland and grassland
Morvern	167.06 km west	Grassland, moorland, conifer woodland, mixed/ deciduous woodland

- 1.3.3 In addition to the Angus Glen wildcat priority area, of relevance to the Proposed Development is the candidate area Drumtochty Forest, Aberdeenshire (see **Figure 7.1.1**) which was initially considered in the 2014 report; however was not recommended for priority designation following the study. Whilst the report did not recommend this region as a priority area due to a lack of sufficient evidence of wildcat in the area, it was acknowledged that:

“...future surveys may reveal more wildcats or hybrids within the extensive commercial forestry plantations of Fetteresso or Drumtochty or further afield into Glen Dye or Durris forest.”

- 1.3.4 The Proposed Development and associated access tracks will be routed through this area. A data request for records of wildcat was submitted in February 2025 with NESBReC. This search identified one recent record of wildcat from 2019, and several older records between 2008 and 2013. See **Table 3** below for more details.
- 1.3.5 Wildcat can travel up to 10 km per night and may disperse a long way from their natal dens, with subadult males being known to disperse up to 55 km before establishing their own territory (Scott *et al.*, 1993) ¹¹. Recent studies suggest that wildcat home ranges may be between 5 km and 30 km where habitat connectivity allows (Kilshaw *et al.*, 2023) ¹².

Table 3: NESBReC Wildcat Records

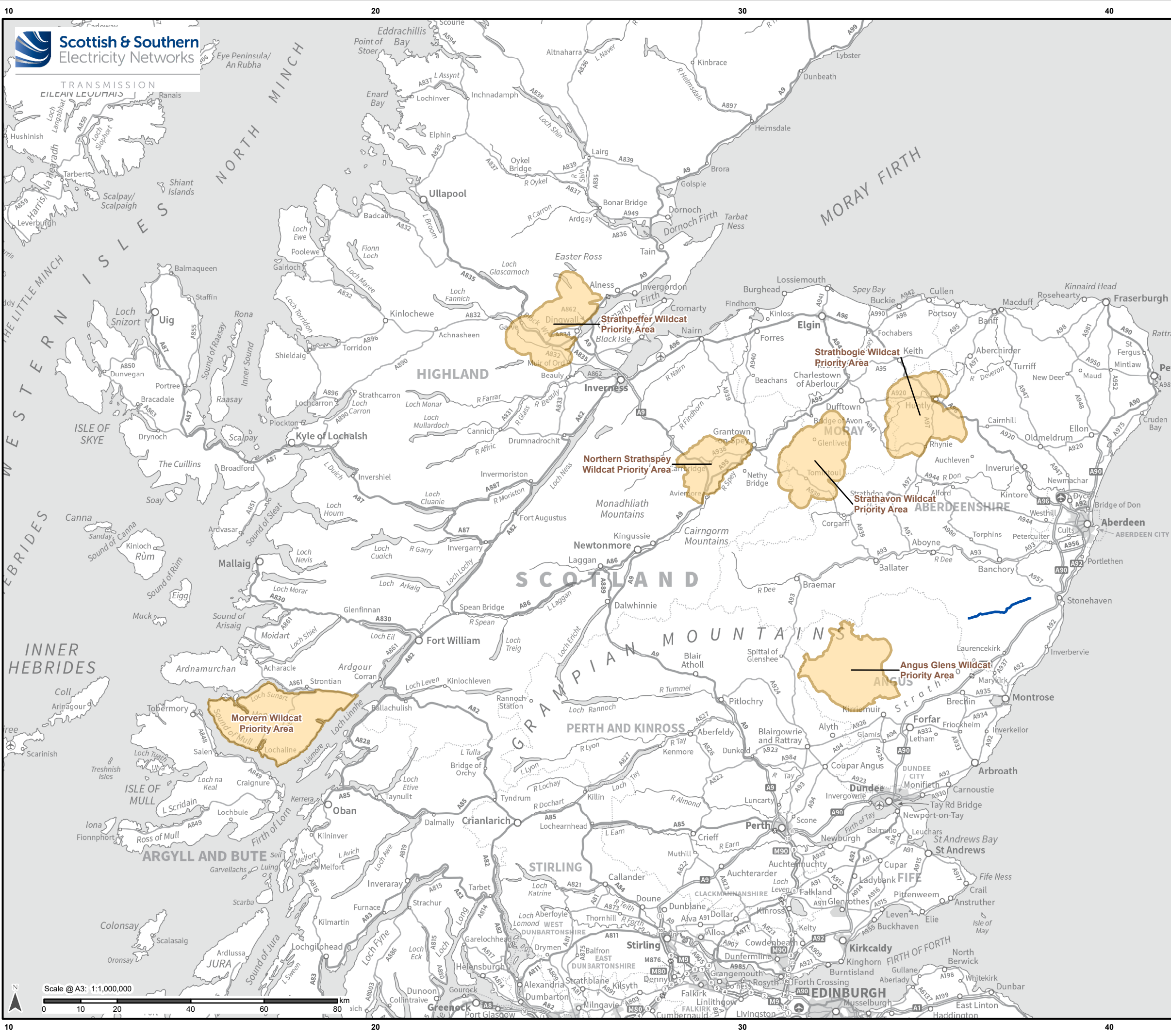
Date	Grid reference	Distance / direction from Proposed Development	Description	Habitat type at record location*
Jan 2019	NO735835	0.44 km south	Caught in a humane trap and subsequently released.	Gorse scrub/ conifer plantation clear-fell
Apr 2013	NO786857	0.06 km north	Live sighting – crossing forest track	Young conifer plantation.
Mar 2011	NO729850	1.2 km north	Tracks in snow only rather than actual sighting. Record has been accepted by NESBREC but not clear how this has been verified.	Young conifer plantation/ regrowth.
Sept 2009	NO690829	1.16 km north	Again, not clear if this was a targeted survey or incidental,	Young conifer plantation.

¹¹ Scott, R., Easterbee, N. & Jefferies, D(1993) :A radio-tracking study of wildcats in western Scotland - Proc. seminar on the biology and conservation of the wildcat (*Felis silvestris*), (1993) Nancy, France. Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 94-97.

¹² Kilshaw, K., Campbell, R.D., Kortland, K. and Macdonald, D.W. (2023). Scottish Wildcat Action final report: Ecology. NatureScot, Inverness.

Date	Grid reference	Distance / direction from Proposed Development	Description	Habitat type at record location*
			comment says "1 cat plus 2 kittens witnessed on 2/3 days."	
Jun 2008	NO764867	1.59 km north	No other information given	Conifer plantation
Jun 2008	NO757864	0.47 km north	No other information given	Edge of conifer plantation, along a ride.

- Habitat type is based on aerial mapping therefore for older records, habitat changes may have occurred since record submission.



Legend

- Proposed Overhead Line (OHL) Alignment
- Wildcat Priority Area

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Project: Glendye Wind Farm Overhead Line
Grid Connection

Title: EIA Report
Appendix 7.1 Desk Study:
Wildcat Priority Areas
Figure 7.1.1

Drawn by: QF
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