

THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST
QUICK GUIDE TO THE
EXUMA CAYS
LAND & SEA PARK



A MODEL FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

As the first land and sea park in the world, the park has contributed significantly to the development of MPAs around the globe. The demonstrated success of this MPA model contributes to conserving resources throughout the world while simultaneously benefiting the Bahamian people by replenishing fish stocks and serving as a research tool for future protection of the marine environment. In 2018, The Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park won the Platinum Global Ocean Refuge Award, meaning it meets the highest science-based standards for biodiversity protection and best practices for management and enforcement.



HOW IT ALL BEGAN: THE DAWN OF BAHAMIAN NATIONAL PARKS

When Ilya Tolstoy, grandson of famed Russian author Leo Tolstoy, assembled a concerned group of forward-thinking Bahamian and North American conservationists in 1958, he did not set out to create The Bahamas National Trust. He was just a dedicated naturalist who realized that the Exuma chain of islands was under threat from developers who wanted to buy it. The expedition to save the Exuma Cays, that Tolstoy led, included key Bahamian officials Oris Russell and Herbert McKinney, Robert P. Allen of the National Audubon Society, as well as environmentalists Carleton Ray, Dan Beard, John Randall and Don Squires. The report from this expedition concluded that the area had “outstanding natural values.”

The survey team called for an organization modelled on the British National Trust to acquire lands and manage protected areas throughout The Bahamas. This organization – which was created by the historic 1959 legislation – was to act as the government’s advisor on conservation matters and seek to educate Bahamians on the value of their natural heritage.

Hence, on July 13, 1959 The Bahamas National Trust Act was signed, creating The Bahamas National Trust. The government adopted the team’s recommendations, and the 176-square-mile Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park – the first of its kind in the world – was officially established. The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) was formed as an independent statutory organization charged with conservation and preservation. The BNT’s governing council included government, civil society and scientific representatives.

Today, the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park is the most visited national park in The Bahamas. Its breathtaking beauty and safe anchorages make it a very popular boating spot in The Bahamas, welcoming thousands of boaters every year. Its healthy ecosystems and proper fisheries management make it an ideal spot for researchers and scientists to conduct various types of research. Whether you’re a boater, a scientist, a thalassophile, a filmmaker, a beach-goer, or just someone on vacation, the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park is one of the most superb places on the planet and a model for national parks everywhere.



ABOUT US

BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST



FOR THE PARKS. FOR THE COUNTRY. FOR THE FUTURE.

We are a non-profit, non-government, membership organization that relies on donations to continue conserving and protecting the Bahamian environment. We are the National Park System of The Bahamas.

OUR MISSION

The Bahamas National Trust is a science-based organization dedicated to effectively managing national parks to conserve and protect Bahamian natural resources.

OUR VISION

A comprehensive network of effectively managed Bahamian national parks and protected areas that is recognized as a powerful force for global biodiversity conservation, which is supported and enjoyed by the public.

OUR VALUES

PASSION & COURAGE

For the environment, for the conservation of our natural resources, and in the face of challenges

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Quality and best practices in protected areas management, in consistent and reliable service to our constituents, as a trusted adviser to government and the public on policies, and using sound science as the foundation for conservation management

NATIONAL PARKS

As places of recreation where people connect with nature

COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

As a key to long-term conservation success, as a key to supporting a public conservation ethic, and as an organization dedicated to developing our future conservation leaders

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Demonstrated through teamwork, partnerships, and community involvement in conservation decisions

INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, & ACCOUNTABILITY

By demonstrating and measuring success and employing best practices in governance

A PARK OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE

THE EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK

The park serves as an ecological refuge with relatively undisturbed ecosystems and an abundance and diversity of plant, coral, and other animal species. It is a critical habitat for certain species that breed, rest, shelter, or feed within the park. It is home to a number of animal species that are listed as threatened or endangered nationally and internationally. The ECLSP is also considered a fishery lifeline. Scientific research has shown that the park is acting as a fisheries replenishment area for fish, conch, and lobster throughout the Exumas and the surrounding Bahamian waters. It is important to protect critical habitats in order to support populations of these species. The relatively undisturbed marine system provides a study area for further research into the long-term management and restoration of marine ecosystems throughout the world.

SUPPORTING CONSERVATION IN THE ECLSP

While the park has seen changes over the last 50 years, its great beauty still attracts a broad spectrum of visitors - yachtsmen, divers, kayakers, and scientists. It draws thousands of visitors each year and its healthy reefs and intact ecology provide important ecosystem services, as well as thriving tourism activities. Fish populations have improved in waters outside the no-fishing replenishment zone and the park continues to provide important habitats for endangered animals like sea turtles, iguanas, and nesting seabird populations.

With more than 100,000 acres of beaches, mangroves, reefs, and ocean, the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park is an ambitious and ongoing undertaking. By all accounts, the park is a great success. Each year thousands of visitors snorkel healthy reefs and stroll along pristine beaches - helping to support thriving tourism-based businesses. However, these successes also present management challenges for the BNT. Your support is critical to ensure the ongoing protection of this important ecosystem, to keep the Exuma Cays beautiful and biodiverse for generations to come.



INTERESTING PLACES IN THE CAYS

ROCKY DUNDAS CAVES

"This is a must-do when visiting the ECLSP, and is way better (and safer) than Thunderball Cave. Only attempt in settled weather, as the cave entrance is exposed to the ocean and easterly breeze & swell. For those not willing to enter the caves, the snorkeling out front is fantastic with minimal current. Those wishing to venture inside the caves, there are 2 entrances to 2 separate caverns. High tide will require you swimming underwater approximately 10' to clear the low lying roof. At low tide, you can enter without going under. There is an area to get out and 'explore' the caves once inside. Be very careful not to touch the stalactites and stalagmites - they take thousands of years to form, and the oil on your skin will halt their growth." [1]

AIRPLANE WRECK & SEA AQUARIUM

"Great for the novice snorkeler. You will feel like you are in an aquarium: hundreds of small Sergeant Major fish will surround you as soon as you enter the water. A great place to observe all sorts of marine life. Be careful not to touch any of the reefs with your hands or your fins. Can be lots of current, but if you stay well within the cove (and close to the rock) you will avoid it. If unsure, visit only at slack tide. "The plane is submerged in about 15' of water, and is nose into the sand. Usually, a monster lobster lurks inside the cabin. This plane crash landed on a nearby private landing strip, and was floated to this spot to create an artificial reef." [1]

THE MOORING FIELDS

The ECLSP is a worldwide leader when it comes to protecting the seabed and offering an abundance of mooring options over such a vast area. As of early 2021, there are currently 8 active mooring fields spread throughout the park. Each mooring field is maintained regularly and they are all unique and special in their own way. From Cambridge Cay in the south, known for its superb protection in all wind directions and proximity to fantastic snorkeling; to Warderick Wells in the central area, famous for allowing cruisers to step directly from their boat onto a pristine sandbar; to Shroud Cay in the north, where visitors can spend days exploring miles and miles of creeks and mangroves. The ECLSP mooring fields allow you to safely secure your vessel within close proximity to a plethora of incredible attractions; and each field offers its own special "to-do" list for visiting guests.

WARDERICK WELLS/PARK OFFICE

The island is a popular spot for cruising sailboats and yachts to stop and spend the night in one of three anchorages. There are several nature trails on the island, including one to Boo Boo Hill that offers views of the island, anchorage and Exuma Sound. You can also hike and explore the loyalist ruins of the Davis Family plantation, located primarily on the south-eastern side of the island. Keep your eyes peeled for the Bahamian Hutia, an endemic endangered species that calls Warderick Wells home!

MOORING FIELDS NORTH TO SOUTH

- 📍 Shroud Cay
- 📍 Hawksbill (North)
- 📍 Hawksbill (South)
- 📍 Warderick Wells
- 📍 Emerald Rock
- 📍 Hog Cay
- 📍 O'Briens Cay
- 📍 Cambridge Cay

DANGER REEF

"2 moorings available. Approximately 25-30' deep. Some reef structure, but mostly known for its marine life. An abundance of Caribbean Reef Sharks- they will hear your boat engine and greet you at the mooring. Some current, so you should be mindful. Exposed to the ocean, so only dive/snorkel here in settled weather." [1]

SHROUD CAY MANGROVES

"Shroud Cay, the northernmost of the 'larger' cays in the park, is known to many because of its extensive creek and mangrove system. In reality, Shroud Cay is actually composed of many smaller rocks/cays. Together, these small rocks and cays form a mangrove & creek system that is absolutely stunning. Many are drawn to Shroud Cay to experience these mangroves for themselves, and exploring the creeks via small tender (at idle speed), paddleboard, or kayak is allowed and encouraged. I'd highly recommend taking a look at Shroud Cay via Google Earth prior to your arrival there so that you can gain a better appreciation and understanding of the island's composition and just what it has to offer.

"Spanning dozens of miles, these creeks can be explored by dinghy, kayak, paddleboard, etc. (however, jet-driven vessels are prohibited). The mangrove system on Shroud is vital to the environment, and is depended on by plants, animals, and humans alike. These mangrove areas are thriving with life, and one can expect to discover an abundance of sharks, rays, and turtles when cruising through the winding creeks. When visiting Shroud Cay care should be taken to NOT disturb the ecosystem at all costs. Please respect the park rules as they relate to idle speed in creek systems, not feeding any wildlife, and not leaving marked trails when hiking." [1]



[1] referenced from
The Exuma Park:
What & How
Revised Edition 2021 by
Brent Burrows II
Former Park Warden

Available [on Amazon](#)

EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK MARINE FEES & PRICING

ANNUAL PASSES

(VALID FOR ENSUING 12 MONTHS)

SCIENCE & RESEARCH VESSEL

\$12,550/year

Includes all landing fees, anchorages and moorings

LEISURE VESSEL

\$18,800/year

Includes unlimited anchorages, moorings, and beach set ups. Gives you priority to preferred moorings.

COMMERCIAL VESSEL

\$22,560/year

Includes unlimited anchorages, moorings, and beach set ups. Covers all daily per guest fees. Gives you priority to preferred moorings.

*Contact us for customized short-term passes.

EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK

MOORING RATES PER NIGHT

Up to 39.11'	\$30
40' - 49.11'	\$40
50' - 59.11'	\$50
60' - 69.11'	\$80
70' - 89.11'	\$120
90' - 119.11'	\$150
120' - 150'	\$190

+\$14 per guest per day

EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK

ANCHOR RATES PER NIGHT

Vessels < 90'	.50¢ per foot
Vessels > 90'	\$1 per foot

+\$14 per guest per day

BECOME A BNT

SUPPORT FLEET MEMBER!

Support Fleet Memberships include **two complimentary mooring nights** and priority mooring within the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park.

Up to 39.11'	\$60
40' - 49.11'	\$80
50' - 59.11'	\$100
60' - 69.11'	\$140
70' - 89.11'	\$200
90' - 119.11'	\$260
120' - 150'	\$320

Scan QR Code
for online payments



or visit us at:
bnt.bs/payexumapark

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The BNT seeks to maintain a balance between public access to national parks and the protection of natural ecosystems. It is the BNT's policy to allow commercial filming and photography consistent with protection and public enjoyment of park resources.

The BNT supports research projects and educational activities. Environmental films contribute to public understanding of the natural world, but a primary consideration is the potential for resource damage and disruption of normal public use and aesthetic values in our national parks.

Commercial, non-profit, documentary, promotional, or educational project organizers must obtain a permit from the BNT to film or take still photographs (using models, sets, or props) within national parks. Permits are not required when visitors are engaged in filming/photography intended for their personal use and enjoyment. The use of aircraft and helicopters is restricted and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

To find out more please check our website or email: supporttheparks@bnt.bs

RESEARCH FEES

Supporting research projects and other activities (e.g. environmental documentaries) is a key element to understanding ecosystems, evaluating management effectiveness, and disseminating information. Researchers are required to obtain a research permit from The Bahamas National Trust to conduct research within national parks.

FRIENDS OF THE PARK

Special Friends of the Park are supporters who donate \$1K or more to the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park, and as a result they will be recognized on our wall of Special Friends proudly displayed in the park.

This group of major supporters receives special recognition and benefits at the Visitor's Center of the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park. We invite you to become a Special Friend of the Park.

Please inquire at the Visitor's Center or email us at: supporttheparks@bnt.bs



EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK

OTHER PARK FEES

DIVING & SEA AQUARIUM FEES

\$14 per person, per day

BEACH SET-UP FEES

\$1,250 per set-up, per day

KAYAKING & CAMPING PERMIT

\$320, valid for 10 days

KAYAKING & CAMPING FEE

\$30 per person, per day



EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK RULES AND REGULATIONS

BNT PARK RULES

Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park is a **NO TAKE ZONE**: no fishing, conching, shelling, or lobstering – nothing living or dead may be removed from within the boundaries of the Exuma park. There are fines and confiscation of vessels for poaching violations.

Follow these two simple rules and you will have a safe and enjoyable visit to the Exuma park:

ON THE
CAYS

Take Only Photos
Leave Only Footprints

Take Only Photos
Leave Only Bubbles

IN THE
SEA

EXUMA PARK REGULATIONS:

- Trash disposal is not available within the Exuma park – please take out everything you bring into the Exuma park.
- Please pick up trash you may see on the trails or beaches and ask Park HQ for disposal instructions.
- Anchoring is not permitted in the mooring fields, on coral reefs, and certain other designated areas within the Exuma park.
- Please stay on marked trails – use the Exuma Park Trail Guidelines.
- All vessels (including dinghies & jet skis) must operate at idle speed in any mooring field or anchorage.
- Jet skis are required to stay at least 300 yards off any moored or anchored vessel.
- The north tidal creek on Shroud Cay is a strict Idle Speed/No Wake Zone.
- Motorized vessels are prohibited from entering any of the other tidal creeks in Shroud Cay.
- Pets are restricted to beaches only – no pets permitted on trails or in the brush. (See Pet Policy below.)
- Camping requires a permit. (See Camping Policy below.)
- Open fires and fireworks are not permitted in the Exuma park.



BNT PARK RULES

- BNT parks are managed to preserve and maintain a delicate ecological balance between native species. Non-native plants and animals often upset that balance. Domestic dogs and cats are natural predators that may harass or even kill native wildlife which is protected within the park's boundaries. Many of our parks include trails, and since pets are sometimes hard to control, even on a leash, they may trample or dig up fragile vegetation. Pets retain a primitive instinct to mark their territories with scent and can spread diseases to other wildlife.
- This policy is designed to protect the natural environments of the native species, while recognizing that many visitors to the park are traveling and have pets with them. These guidelines are designed for their pet's protection as well. When a loose pet chases an animal, the wild animal's ability to survive is threatened, and it may react aggressively or leave the area altogether. There are also many deep sinkholes on the cays which pose a danger to unleashed pets.
- Over the years pets have resulted in the destruction of bird nesting sites, loss of rare or endangered species (Rock Iguanas and Hutia), and the disturbance of native vegetation. Scientific studies have indicated that control of domestic animals should be increased throughout the park-owned properties.
- Pets must be leashed or physically restrained from harassing or harming wildlife and vegetation at all times.
- Pet leashes may be no longer than six (6) feet in length.
- Pets may not be left unattended on park property.
- Pets may not be tied to trees, bushes, tables, or shelter facilities even when the owners are present.
- Pets are permitted on the beaches of most cays; however, they are NOT permitted on trails, in the backcountry, or cays designated as prohibited for pets. Non-fur bearing pets, such as reptiles, birds, or fish, must be confined under the physical control of the owner.
- Captive wild species, whether native or non-native, and barnyard animals are prohibited from park property.
- Areas of the park designated as prohibited for pets shall be determined based on park natural and cultural resources.
- Failure to abide by these rules may result in the visitor being asked to confine the pet to their vessel, remove the pet from the park, or to leave the cay/park.
- Exuma Park understands that some dogs need a lot of exercise – please ask the Park Office about visiting the sandbar at low tide if you need to exercise your dog.

CAMPING AND KAYAKING POLICY

To camp and kayak in the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park you must:

- Acquire a camping permit (\$250, valid for a maximum of 10 days).
- Pay the prescribed daily user fee. This is collected daily by the Warden or can also be paid at Warderick Wells Cay, the location of the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park (ECLSP) Headquarters. The daily user fee for Kayaking & Camping is \$25.00 per person per day.
- Obey all Park Rules and Regulations (By-laws) and ensure that all persons in your camping party obey all rules and regulations. Copies of the By-laws are available at The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) and ECLSP Headquarters upon request. Notify the ECLSP Headquarters at least two weeks in advance of the planned camping date to ensure there are no conflicts with other park users. Notification should be by telephone, fax, or e-mail. The ECLSP Headquarters can be reached by telephone or e-mail.
- Keep the number of persons camping to within the number outlined in the arrangement made when notifying the park headquarters.
- Remove from the park all debris/trash resulting from camping activities. You should also ensure that no camping equipment or gear is left behind. The Park should be left in the pristine condition that it was in before your arrival.
- Use portable stoves for cooking purposes only. Any other means of producing fire is prohibited. Open wood burning fires are prohibited. Collection of wood, debris, or other materials to use for fires of any type or magnitude are also strictly prohibited.
- Be sensitive to the nocturnal fauna that inhabit the islands and make every effort not to disturb them. This includes, but is not limited to, minimizing the use of lighting.
- Ensure that all camping equipment is in good working condition before entering the park. Tents must be freestanding systems only and should be erected according to the manufacturer's recommendations. If kayaking, a handheld VHF radio is highly recommended for safety.
- Ensure that there are no environmental impacts and minimize any negative visual impacts. In keeping with this requirement, the total usable camping area should be no greater than two times the size of the tent footprint. (This total area includes the footprint of the tent.) Tents should be low profile, for minimal visual impacts, with a sleeping capacity/tent rating of no more than two persons per tent. Battery operated portable tape and CD players can be used at a level that will not be disturbing to or heard by wildlife/marine-life or users of the park.
- Ensure that you are prepared for any minor changes in weather/climatic conditions. There are no assigned campgrounds, bathroom facilities, refuse or refuge areas. Drinking water is available at the park headquarters.
- Ensure that tents are erected on the beaches only.

*Camping is only allowed at Hawksbill Cay, Warderick Wells, and O'Briens Cay.



BY-LAWS OF EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK (1986)

1. These rules may be cited as the rules of the Land and Sea Parks of The Bahamas National Trust and are made under Section 24 of The Bahamas National Trust Act.
2. The By-laws operate in conjunction with all other laws of The Bahamas.
3. The Land and Sea Parks have been designated marine replenishment areas and nurseries for The Bahamas; therefore, the hunting, trapping, netting, capture, or removal of any fish, turtle, crawfish, conch, whelk, or any marine and/or fisheries resource in or from the park is prohibited.
4. The destruction, injury, or removal of any living or dead plant life, beach sand, coral, sea fan, or gorgonians from the park is prohibited.
5. The molestation, injury, or destruction of any land animal or bird life or the egg of any animal or bird is prohibited, as is the use of nets or snares for the taking or destruction of any animal or bird life in the parks.
6. Permission may be granted in individual instances for the capture or removal of a designated number of land or sea animals or plants required for valid scientific research. In each instance, the scientific institution concerned must obtain a permit from The Bahamas National Trust prior to capture or removal of the specimens.
7. Dumping of any wastes, oil, or rubbish either on land or in the sea is prohibited.
8. No person shall injure, deface, or remove any building, structure, sign, ruins, or other artifacts within the parks.
9. The posting of any sign, placard, advertisement, or notice within the parks is prohibited, as is the erection of any building, shed, tent, or other structure.
10. No person shall display, use, fire, or discharge any explosives, firearm, or harpoon gun within the parks.
11. With reference to privately owned property, these By-laws do not affect the existing rights of any person acting legally by virtue of any estate right or interest in over or affecting the land of the parks.
12. Willful obstruction, disturbance, or annoyance of anyone in the proper use of the lands and submarine areas or of any officer of The Bahamas National Trust in the exercise of his or her duties is prohibited.
13. Any person charged with an offense against any of these By-laws shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding \$500 and to the confiscation of any boat, vessel, or aircraft and of all equipment, stores, provisions, or other effects used for the purpose of committing the offense.

The BNT works closely with its partners of The Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) at ECLSP assisting with enforcement patrols and surveillance. RBDF Marines are stationed at Warderick Wells all year round.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PARK DETAILS

The Exuma Park's office is located on a remote location on a small island, so contacting the park office can sometimes be challenging!

VHF: Call "Exuma Park" on Channel # 09.

Channel #16 is monitored 24 hours a day for emergencies.

Coordinates of Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park Boundaries In Degrees:

NW corner: Lat 24° 30' 37" N Long 76° 52' 37" W

NE corner: Lat 24° 35' 30" N Long 76° 45' 50" W

SW corner: Lat 24° 14' 25" N Long 76° 36' 02" W

SE corner: Lat 24° 18' 37" N Long 76° 28' 47" W

HOW TO REPORT POACHING

Park Warden

Park Wardens request all visitors to report any poaching or other unusual activity they may observe – no fishing, shelling, or conching of any kind is permitted within Exuma park boundaries.

Call "Exuma Park" on Channel # 09 to report suspicious activity.

You can remain anonymous if desired – simply identify your vessel as "Miss Molly" or any other fictitious name to remain anonymous.

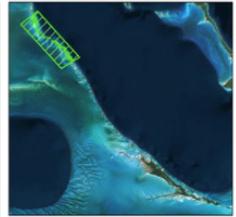
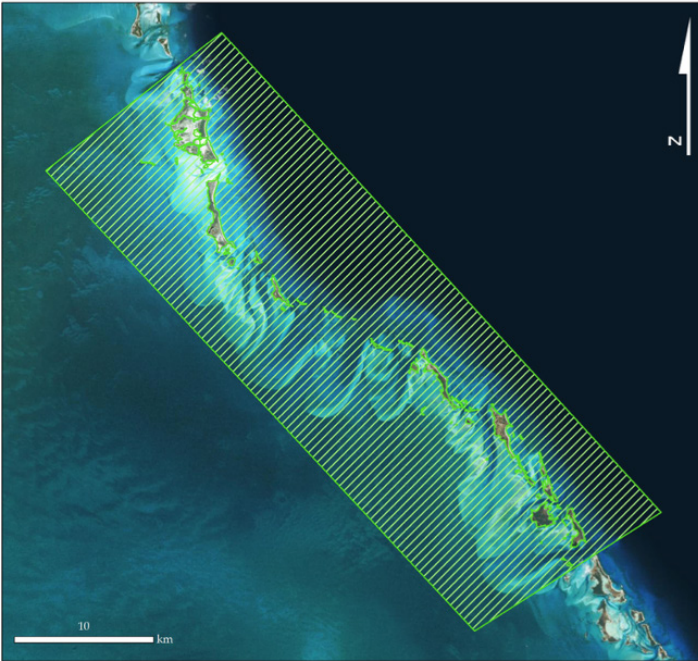
Bahamas Defence Force

The Bahamas Defence Force has stationed three officers at Park Headquarters to assist Park Staff with enforcement matters. Defence Force vessels frequently overnight at Park Headquarters as well. Contact Defence Force on VHF #16





EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK (ECLSP)



Established: 1958
Size: 174,194 Acres (70,494 Hectares)
Island: Exuma Cays
Protects: Marine and terrestrial habitats,
fisheries, and bird nesting areas

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, EPI, contributors, and the GIS User Community



Get in Touch

supporttheparks@bnt.bs



[@bahamasnationaltrust](https://www.instagram.com/bahamasnationaltrust)

[#exploreyourpark](https://twitter.com/exploreyourpark)



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