

**ALL PILCHUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY-SPONSORED EVENTS
SCHEDULED IN APRIL ARE CANCELLED
INCLUDING
PROGRAM MEETING AND BIRDING TRIPS**

Message from Cindy Easterson

President, Pilchuck Audubon Society

Dear Pilchuck Audubon Members,

Please know how much we value our Audubon members, supporters, and staff. Your health and well-being are a priority, and addressing how we respond to COVID-19 is something we've had to consider carefully. We want to do everything we can to prevent community spread of the virus at our outings and events. With that the priority, **all Pilchuck Audubon Society-sponsored events will be cancelled for the month of April.**

We want to resume normal operations as soon as possible but our local communities have been through a lot, and we are obligated to take steps in response to COVID-19 that will protect those in our Audubon family. We are doing our best to comply with local, state, and federal guidelines and encourage you to support our efforts by adhering to social distancing recommendations.

It's hard. As birders we are experiential people and enjoy those experiences best when surrounded by friends who share our passion. However, I believe our enduring love of birds will help us get through.

More than 100 million Americans are now under state or local orders to stay inside as much as possible, and public health experts say that



Marbled Godwit | © Rex Guichard

maintaining physical distance from others is the best way to slow the outbreak. We urge you to be extra cautious when considering spending time in public spaces. For the greater good, staying at home if you can is what is called for right now. National Audubon has created [a page celebrating the joy of birds](#) where you can find activities and entertainment to help you get through this tough and uncertain time. 🦋

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2020 Birdathon

Like every year, our annual Birdathon fund-raising event is scheduled for the month of May. But unlike every year, we find ourselves in the midst of uncertainty. We are hoping we are still able to host this incredibly important fund-raising event, whether in its traditional format or a modified format to account for health and travel restrictions.

So mark your calendars for Birdathon in May, but keep an eye out for more information in the coming weeks as we continue to evaluate and monitor these extenuating circumstances. 🐦



Memorial Weekend Birding Trip to Klickitat County May 23-26

Once again it is time to start planning for Susie's PAS trip to Klickitat County Memorial Day weekend, leaving Saturday morning, May 23, and returning Tuesday evening, May 26. It has been 10 years since our first adventure; each time, we have had many adventures and fun times. With the exception of 2015, we have gone every year.

The general format for this trip is no more than 12 people in 3 cars, departing early Saturday morning. We share driving and gas costs, and all bring food to share for picnic lunches together for 4 days. We usually dinner out together. There are not a lot of restaurants in Klickitat County. There is one very good Mexican place in Goldendale; we have had many interesting dining experiences. We stay in Goldendale and Glenwood; trip goers have often shared rooms to keep costs down.

At least once on the trip, we go to the Conboy National Wildlife Refuge. Klickitat County has a well-earned reputation for a variety of birds, beautiful native plants, and wildflowers.

Please call or email if you have questions or want to sign up. We have filled up fast in the past; after this many years, I am uncertain of the demand; if there are at least 7 people and 2 cars/drivers, we will go. As of this writing, six adventurers have signed up, and we are hopeful we'll be able to go.

Because booking lodging in Klickitat County is not easy, I would like to know of your interest as soon as possible. Call 425-711-8165 and leave a message; or text me at 425-478-9383, or email me, Susie Schaefer, at garden@pilchuckaudubon.org.

The annual June long trip is not possible this year. 🐦

About Pilchuck Audubon Society

The Pilchuck Audubon Profile, official newsletter of Pilchuck Audubon Society, is published monthly.

Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) is a grass-roots environmental organization with members throughout Snohomish County and Camano Island, Washington.

Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, for the benefit of the earth's biological diversity.

Through education, advocacy, and community activism, PAS is committed to bringing people closer to wildlife in order to build a deeper understanding of the powerful links between healthy ecosystems and human beings, and to encourage the involvement of our members in efforts to protect the habitat this wildlife

depends upon for survival.

We serve as a local chapter of the National Audubon Society. PAS is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Washington.

Newsletter Submissions

Submit articles to newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290. Submissions must be received by the 21st of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.610.8027.

The monthly Profile is available online at

www.pilchuckaudubon.org

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Reconnect with Your Local Birds

by Brian Zinke

For the health of our communities and ourselves, we should all heed the shelter-in-place orders as much as we possibly can. But that doesn't mean we have to rid ourselves of birding completely! At the time of this writing, the current restrictions still allow for walks around your neighborhood so long as you practice good social distancing.

This is a great time to step back and appreciate the little things we often overlook in our birding quests. How many times do we look up and see a European Starling or Rock Dove and keep on our way, looking for something "more interesting?" When is the last time you watched one of these "less desirable" birds and studied their behavior?

The same goes with your bird feeders. We often notice the birds at the feeder, but do we really "see" them? Which birds sort through your seed mix and pull out the specific types of seeds they prefer? Is there a pecking order or dominance hierarchy between species? I personally have noted at my second-story apartment feeders that the Red-breasted Nuthatch often gives the Chickadees a stern look before stealing their perch on the tube feeder.



Red-breasted Nuthatch | Photo by Phillip Dickinson

What is Social Distancing?

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, social distancing is "deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid illness." The recommended distance to keep from others is at least 6ft. But for those of us who struggle with picturing what that distance looks like, here's a helpful graphic from The Raptor Trust with examples more in tune with a birder's mind.



Likewise, how often do you drive by the local park in your neighborhood to go birding at a "better" location? If we all bird at the same hotspots all the time, we're really missing a large portion of our bird communities. There are so many small parks in our area that have not a single checklist submitted in 2020. Not one! Do you live near Tambark Creek Park in Bothell? What about Loganberry Lane Park in Everett, Japanese Gulch in Mukilteo, Camano Ridge Forest Preserve on Camano Island, or Twin Rivers Park in Arlington? [Browse the hotspots on eBird](#) to see what areas in your local neighborhood are being overlooked and help us fill in the gaps. If you do visit one of the local parks in your area, please follow the safety guidelines for distancing, and consider birding alone instead of in groups.

This is a difficult time for us all, but we should still strive to find those little nuggets of joy in our lives.

I challenge you to get back to the basics of birding. Notice the small things. Notice the things you've never paid attention to before. Spend some time with the species you've neglected. And bird those small, local areas even though your species list will be small, because those birds are important, too. 🦅

With the current social distancing requirements and shelter-in-place orders, we must find other ways to keep our spirits up and our love of birds satisfied. Luckily, there are tons of online resources to satisfy that itch! Whether you want to watch some birds, learn a new skill to improve your birding, or are looking for some crafty ideas to keep you and the kids entertained, there are a number of places online to do just that! Below are some of our favorites.



[Bird Cams](#)

Choose your species and watch the live cams from all over the country!



[eBird Essentials Course \(Free\)](#)

This free course will ease you into using eBird for the first time. eBird is an easy-to-use website/app that helps keep track of your bird sightings, plus it gives those data to scientists to help inform conservation.

[Bird Song Hero](#)

An introductory game to birding by ear, this will help get you on your way to tuning your ears to the birds!

[Quiz Yourself by Sight or Sound](#)

eBird offers quizzes that you can customize to a specific location and time of year, and you can take the quiz by looking at photos or listening to sounds.

[Watch Videos on the Four Keys to Bird Identification](#)

Learn how to go through the process of identifying a bird in the field.

[How to Choose the Right Bird Feeder](#)

Learn which types of feeders are better for different species.



[Feeding Birds: A Quick Guide to Seed Types](#)

Brush up or learn something new about the different types of food offerings you can provide the visitors in your yard or on your balcony.



[Make Hummingbird Nectar](#)

Learn how to make this simple food to attract hummingbirds to your feeder!

[How to Make Bird Seed Cookies](#)

Learn how to make these fun feeders that you can hang anywhere!

[All About Birdhouses](#)

Learn about the different types of bird houses, what specifications different species prefer, and blueprints on how to build your own! 🐦



7 March 2020

Weekend Birdwalk to Camano Island–Barnum Point

by Jonathan Blubaugh

Pilchuck Audubon Society and the North Sound Birders' Meetup visited Island County's newest park development, Barnum Point County Park. Until recently, it was known as Barnum Point Preserve. Details may be found here: <https://www.liveineverett.com/blog/worth-leaving-town-for-barnum-point-county-park>. PAS member Lisa Weber sighted the Island County announcement and suggested the outing. I conferred with PAS Weekend Birdwalk Trip Leader Doug Resnick, and he told me I should make it so. I love taking requests.

Attendance was down due to the coronavirus speculation. If the birdwalk had been a week later, it probably would have been cancelled. Still, we had ten people. As a precaution, most of us caravanned rather than car-pooling. We used sensible precautions. Everybody was in good health and good spirits, but a bit somber due to the circumstances.

We began at a newly built parking lot that has new graveled trails leading away. At the parking lot we met a participant who lives on Camano Island and wanted to meet us at the site. She turned out to be an invaluable guide because not only does she live nearby, her group of volunteers had put in countless hours to bring the park to the public with its numerous improvements. Many thanks to Joan!

I had been to the site once, years before, on a dead-end road at what is now the south end of the park. At that time, we drove to the end of the road on the eastern shore of the island, looked for birds, and turned around and left. This time, we went to the new parking lot uphill from there, which is accessible from Sunrise Bl. on the island. Joan suggested our course to explore the park. We readily agreed. At the parking lot Joan showed us that we were at a holly tree orchard. There were at least three varieties of large holly trees in a fairly large former nursery. It was full of robins enjoying the huge crop of holly berries. She told us the park and volunteers had scheduled the orchard for termination. I said I hoped they wouldn't take them all out. The hollies were providing prodigious food and shelter for plenty of robins and other fruit-loving birds. We lingered at the edge of the parking lot beside the holly grove because, as usual, there was really good birding at the parking lot. When first arriving at a new site, one starts hearing interesting things as soon as stepping out of the car. There is great new pedagogical signage at the parking lot and at a few appropriate places on the trails such as overlooks. The path past the holly nursery took us down to a small pond with a couple of mallards on it. It was

here that I noticed an Anna's Hummingbird going straight up as if on an elevator while looking straight down, as could be seen by his lowered bill. I gathered all the people and asked for silence. I think nearly all of us then saw the spectacular diving display and heard the loud "ting" he makes with his tail at the perigee of his dive. My reward is the tremendous vicarious thrill when the guests get to see and hear such an amazing miracle of nature! No wonder everybody feeds the little daredevils. As we doubled back to the parking area, we stopped to see a few small mixed groups of passerines (which are sometimes referred to as chicklets).

Next, Joan led us down a loop trail to the seashore. At the bluff we had sweeping views to the east from Warm Beach on the north to Hat Island, the Tulalip reservation, and the southwest shore of the island. There, we found a few seabirds that made viewing a bit challenging because they insisted on repeatedly diving out of sight. Another extremely interesting behavior we witnessed was the synchronized diving of the Surf Scoters, which I had never seen before. I estimated there were in the range of 150 scoters in two groups. The nearest raft of scoters, at least one hundred birds, were nearly in a line. When one dove, within seconds all the rest did too, except one straggler who stayed on the surface. We watched this ongoing foraging cycle repeat several times. We don't know what they were after, but it's very easy to suggest cooperative hunting just like packs of Harris Hawks.

Here's a list of most of the birds we saw: a couple of Mallard, approximately 150 Surf Scoter, 3 Bufflehead, 3 Barrow's Goldeneye, 2 Anna's Hummingbird, 14 Glaucous-winged Gull, a hybrid "Olympic" gull, 2 Double-crested Cormorant, a Red-tailed Hawk, a red-shafted Northern Flicker, 3 Steller's Jay, a crow, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a couple of Pacific Wren, a couple



Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
allaboutbirds.org

of Bewick's Wren, 10 American Robin, a couple of House Finch, 2 Dark-eyed Junco, a couple of Song Sparrow, and a Spotted Towhee. We also heard a Golden-crowned Kinglet, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, a couple of Brown Creeper, and a couple of Red-winged Blackbird. All were uploaded to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology via the eBird mobile application.

I will not plan any further weekend birdwalks until we can be reasonably certain that the danger of disease transmission has passed, and it is permissible. 🦋

I am drawing upon Adam Maxwell's excellent year-end wrap-up about the 2020 Legislative Session. Adam is Audubon Washington's Government Relations Director. I must abbreviate his excellent report for this edition of PAS PROFILE.

"After last year's passage of the **Clean Energy Transformation Act** we had high expectations for the legislature to pass aggressive transportation emissions reduction policies. Unfortunately, our top transportation emissions priority, **the Clean Fuel Standard**, once again stalled out in the Senate Transportation Committee.

"On the bright side, a number of important climate bills did make it to the governor's desk. These include: Sustainable Farms and Fields (**SB 5947**), a Zero Emissions Vehicles mandate (**SB 5811**), a bill that sets new, ambitious net-zero greenhouse gas emissions limits (**HB 2311**), and funding for **a project** that will lead to responsible, efficient siting of solar energy in the Columbia Basin.

"While some progress was made in the short legislative session, unless we take more far-reaching measures, birds and people will face increasingly dire threats. We must keep up the pressure to adopt more far-reaching policies, such as clean fuels and carbon pricing, which will have a clear and measurable impact on carbon reduction. We also must continue to advocate for more stable and robust funding for our state's conservation agencies.

"Passage of Key Audubon Priorities

"Sustainable Farms and Fields

"The legislature passed the Sustainable Farms and Fields bill (SB 5947), which helps farmers access funding to voluntarily adopt more efficient and effective emissions reduction and sequestration practices aimed at increasing the quantity of carbon stored in the land. It also has the potential to help some farmers become producers and suppliers of the clean fuels Washington needs to reach its emissions goals."

"Smart Solar Siting

"The 2021 supplemental budget includes a \$500K budget proviso to fund a least-conflict solar siting project at Washington State University's Energy Program. The project will focus on understanding and mapping

potential conflict areas in Washington's sunny Columbia Basin with the goal of helping clean energy developers identify the best places to develop utility scale solar projects. The proviso, spearheaded by Audubon, had support from American Farmland Trust, Renewable Northwest, and state and local elected officials from both sides of the aisle. As we develop a 100% clean energy grid, stakeholder-driven processes like this will play a key role in helping to responsibly and efficiently site the clean energy we need."



"Funding for the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

"The legislature has provided WDFW with \$27M in State General Fund appropriations in the supplemental operating budget. This will fund WDFW's core services through June of 2021 and allocates significant resources for new work. The ongoing dollars are close to fully funding WDFW's important work, which is a huge improvement, especially in a supplemental year. This improved funding was in no small part thanks to the nearly 2,500 emails sent by Audubon members over the course of the short 60-day legislative session.

"Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC) Priorities

"As an EPC member, Audubon Washington helped pass the greenhouse gas emissions bill (HB 2311). EPC also passed a ban on plastic bags (SB 5323) and a budget proviso that will explore how to implement the principle of "net ecological gain" in shoreline project development. Unfortunately, our top EPC priority, Clean Fuels, did not make it out of the State Senate."

"For a full run-down of all of the policies Audubon was supporting and monitoring in the 2020 legislative session, see our [legislative tracker](#)."

For a complete copy of Adam's report, send an email request to: agibbspr@gmail.com. ✉



On February 26, Pilchuck Audubon Society, Academia Latina, and the North Sound Birders' Meetup visited Ferguson Park and Blackman's Lake in Snohomish to celebrate the Great Backyard Birdcount with a picnic and birdwalk.

Attendance at these joint PAS/Academia Latina/Meetup birdwalks has been consistently strong with about 38 participants this day. In addition PAS Treasurer Judy Hall and me, we had Academia Latina leader Rosamaria Graziani, her co-leader Allizon, and Snohomish Rising trip leader Andy and his wife, Ingrid. We had at least two responses on Meetup, and Becky from Meetup joined us. We were joined by Conor Courtney, a journalism student at UW, writing a story for the *Mill Creek Beacon* about the Pilchuck Audubon chapter. We were delighted to welcome him to our birdwalk. He interviewed me and



American Wigeon | audubon.org

several of the birders. We relish the opportunity to get word of our perspective out in as many ways as possible. Many thanks to Mr. Courtney and the *Mill Creek Beacon*. He told me he will share the article with me and, when he does, I will share it with you.

At the outset I ran into a tiny bit of difficulty. I had been to Ferguson Park only once before, more than ten years ago with PAS's Tuesday birding group. I must have had a day off. I didn't remember anything about how to get there or where to park. In researching the trip, I scrutinized the Google Map and aerial photo. Noticing a closed gate, I gave written directions to park at the Blackman Lake boatlaunch. But people who were familiar with the park knew that there was parking on the other side of the closed gate. That's where most of them went. Plus, some people, rather than following my convoluted directions, logically put the address into their own navigator. That also led to the other parking lot "behind" the closed gate. Clearly, I missed the parking lot "behind" the gate and its entrance drive in my research. Sorry. We ended up arriving at two different locations as a result. I was nearly ten minutes late. Fortunately, the two groups met, and we were able to do a little birding.

The park sits on the rising south shore of the lake nestled up against urbanized Snohomish on three sides. The park is landscaped and grassy, with tall Douglas Fir. On the west side is a small Ultimate Frisbee course. We started at the top near a picnic shelter and playground. We did pretty well in finding birds in the park; when we walked the perimeter on the south and west, there were no birds whatsoever. The neighboring properties on that

side were mostly single story retail, commercial, and possibly very light industrial. Plenty of parking, paved alleys, and no birds. It didn't take long for guests to start mentioning, "Hey, let's go down to the lake, we saw some birds down there." I guess this was a tactical error on my part. I wanted to do a little bit of walking—after all, it's a birdwalk. But walking the perimeter proved fruitless in this case. The lake was a very busy place with at least one mildly surprising species. People remarked at the hybrid ducks. I theorized that they were probably Mallard x Muscovy ducks. They were very dark, but had clear traces of green heads among the drakes. I selected "Mallard (domestic-type)" in eBird for them. The mild surprise was a flock of twenty Ruddy Duck in non-breeding plumage found by Andy. Improvidently, they were on the far lakeshore, so I doubt too many of us saw them. The white cheek patch is distinctive, but that's about all I could say.

I seemed to have missed one Meetup participant. I found her eMail long after getting home. She couldn't find us initially. Thus, she made a comment online in the Meetup application that she was looking for us. That generated the eMail to me. In the process of continuous improvement then, I guess I could do a couple of things differently. I should mention that I really don't communicate with the Meetup application on the day of the trip or in the field. People should call me; I will have my phone with me for the eBird app. Second, when planning the next trip, I should put the address into the Google Map and see where it leads.

Here's a list of most of the birds we saw: 4 Canada Goose, 6 American Wigeon, about 110 Mallard, 6 cross-breed ducks, 2 Bufflehead, the 20 Ruddy Duck, a Pied-billed Grebe, about 50 American Coot, 22 Glaucous-winged Gull, 5 Double-crested Cormorant, a Great Blue Heron, a Bald Eagle, a male Downy Woodpecker, a Peregrine Falcon, a couple hundred crows, two Black-capped Chickadee, a couple of Chestnut-backed Chickadee, about 10 Bushtit, 4 spectacular Golden-crowned Kinglet, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Bewick's Wren, 4 European Starling, an American Robin, 7 Dark-eyed Junco flushed up by a toddler, and a Song Sparrow. We also heard a Northern Flicker, a Steller's Jay, and a Spotted Towhee. All were uploaded to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology via the eBird mobile application.



Ruddy Duck | all-aboutbirds.org

I will hold off planning additional Weekend Birdwalks until we can be reasonably certain that our groups will not be transmitting the disease. 🦆

BACKYARD BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

January 26, 2020 to February 25, 2020

by Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

Hope everyone is well and staying safe in this time of crisis in our country.

Reporting from their home at Lake Bosworth, Carole and Larry Beason listed 7 American Robin, a Bald Eagle over the yard, a Belted Kingfisher at the shore, 5 Bufflehead on the lake, 14 Canada Goose on the lake, 5 Chestnut-backed Chickadee at the feeders on the roses, 2 Common Raven in the trees, 5 Common Merganser on the lake, 12 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 Downy Woodpecker at the suet, a Fox Sparrow on the patio, 8 Golden-crowned Sparrow, a Great Blue Heron flying over the lake, 6 Pied-billed Grebe, 2 Pileated Woodpecker, 17 Purple Finch, 2 Red-breasted Sapsucker, 25 Red-winged Blackbird flying over, 9 Ring-necked Duck and 2 Wood Duck on the lake, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and 50+ Trumpeter Swan off Marsh Road, for a total species count of 38.

Hilkka Egtvedt's report from her home in Mukilteo listed a Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2 Anna's Hummingbird, 5 Band-tailed Pigeon, 2 Hairy Woodpecker, 5 Steller's Jay, 4 Northern Flicker, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, 5 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, a Bewick's Wren, 3 Spotted Towhee, a Fox Sparrow, 2 Golden-crowned Sparrow, 20 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 House Finch, and 20 Pine Siskin, for a total species count of 22.

Kriss Erickson's total species count of 22 included 14 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 Bewick's Wren, 6 Steller's Jay, 23 Bushtit, 12 Northwestern Crow, 4 Western Gull, a Pine Grosbeak, 21 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 3 Spotted Towhee, 3 House Finch, 4 Northern Flicker, 3 Song Sparrow, a Red-tailed Hawk, 3 Mallard Duck, 6 Pine Siskin, a Winter Wren, and 14 European Starling.

Reporting from Stanwood, Mary Sinker reported 11 American Robin, 5 Anna's Hummingbird, 2 Bald Eagle, 2 Barred Owl, 18 Black-capped Chickadee, a Brown Creeper, 11 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 80 Dark-eyed Junco, 5 Downy Woodpecker, a Great Blue Heron at the creek, 2 Killdeer in the pasture, 14 Mourning Dove, 4 Northern Flicker, 2 Pileated Woodpecker, a Red-breasted Sapsucker, a Red-tailed Hawk, 9 Red-winged Blackbird at the feeders, 9 Song Sparrow, 12 Steller's Jay, 2 Varied Thrush, and 7 Winter Wren, for a total species count of 29.

Walter Zandi's report from Monroe listed a Pileated Woodpecker, 3 Northern Flicker, 3 Spotted Towhee, 4 Steller's Jay, a Song Sparrow, a Fox Sparrow, 6 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, a Varied Thrush, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, a Turkey Vulture flying overhead, 2 Barred Owl heard overnight, 2 Hairy

Woodpecker, and 12 American Robin, for a total species count of 14.

My report from Marysville included 10 American Crow, 4 Black-capped Chickadee, 15 Dark-eyed Junco, 5 Glaucous-winged Gull, 50+ Mallard Duck in the flooded fields, 30+ Mourning Dove, 10 Ring-necked Duck in the fields, 4 Spotted Towhee, 25 Trumpeter Swan in the fields, 2 Kinglet species, 20+ Snow Goose in the fields, 4 Northern Flicker and a Red-tailed Hawk, for a total species count of 18.

If you would like to participate in our Backyard Birding count, please contact me at pricemara1@gmail.com or leave a message on my cellphone at 425-750-8125. ✉

Demo Garden

Susie Schaefer reports that, for May and beyond, there will be a program for the Demo Garden on Zoom. Look for it on the PAS website. ✉

TRIP CALENDAR

Check our website, www.pilchuckaudubon.org, for the latest information



No Birding Trips in April

Pilchuck Audubon Society Membership Information

Support your local Audubon chapter by becoming a member. PAS dues are tax deductible (consult your tax professional for details). The PAS tax ID number is 91-6183664.

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