

## RECENT LITERATURE

Todd's 'Birds of Western Pennsylvania.'—This sumptuous volume<sup>1</sup> represents the fruition of a half a century of field observation on the author's part as well as a thorough acquaintance with other available sources of information concerning the bird life of the western mountainous half of Pennsylvania, an area which fifty years ago was regarded as "a virtual terra incognita, ornithologically speaking, whereas it is now better known than any area of similar size in the eastern United States." In addition to his long familiarity with the birds of this region, the author brings to his task a wide acquaintance with the birds of other portions of eastern North America and elsewhere, so that in the light of this broad knowledge, he is able to speak with unusual breadth of view and long perspective.

The chief purpose of the book is to extend our knowledge of the detailed distribution of birds in eastern North America and to provide descriptive accounts of the birds of western Pennsylvania in the hope of stimulating a general interest in local ornithology. The treatment is thus admittedly from the 'popular' viewpoint. The introductory chapters provide brief descriptions of the topography and climate, the general aspects of the present bird life, and especially a valuable discussion of the distribution of breeding species and their relation to those factors. The author concludes that the old and long-accepted life-zone concept as formulated by Merriam and J. A. Allen is inadequate to express the facts of distribution. Rather there are represented two main contrasting categories of birds: those of chiefly austral distribution and those of more boreal affinities; while in their actual and potential distribution, each species is a law unto itself and each is controlled in its northward or southward range by its special requirements, so that it is not possible to define life zones by means of groups of birds bound together by common needs of climate or other circumstances. With this conclusion, the reviewer is quite in agreement, and long ago expressed the same idea in regard to the distribution of mammals in New England. Of special value is the historical account of the region and its bird life for even fifty years ago there were still areas in western Pennsylvania that were under primeval evergreen forest and supported a number of more northern species of plants and animals; but with the intensive lumbering operations already then under way, these have now been largely destroyed, while disastrous forest fires have added to the ruin, with the result that there has been a retreat of the more northern types and an advance of the more southern, with many and wide changes in habitats and consequently in distribution.

The body of the book takes up each species known from the area, giving its field characters, range, migration, and habits, written especially from the point of view of western Pennsylvania, while for the rarer species, the detailed records and references are given. The paragraphs on habits are well written and afford interesting accounts of the characteristic activities of the various species, without pretending to be detailed life histories. Those on migration bring together a multitude of scattered notes gathered from many sources while the notes on distribution and changes in populations are timely and particularly interesting. One might have wished, however, for more definite details in many cases, where estimates of numbers or counts of individuals would provide a firmer basis for

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<sup>1</sup> Todd, W. E. Clyde. *Birds of Western Pennsylvania* / 410, xv + 710 pp., 23 pls., map, 1940; University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. \$5.00

future comparisons than such vague terms as "rare" or "not uncommon." For all that, the book provides a vast amount of interesting detail and gives a picture of the changes and present condition of bird life in the area covered that is of unusual value. The book, though of a larger size than convenient for a manual, is well gotten up, the double columns of print make reading of a wide page easier, the dull paper and the style of type are well chosen. There is a gazetteer of names and a carefully prepared bibliography as well as an index to bird names. In addition to an excellent topographic map of western Pennsylvania and a plate in black and white showing the appearance of certain raptorial birds, the work is embellished with twenty-two colored plates illustrating 118 species from drawings by Dr. George Miksch Sutton. Many of these, notably those of owls, are extremely good. The method of reproduction by aquatone gives a soft artistic effect, but often the figures, as a result, lose in sharpness, while others with considerable reduction lose most of their diagnostic value, as in the case of the small flycatchers and vireos in which the true values of the greens and shades of olive are quite lost. It would have been better in such cases to have had a few figures of natural size rather than many of miniature proportions, especially where the better-known species are familiar from other figures. All in all, the volume is an outstanding addition to the various State bird books now available.—G. M. ALLEN.

**Gabrielson and Jewett's 'Birds of Oregon'** at last provides that State with an adequate summary of its varied bird life to fill in the gap between the State ornithologies of Washington and California. It forms the second of the Oregon State Monographs sponsored by the Oregon State College for the purpose of arousing a wider interest in the study and preservation of the wildlife of the region. In this, no better choice of authors could have been made, for both have spent many years in private and official capacities investigating the birds of Oregon and have had the advantage of access to the vast amount of information gathered by the U. S. Biological Survey, the State Game Commission and many other sources. The book<sup>1</sup> has been written entirely by the senior author, but a large part of the task of checking records and literature has been assumed, they tell us, by the junior author.

The opening pages provide a check-list of the birds of Oregon, with page references to the formal accounts in the body of the book, followed by a chapter intended for the general reader, on the varied activities of birds. The chapter on topography and life zones is especially interesting, for no less than five life zones are represented, from the Upper Sonoran of the lower parts of the State, to the Arctic-Alpine, on some of the higher mountain-tops. Three species of birds, the Hepburn's and Gray-crowned Rosy Finches and the American Pipit, characterize the Arctic-Alpine islands, but the supposed presence of the White-tailed Ptarmigan within the State is shown to be with little doubt erroneous. The Coast Range and the Cascade Range cut the State into sections running north and south, at the same time controlling climatic features, from the heavy rainfall of the coast to the arid regions of the eastern part of the State.

An interesting chapter is that reviewing the history of Oregon ornithology from the arrival of Lewis and Clark in 1805 down to the present time. The number of important works on this subject, however, is regarded by the authors as few. The fragmentary notes of earlier explorers and travellers do not indicate, as

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<sup>1</sup> Gabrielson, Ira N., and Jewett, Stanley G. *Birds of Oregon*. 8vo, xxx + 650 pp., 1 col. and 97 half-tone pls., 20 text-figs., map, 1940; Oregon State College, Corvallis, Oregon. \$4.25.

often supposed, that gamebirds were abundant in those days. Indeed, Townsend relates, that in September 1834, when he and Thomas Nuttall crossed the Blue Mountains, he was once forced to make a meal of rosebuds and on one occasion, upon returning to camp, was dismayed to find Nuttall and Captain Thing picking the last bones of an owl which he had shot that morning, intending to preserve it as a specimen! From Oregon, thirty-five species or races have been described as new and are separately listed with their type localities.

The body of the book consists of the 'Annotated List' in which are given for each bird a brief description, and a statement of its general distribution and occurrence in Oregon, followed by a short account of its history, haunts, food and more obvious habits. One might have wished that this last item could have been amplified. An hypothetical list of thirty-three species, a full and well-prepared bibliography and an index of English names, conclude the volume. The many excellent illustrations are from photographs of Oregon birds, mostly by the Finleys, Bohlman, Alex Walker and some others, with a colored frontispiece by Murie, that sets the tone of the book. Very wisely the publishers have made the volume of regular octavo size, rather than of extra height, but it was a pity that they found it necessary to use the heavy, shiny paper for the sake of the half-tones. As a good summary of the bird life of Oregon this volume should prove of great value in stimulating an interest in the birds of the State as well as providing much information.—G. M. ALLEN.

Peters's 'Check-list of Birds of the World,' Vol. 4, now issued, is uniform with the previous three volumes and extends the review of the genera and species of Recent birds to include the orders Cuculiformes (plantain-eaters and cuckoos), Strigiformes (owls), Caprimulgiformes (oilbirds and goatsuckers), and Apodiformes (swifts). As before, are included the original references to all generic, specific and subspecific names, with for the first a statement of the genotype, the method of its determination, and synonyms; furthermore, references to important papers on each group are given, while for every species and subspecies there is a careful statement of the range as at present determined. The treatment of the orders is brought down to the close of 1938, with a few later additions.

Since these volumes form the only comprehensive survey of the birds of the world since Sharpe's 'Hand-list' of some forty odd years ago, the comparison of figures as given by the author in his preface is interesting. For with the completion of the Strigiformes in the present volume, all the groups covered by Sharpe's first volume (1899) have now been reviewed. In that volume are listed 830 genera and 3626 species, while in the corresponding groups as listed by Peters, are 569 genera and 5106 'forms,' a decrease of 261 in the number of genera but an increase of 1480 in species and subspecies. The large increase of nearly a third in the number of these latter is the result of active exploration and discriminative study during the intervening years; but the decrease in number of genera reflects especially the critical and comprehensive study by Mr. Peters of the characters used as the basis of genera. In this he has shown admirable conservatism and frequently unites under a single genus closely related species which at various times have been given separate generic rank. He thus emphasizes the idea at the root of the Linnaean binomial system, that the generic name implies similarity and a relatively close relationship of the included members, whereas the specific name implies a dissimilarity in minor characters among related species. The tendency to extreme generic division, as the late Dr. Witmer Stone long ago pointed out,

might eventually lead to giving generic rank to every specific type, the logical outcome of which would be a monomial nomenclature. For after all the genus is a more or less arbitrary division, depending on how much or how little one cuts off from a continuous line of evolution.

Thus the present work<sup>1</sup> is far more than a mere compilation, for Mr. Peters provides in these volumes a new estimate of the major groups and their subdivisions which is in effect a revision of the genera of birds and in many cases of their component forms, as well as a reconsideration of the appropriate names as determined by the International Rules of Nomenclature formulated since Sharpe's time, and frequently leading to results different from his. It thus becomes an invaluable tool as well as an indispensable work of reference for the systematic ornithologist, a work to be kept constantly at hand on his desk. For the benefit of those less familiar with current nomenclature, the addition of at least some of the familiar English names of birds would have been helpful in locating their modern Latin ones; while from the reviewer's point of view the abundant footnotes might better have been inserted in their proper connection in the body of the text, not only to obviate the difficulty of locating the small reference figures, but also as a saving in expense in making up the pages. The method of arrangement of the subspecies under their specific groups is not at first apparent but seems to be geographic from north to south instead of alphabetical, a method which may have certain advantages but makes more difficult the finding of any particular one in glancing over a series. A thorough index completes the volume. Four new subspecific names are given as substitutes for others found to be preoccupied.

The obvious care with which the work has been done, the meticulous checking of references and original spellings, the compilation of ranges, and the well-balanced and thorough review of the various groups make this an unusually accurate and trustworthy guide and summary.—G. M. ALLEN.

**Howard on 'A Waterhen's Worlds.'**—In this fine essay<sup>2</sup> of eighty pages, the author presents a summary of his minute observations on the behavior of the British Waterhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) during the breeding cycle, particularly with a view to analyzing the sequence of events and their relation to the bird's internal processes and to its perception of external objects, that is, primarily, its mate, other individuals of its kind, and the surroundings in which it lives. It is thus a study of behavior and an attempt to correlate actions with feelings evoked by these internal and external factors, both of which are variable and undergo progressive change. In this he studiously avoids the use of such stereotyped terms as stimulus, action and reaction, conditioned reflex and other conventions of psychologists lest they imply too little or too much, but seeks to picture the "worlds" of perception and action in which the bird lives. These "worlds," so far as concerns the breeding cycle he conceives as four: the "territory world" which comes first and in which the male bird seeks to maintain mastery over an area for the private use of the pair; then the "sexual world" which concerns the development of the gonads and is correlated with the gradual upward surge of feeling, at length culminating in coition and nesting; the "platform world" in which the center is the spot or spots selected by the birds as appropriate for the

<sup>1</sup> Peters, James Lee. Check-list / of the Birds of the World / Volume IV / 8vo, xii + 291 pp., 1940; Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. \$4.00.

<sup>2</sup> Howard, Eliot. A / Waterhen's / Worlds / large 8vo, ix + 84 pp., 2 pls., 1940; Cambridge at the University Press. The Macmillan Company, New York. Price 10s., 6d.

various ceremonies which both perform together or individually, leading eventually to nest building; and finally the "family world," wherein all this behavior is abandoned and with the laying of the eggs, brooding and feeding activities are initiated. All these separate "worlds" form a connected whole that gradually unfolds. The author is led to the conclusion that the birds have "feelings" which are expressed in actions and are correlated with internal changes that proceed from moment to moment, as in the gonads, in the pituitary, and through the development of hormones, and so on. The discussion of these points is suggestive and restrained, and helps to give a picture not only of the visible activities and their results, but also of what goes on within the organism itself. Although we assume that birds have no power of abstraction in the human sense, there is nevertheless evidence of "perception . . . involving reference, memory, and expectation" but in which "the past is perceived as present, and lived in as present, and is the basis of expectation and seeking."

The book is apparently designed for the general reader as a study in bird psychology, but the descriptive account is perhaps too much beclouded with argumentation to be perfectly clear. It is beautifully printed, and with its wide-margined pages, and the excellent figures of its two plates, presents a tempting appearance and forms another distinguished contribution by the author to this subject.—G. M. ALLEN.

**Berry on Wild Geese and Wild Duck in Scotland.**—This report<sup>1</sup> forms the second volume of the International Wildfowl Inquiry, and is an investigation of the status and distribution of wild geese and ducks in Scotland. The need for this was "primarily suggested by the very unsatisfactory condition which prevailed in the United States" of recent years. For it appears that a similar situation may very soon be expected in Europe "and indeed, throughout the earth," unless steps are taken before it is too late to counteract in some measure the many adverse factors now affecting populations of these much-sought gamebirds. Potent new factors are the effectiveness of modern arms, and the increased use of automobiles, power boats and other means of quick transportation, resulting in far greater destruction and disturbance of the birds than in former times. Many other unfavorable conditions result from constant changes wrought by man.

Commencing on the west coast of Scotland and proceeding north and east, brief statements are given concerning each of the twelve Scottish physiographic or 'faunal' areas, and the kinds of waterfowl occurring. Following this introductory, the various species are taken up in turn and a general review of the past and present status and changes in abundance or habits, is given, with a summary statement for each. Thus it appears that the Graylag Goose is now in danger of extirpation as a breeding bird in Scotland. On the other hand the Pink-footed Goose has shown a remarkable increase in the number of visiting birds in recent years, probably as a result of increase on the Greenland breeding grounds; indeed, the species has lately become a breeding bird in Iceland. The Canada Goose was introduced in Scotland over a century ago, and owing to its wariness still maintains itself in small numbers, and at the same time has largely lost its migratory habits. There is much interesting information concerning the reciprocal effects of various new factors. Thus in some cases the destruction of rabbits as pests

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<sup>1</sup> Berry, John, Ph.D., F.R.S.E. International Wildfowl Inquiry / Volume II / The Status and Distribution / of / Wild Geese and Wild Duck / in Scotland / 8vo, xiii + 190 pp., 4 pls., map, 1939; Cambridge University Press, The Macmillan Co., New York City. \$3.25.

affects the number of Shelducks that depend in part on rabbit burrows for nesting sites; drainage of swamp areas renders them unsuitable for breeding ducks; the protection of newly planted forests by surrounding them with rabbit-proof fencing of wire netting may result in the death of ducklings hatched inside the area that are unable to get through to water. The increase of Black-backed Gulls in recent years has reduced the numbers of young ducks and geese which these birds persistently harry. In one case a large island where predators were formerly kept in check, became infested with Hooded Crows when this protection stopped, with the result that most of the eggs or young of breeding ducks were destroyed by them. Pike, on inland waters, take great toll of young ducklings as well as of salmon in young stages, but in turn are kept partly in check by mergansers, which often have a beneficial effect in preventing too great an increase of these predatory fish. The many human factors involved are also discussed. One general conclusion is clear, that overshooting and disturbance of nesting birds have great effect in lessening the numbers of these gamebirds.

The report is valuable in its detailed observations, and in affording a preliminary survey of the situation in Scotland. By calling attention to the importance of immediate steps for the safeguarding of both resident and transient species, it points the way to further surveys in other areas and brings forcibly to view the duty of the present generation if there is to be a supply of geese and ducks in the future. Although the author tells of many counts of flocks made, practically no figures are given, but instead general terms are used to indicate degree of abundance, lest such figures might "prove detrimental to the best interests of wildfowl conservation"; nevertheless they would have given a better basis for future comparisons, even though admittedly only approximate. The value of this report in presenting the needs of the present situation and sounding a note of warning ere it is too late to put remedial measures in effect, cannot be overestimated. The encouraging thing is that these needs are now recognized.—G. M. ALLEN.

Clarke's 'Great Wings and Small.'—Birds play an increasingly large part in the literature of the present day and it is an encouraging sign of our times that a busy public finds ornithological observation and study a welcome recreation. For this reason the present gathering<sup>1</sup> of twenty-nine selections from as many modern authors will doubtless have a wide appeal to the general reader as well as to bird-lovers in particular. Miss Clarke has in previous volumes offered compilations of cat, dog, and horse stories, and now without the usual apologies, presents a selection of essays on wild birds from popular writers of our day. These are arranged alphabetically by authors, beginning with Jacob Bates Abbott on 'Vanishing Americans,' and closing with Mabel Osgood Wright's 'Feathered Philosophers.' The series includes articles by such popular writers as William Beebe, John Burroughs, W. H. Hudson, Cherry Kearton, John Muir, T. Gilbert Pearson, E. A. Preble and E. T. Seton, together with a number of essays by less well-known persons. The subjects cover such diverse matters as bird protection in America, the observation of tropical pheasants and birds of paradise, habits of terns and penguins, an appeal for the Bald Eagle and a timely protest against the destruction of the Florida Everglades. There is even a tale by Mark Twain, 'Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn,' that perhaps is remembered by few. While some of the selections are of a more serious nature, and others are admittedly humor, the general appeal is the 'an-

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<sup>1</sup> Clarke, Frances E. (compiler). *Great wings / and small / Bird stories of our day /* 8vo, xii + 332 pp., June 1940; The Macmillan Company, New York. \$2.50.

thropomorphic' one. Apart from the better-known authors, whose essays are taken from their published books, a number of the articles are reprinted from current magazines which are less available, so that it is a distinct advantage to have them in more permanent form. All these are properly credited, but it would have been helpful if full bibliographic citations of each had been given. There is no preface nor are there illustrations or even an index. Since the work is purely a compilation, any errors are to be laid at the door of the separate authors. It is unfortunate therefore that on the very first page, the death of the last Passenger Pigeon in the article by Abbott, is said to have been "in the early 1920's" instead of in 1914. On the whole, however, there is little to criticize. The collection presents an interesting lot of essays of an obviously 'popular' nature and at the same time indicates what sort of writing has a general appeal; while in once more bringing before the ornithological reader various forgotten or overlooked passages, it performs a distinct service and provides good reading.—G. M. ALLEN.

**Knopfli's Birds of Switzerland, Part 17.**—The seventeenth part of this treatise<sup>1</sup> on the birds of Switzerland now appears under the authorship of Dr. Walter Knopfli, and covers the ducks, geese, and swans (Anseriformes) and the pelican and cormorants (Pelecaniformes) found in that republic. The work was actually undertaken many years ago, by Fatio and Studer as an elaboration of their Catalogue of Swiss Birds of 1892; the present author has carried on the last two parts, and if circumstances permit, will complete it with the issue of one more part to cover the gulls, terns and divers. For each of the species synonyms are given with often a discussion of common names, ancient and popular, followed by a well-written account of the habits, occurrence and migration, and particularly the breeding and distribution in Switzerland. It thus forms a general summary of the local bird-life in the groups covered, while the numerical statistics given for many of the ducks will afford useful material for future comparisons.

It is interesting to note the number of instances in which ducks that have obviously been introduced and doubtless have escaped from ornamental collections of waterfowl, have become feral and seem now more or less established. Thus the American Wood Duck is now a nesting species in Switzerland, though in small numbers, while the Mandarin Duck and the Muscovy Duck frequently have been taken in a feral state.

With the work now so near completion, we may hope that the present difficult conditions will not too long delay the appearance of Part 18, for the local value and usefulness of this treatise for ornithologists and game administrators is obvious.—G. M. ALLEN.

**Delapchier's 'Petit Atlas des Oiseaux.'**—This attractive little volume<sup>2</sup> is the first of a projected series of four brochures, designed to awaken a greater popular interest in birds and at the same time to serve in a measure as a pocket-guide to the species commonly met with in France and the immediate region of central Europe. In a brief foreword M. Berlioz commends the work to students of biology as well as to those having a general interest in birds, for there are few such guides available in France in comparison to those published in other European countries such as England and Germany.

In his introductory pages the author follows the older classification, dividing the

<sup>1</sup> Knopfli, Walter. *Les Oiseaux de la Suisse* . . . XVIIe livraison: Anatidae, Pelecanidae, Phalacrocoracidae. 8vo, pp. i-x, 3607-3874, 1939; Berne and Geneva. Georg & Cie.

<sup>2</sup> Delapchier, L. *Petit Atlas des Oiseaux*. I. Passereaux. Small 8vo, 40 pp., 16 colored plates and cover-plate, 1940; N. Boubée & Co., 3 Place Saint-André-des-Arts, Paris (6e), France.

class Aves into three subclasses, Carinatae, Ratitae, and Impennes, and listing under the first of these twenty-two orders, with brief characterization. It is therefore unfortunate that in a work designed for popular use, he does not follow the more generally accepted groupings but makes separate orders of the gulls, and of the auks and their relatives, while combining the grebes and the loons into one. Moreover, there is lack of uniformity in using the current ordinal termination '-iformes' for some, while retaining such terms as Steganopodes for the Pelicaniformes and Pygopodes for the loons and grebes.

The rest of the introduction is devoted to a part of the Passeriformes, with a short account of their distinguishing characters and those of some twenty-eight of the important families, each of which is illustrated by all or part of the figures on a colored plate. Finally there is a list of the species commonly to be met with in France, Belgium, and Switzerland, with a few lines to each, giving the French and Latin name, a reference to the colored figures at the back of the book, a few words of description, the typical habitat and status. The seventeen colored plates (including the cover design) are by the author and depict nearly 120 species of European birds with a selection of exotic species to illustrate types of passerine birds not found in France, such as the birds-of-paradise, the tanagers or the weaverbirds. A few North American species such as the American Robin and the Cardinal are included. These are excellent, if more or less conventional, and are beautifully reproduced. As an attractive general and local introduction this series when complete, should have a popular appeal, while one cannot help but admire the spirit of the author and publisher in issuing a bird-guide of this nature in a time of national stress.—G. M. ALLEN.

Trautman's 'Birds of Buckeye Lake, Ohio,' gives a detailed picture<sup>1</sup> of the bird life of this lake and its bordering territory, together with an outline of its geological history since late pleistocene times and a resumé of the changes that have taken place since the coming of white men. The author's aim has been to summarize our knowledge of the past and present avifauna as a basis for further comparative studies in years to come and to provide useful information as a guide for further developments in the area.

The region studied is about ten miles long and covers some forty-four square miles. One of the first white explorers was Christopher Gist in 1750. By 1820, several small towns had arisen within twenty miles of the 'Great Swamp' as the lake was then called, and the clearing of forests and establishment of farms had already begun in the region. From the meager information available the author reconstructs a view of the vegetation then prevailing with its important species of birds, and has traced so far as possible the sequence of changes that have taken place with deforestation and agriculture, the construction of roads and growth of settlements. The period from 1821 to 1890 saw the greatest exploitation of game, the extirpation of Wild Turkey and Passenger Pigeon, the decrease of forest-nesting species and upland gamebirds, the destruction by market gunners. Later changes are outlined down to the present time.

Succeeding chapters analyze the seasonal occurrence of birds, and their ecological and nesting succession in the swamp lowlands, while the body of the work gives a detailed account of the species and subspecies of birds now inhabiting the area, their migrations, nesting and food habits, present and past status, with par-

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<sup>1</sup> Trautman, Milton B. 'The Birds of Buckeye Lake, Ohio.' Misc. Publ. Mus. Zool., Univ. of Michigan, no. 44, 466 pp., 15 pls., 2 maps, May 7, 1940. \$2.50.



ticular records for the less-common forms. A full list of the literature and separate indices to English and Latin names of the plants and animals mentioned, conclude the volume. The illustrations show for the most part some of the different types of situations in the area, lake, swamp, open or wooded country.

In a strictly faunal work of this kind, it might have been better to follow the current edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-list' in the use of Latin names of birds rather than to adopt without explanation various less-familiar ones since suggested. However, this is an excellent summary of the local avifauna, past and present, and presents a mass of well-arranged data on the occurrence and habits of the birds of a selected small area that will prove of great value. An unusual feature of importance is the series of figures giving actual counts of species of birds, which will thus give a definite basis for future comparison.—G. M. ALLEN.

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