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# Crayfishes of Kansas: List of Taxa, Synonyms, and References

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There are currently 12 species of crayfishes (Decapoda: Cambaridae) reported from Kansas, although there are questions about the systematics of some taxa. Research and the corresponding scientific literature on crayfishes conducted in the state since 1885 are limited, but they cover a variety of topics. It is hoped this list of species and references will aid those who seek to add to our knowledge. Only published references are included, but a few Master's theses about Kansas crayfishes are available. Also not included among the references cited in the list are regional, national, or international publications that mention Kansas in the broader distributions of species but do not add to the information in the sources cited here.

To use this list, you can take the currently accepted name of a taxon to check for publications that included that name. These references are listed under the name of each species. Also listed are taxa that represent probable synonyms or assumed misidentifications (under the subheading "Synonyms"). Entries for each of these names will provide additional references that referred to the species by these other names. You can also select the name of a taxon from one of the published references and find that name in the list. This will provide you with a scientific name that is currently recommended. Scientific and common names of the state's 12 reported species are highlighted in bold print. Scientific names were taken from the summary by Crandall and De Grave (2017), which updated earlier lists by Hobbs (1974; 1989) and McLaughlin et al. (2005), and from Glon et al. (2018). Common names were taken from references by Pflieger (1996), McLaughlin et al. (2005), and Robison et al. (2017).

Within the list, an equal symbol (=) usually indicates that the first name given is not currently recognized as a valid taxon and is a synonym of the second name given. In other instances, a misidentification is assumed, and the second name represents the likely identity of the specimen collected in Kansas. No voucher specimens were checked while compiling this list. The summaries of Williams and Leonard (1954), Bouchard and Robison (1980), Pflieger (1996), and Robison et al. (2017) were used in conjunction with the synonymies provided by Crandall and De Grave (2017) to assign synonyms.

Two of the currently recognized species were first described by Walter Faxon (1885c) from collections of crayfish in Kansas. *Faxonius nais* (reported as *Cambarus Nais*) was based on 17 specimens collected by W.S. Newlon in Labette County in southeastern Kansas. The county is on the border with Oklahoma and is drained by the Neosho and Verdigris river systems, which are part of the Arkansas River basin. *Faxonius neglectus* (reported as *Cambarus neglectus*) was described from three specimens collected by F.W. Cragin and J.B. Fields from

Mill Creek in Wabaunsee County, which is a tributary of the Kansas River in the Missouri River basin. In addition, William Hay (1899) described *Cambarus pilosus* from specimens collected at Beloit in Mitchell County, which sits along the Solomon River, another tributary system in the Missouri River basin. It is currently considered a synonym of *F. nais*.

Species listed by the state of Kansas as endangered (E), threatened (T), or in need of conservation (SINC) are noted in the list. Presently, only *Faxonius macrus*, the Neosho Midget Crayfish, is protected as a species in need of conservation.

There are taxonomic issues with some of the crayfishes included in this list that require explanation. Phylogenetic analyses have shown that the species-rich genera *Cambarus*, *Orconectes*, and *Procambarus* are not monophyletic, and efforts are underway to complete a systematic revision of crayfish in these and other genera (Sinclair et al. 2004; Owen et al. 2015). Thus far, surface-dwelling species of *Orconectes* have been assigned to the resurrected genus *Faxonius*, while the monophyletic group of cave-dwelling species retains the name *Orconectes* (Crandall and De Grave 2017). Some species now in *Faxonius* may be reassigned to other genera. Similarly, the former subgenus *Lacunicambarus* was split from the genus *Cambarus*. The single species in Kansas, *L. diogenes* (Devil Crayfish), is a species complex that needs to be evaluated (Glon et al. 2018). This will likely change the name of the species in Kansas.

Other issues involve particular species. Kansas records from 1890–1903 of the Rusty Crayfish, *Faxonius rusticus* (reported as *Cambarus rusticus*), were misidentifications of the Golden Crayfish, *F. luteus*, which was not described until 1933. *Faxonius rusticus* is native to Indiana, western Ohio, central Kentucky, and small areas of adjacent states, but its range is expanding. In our region, the species has been reported in Colorado, Nebraska, and Iowa, but not in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, or Arkansas. Introduced populations pose threats to native species of crayfish and ecosystem processes (Wetzel et al. 2004; Durland Donahou et al. 2019).

The most challenging taxonomic issue among Kansas taxa is a longstanding problem involving a group of three species—*Faxonius virilis* (Virile or Northern Crayfish), *F. nais* (Water Nymph Crayfish), and *F. causeyi* (Western Plains Crayfish). Based on morphology, *F. causeyi* is nearly indistinguishable from *F. virilis* (Hobbs 1989, pages 39–40). However, Unger (1978) considered *F. causeyi* in Colorado to be more similar to *F. nais*, and he referred to his specimens as "*Orconectes nais* form *causeyi*." Hobbs (1989) recommended retaining all three species until a thorough study of their systematics is conducted. That view is reflected in this list, but the systematics of these and similar species are presently uncertain.

Uncertainty about the identities of the taxa in this species group is especially perplexing in Kansas because the zone of overlap among the distributions of the three species is apparently in the Arkansas River basin and Kansas River basin (part of the Missouri River basin) in Kansas, Oklahoma, and portions of adjacent states. The following explanation and interpretation are based primarily on statewide assessments of crayfishes conducted in Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. However, only a comprehensive study of the morphological, ecological, and genetic attributes of populations of these species will resolve the questions of their identities and distributions.

**Original Descriptions.** Of the three species reported from Kansas, *Faxonius virilis* was the first to be described (Hagen 1870). The type locality was later designated as Lake Superior (Crandall and De Grave 2017).

As previously mentioned, *Faxonius nais* was described in 1885 based on 17 specimens five form I males, five form II males, and seven females.<sup>1</sup> The specimens were collected in Labette County, Kansas (Faxon 1885c). In addition to the type locality for *F. nais*, the type locality for the conspecific *Cambarus pilosus* is Beloit in Mitchell County, Kansas (Hay 1899).

The third species, *Faxonius causeyi*, was not described until 1967 from specimens collected at Conchas Reservoir on the (South) Canadian River (Arkansas River basin) in New Mexico (Jester 1967). Jester noted that the species was related to others in the *F. virilis* group, but he did not compare it to either *F. virilis* or *F. nais*. He reported that Horton Hobbs Jr. considered *F. causeyi* to be "more closely related to *O. palmeri longimanus* than to other species." *Faxonius palmeri longimanus*, the Western Painted Crayfish, has been reported from the Caney River system (Arkansas River basin) in Cowley County, Kansas (Metcalf and Distler 1963). In 1975, Reimer and Jester described another new species from the samples collected at Conchas Reservoir. *Faxonius deanae*, the Conchas Crayfish, is native to the Canadian River basin from northeastern New Mexico to western Oklahoma, and it most closely resembles *F. palmeri longimanus* (Morehouse and Tobler 2013).

Distinguishing the Species. Morphologically, the gonopods on form I males are currently used to distinguish taxa in this species group. The distal ends of the gonopods are bifurcated, relatively long, and slender. The distinguishing features are the relative length and degree of curvature of these processes (rami) (Figure 1). However, there is natural variation.



**Figure 1.**—Drawings of gonopods of *Faxonius virilis* and *F. immunis* from form I males associated with the original descriptions by Hagen (1870, plate I).

When he first described *Faxonius nais* (as *Cambarus Nais*), Faxon (1885c) compared it to *F. virilis* and *F. immunis*.

This species much resembles *C. virilis*, especially the form called *variety* A by Dr. Hagen. It differs in the shape of the first abdominal appendages [gonopods] of the male. In *C. Nais* the rami of these appendages are shorter and more strongly curved than in *C. virilis*, but not so much recurved as in *C. immunis*. The areola is narrower than in *C. virilis*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Form I males are reproductively active; form II males are not. Male crayfish alternate between these forms by molting. Gonopods are accessory reproductive structures on the ventral surface at the anterior end of the abdomen used by the male to deliver sperm into a cup-like structure (annulus ventralis) on the female. She stores the sperm until ready to release eggs, which she will carry on the underside of her abdomen as they develop.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The areola is an hourglass-shaped area on the top of the carapace of some Faxonius species.

Pflieger (1996), using the genus Orconectes, noted that specimens from northeastern Missouri and scattered locations elsewhere were "identifiable as O. nais or are intermediate between O. nais and O. virilis." Given these intermediate forms, he tentatively considered all populations to be Faxonius virilis. He also included F. causeyi records with F. virilis. In Arkansas, Bouchard and Robison (1980) considered the specimens Williams (1954a) identified as O. nais as "mostly if not completely referable to O. virilis." That view had not changed when an annotated list was published in 2017, which included Arkansas records of F. nais and F. causeyi under F. virilis (Robison et al. 2017). The same conclusion was reached in Nebraska. Schainost (2016) examined morphological features in several populations and concluded there was greater variation within populations than among populations, all of which he assigned to F. virilis. Phillips (1980) compared F. virilis from Iowa and F. nais from northeastern Kansas and noted intermediate forms in southwestern Iowa, which he classified as F. virilis.

The general unity of the conclusions regarding these species in Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska differed somewhat from the view of Unger (1978) in Colorado, where he distinguished *F. virilis*, *F. nais*, and *F. nais* form *causeyi*. Similarly, in Oklahoma, Morehouse and Tobler (2013) included all three species in their summary of the state's crayfishes. However, they included only *F. nais* and *F. virilis* in their key. *Faxonius nais* was reported to be statewide in distribution, while *F. virilis* was limited to the Arkansas and Cimarron river basins in northern Oklahoma. *Faxonius causeyi* was confirmed only in the upper Canadian River basin, as was *F. deanae*.

**Confusion in Kansas.** The questions of which of the species are present in Kansas and where they occur are as unsettled as they are elsewhere in the region. The first list of Kansas crayfishes published by Faxon (1885c) listed seven species, including *Faxonius virilis* and the original descriptions of *F. nais* and *F. neglectus* (Table 1). In 1900, Harris added what is now recognized as *F. luteus* to bring the number of species to eight. He listed 21 localities across Kansas where *F. virilis* was collected and stated that it "seems to be the most widely distributed species in our state." In contrast, he listed only two sites for *F. nais* (Harris 1900).

Five decades later, Williams and Leonard (1952) reduced the number of species to seven by including all Kansas records of *Faxonius virilis* under *F. nais*, which had a statewide distribution. They also remarked on the challenge distinguishing these species. "The distinction between *Orconectes nais* and a closely related species, *O. virilis*, which occurs in the northern and eastern Mississippi Valley drainage, has long been a subject of confusion. The exact limits of the ranges of these two species is [*sit*] not known." This view generally matched the distributions given by Hagen (1870, page 91) for *Cambarus virilis* (from Lake Winnipeg in Canada through the upper Mississippi River basin and Great Lakes) and *C. virilis* "variety A" (Ohio through Texas).

After another four decades, the list of Kansas crayfishes reached its current size, but Ghedotti (1998) followed Pflieger (1996) in treating *Faxonius nais* and *F. causeyi* as conspecific with *F. virilis*. The list presented here includes the same species reported by Ghedotti (1998) but separates *F. nais* and *F. causeyi* from *F. virilis*, while acknowledging they require additional study.

**Distributions.** Given the difficulty distinguishing similar species of *Faxonius* reported from Kansas, their distributions are poorly defined. Based on information in the publications cited, I offer the following interpretation of their distributions as a starting point.

Species	Faxon	Harris	Williams and	Ghedotti	Eberle
	(1885c)	(1900)	Leonard (1952)	(1998)	(2020)
F. causeyi					٠
F. immunis	•	•	•	•	•
F. luteus		•	•	•	•
F. macrus				•	•
F. nais	•	•	•		•
F. neglectus neglectus	•	•	•	•	•
F. palmeri longimanus				•	•
F. virilis	•	•		•	•
L. diogenes	•	•	•	•	•
P. acutus				•	•
P. gracilis	•	•	•	•	•
P. simulans	•	•	•	•	•
Total species	7	8	7	10	12

**Table 1.**—Species included in lists of Kansas crayfishes published since 1885. The names have been updated to correspond to currently recognized taxa in the genera *Faxonius*, *Lacunicambarus*, and *Procambarus*.

*Faxonius virilis* is a widespread, northern species. Its native distribution extends from the Rocky Mountains east through the Great Lakes and as far south as the Arkansas River basin in Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, and adjacent areas on the Great Plains. The species has also been transplanted well beyond its native range, even into western Europe, and it is considered a threat to native ecosystems in these areas (Hobbs 1989; Pflieger 1996; Filipová et al. 2010; Morehouse and Tobler 2013; Robison et al. 2017). This would suggest a generally statewide distribution in Kansas, as indicated by Faxon (1885c) and Harris (1900).

The distribution of *Faxonius nais* is more restricted. The opinions of experts in Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska suggested that reports of *F. nais* were mostly, if not entirely, attributable to morphological variations in *F. virilis* or intermediate forms (Bouchard and Robison 1980; Phillips 1980; Pflieger 1996; Schainost 2016; Robison et al. 2017). Thus, the native distribution of *F. nais* might be limited to the Kansas, Arkansas, and Red river basins on the Great Plains, primarily in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, but also in parts of adjacent states (Faxon 1885c; Harris 1900; Unger 1978; Morehouse and Tobler 2013). The type locality for *F. nais* is in the Arkansas River basin, and the type locality of the conspecific *Cambarus pilosus* is in the Missouri River basin, both in Kansas (Faxon 1885c; Hay 1899).

*Faxonius causeyi* is native to the upper Canadian River basin on the Great Plains from northeastern New Mexico to western Oklahoma (Jester 1967; Morehouse and Tobler 2013). Other reports in the Arkansas River basin are possibly misidentifications (Pflieger 1996; Morehouse and Tobler 2013; Robison et al. 2017). However, the species has been established outside its native range (Jester 1967; Unger 1978). Given the taxonomic uncertainty and introductions, the presence of *F. causeyi* in the Spring River basin of Kansas (and adjacent states) reported by Beasley and Branson (1971) is uncertain and needs to be reexamined.

*Faxonius palmeri longimanus* was reported in Cowley County in southeastern Kansas. The record was based on 284 specimens collected in 1961–1962 (Metcalf and Distler 1963). However, a recent assessment of its distribution in Oklahoma indicated a concentration of records in the southeastern portion of the state, which corresponds with its reported distribution in southwestern Arkansas (Morehouse and Tobler 2013; Robison et al. 2017). Given the challenges with identification of this and similar species in the state, the status of *F. palmeri longimanus* in Kansas also needs to be reexamined.

**Essential Research Needs.** As additional research is conducted on crayfishes, a more accurate understanding of the species and their distributions will be one result. The recent lists of species in North America are undoubtedly incomplete, perhaps substantially so. As additional species are identified, especially within widespread species, there are likely to be changes in our understanding of the Kansas fauna. This is almost certain to occur within the *Faxonius virilis* and *Lacunicambarus diogenes* species complexes.

So far, two studies have examined genetic material from populations identified as *Faxonius virilis* and *F. nais*, including populations in Kansas. In the first study, Fetzner et al. (1997) assessed allelic frequencies in four populations of *F. virilis* from Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri, along with one population of *F. immunis* from Illinois and one population of *F. nais* from a pond at Manhattan, Kansas. The original source of the population in the pond is unknown. In the second study, Mathews at al. (2008) examined two mitochondrial genes and one nuclear gene from 10 populations in Massachusetts, one in New York, one in Rhode Island, and three in Kansas, all of which were identified as *F. virilis* from Quebec (one individual), *F. nais* from Oklahoma (two individuals), and *F. deanae* from New Mexico (one individual).

Neither study was intended to be a comprehensive assessment that would resolve questions of the identities and distributions of taxa within this species group, and neither included specimens from type localities. However, the results of both studies, as well as related studies by Fetzner (1996) and Filipová et al. (2010), showed a substantial amount of genetic variability among the sampled populations. In addition to genetic diversity, Mathews et al. (2008) reported differences among the gonopods of form I males that corresponded to the clades identified in their genetic analysis. The gonopods in the samples from two creeks near Manhattan, Kansas differed from specimens in the Northeast identified as *F. virilis*. No form I males were collected in the third creek in Kansas. In light of the apparent genetic diversity and differences in gonopod morphology, this list includes both *F. virilis* and *F. nais*. The latter will likely stand as a valid species with its type locality in Kansas, but an accurate determination of what species in this complex occur in the state is not yet possible.

As stated earlier, only a comprehensive study of the morphological, ecological, and genetic attributes of these species will resolve the questions of their identities and distributions. In addition to a broad systematics project, surveys of all presumed crayfish species across Kansas are needed. It is essential that the surveys are documented with museum specimens (including form I males, form II males, and females of *Faxonius* species) fixed in ethanol to allow for additional genetic analysis. Only then will an accurate summary of the crayfish species and their distributions in Kansas be possible.

## List of Kansas Crayfish Species, Synonyms, and References

Cambarus baumgartneri Harris = Procambarus simulans (Faxon)

• Harris (1901a)

Cambarus diogenes Girard = Lacunicambarus diogenes (Girard)

- Faxon (1885a)
- Faxon (1885b)
- Faxon (1885c)
- Ghedotti (1998)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)
- Williams (1954a)
- Williams and Leonard (1952)

Cambarus gallinas [correct spelling: gallinus] Cockerell & Porter = Procambarus simulans (Faxon)

- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1902)

*Cambarus gracilis* Bundy = *Procambarus gracilis* (Bundy)

- Faxon (1885c)
- Faxon (1890)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1901b)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)

Cambarus immunis Hagen = Faxonius immunis (Hagen)

- Faxon (1885a)
- Faxon (1885b)
- Faxon (1885c)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1901b)
- Harris (1901c)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)

Cambarus immunis spinirostris Faxon = Faxonius immunis (Hagen)

- Faxon (1885c)
- Faxon (1890)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1901b); as C. i. spinostris
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)

Cambarus nais Faxon = Faxonius nais (Faxon)

- Faxon (1885c); original description with Kansas type locality
- Faxon (1890)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)

*Cambarus neglectus* Faxon = *Faxonius neglectus* (Faxon)

- Faxon (1885c); original description with Kansas type locality
- Faxon (1890)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)
- Minckley and Deacon (1959)

Cambarus pilosus Hay = Faxonius nais (Faxon)

- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a); as C. pelosus
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)
- Hay (1899); original description with Kansas type locality

Cambarus rusticus Girard = Faxonius luteus Creaser

- Faxon (1890)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)

Cambarus simulans Faxon = Procambarus simulans (Faxon)

- Faxon (1885a)
- Faxon (1885b)
- Faxon (1885c)
- Faxon (1890)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)

*Cambarus virilis* Hagen = *Orconectes virilis* (Hagen)

- Faxon (1885a)
- Faxon (1885b)
- Faxon (1885c)
- Faxon (1890)
- Harris (1900)
- Harris (1901a)
- Harris (1901b)
- Harris (1901c)
- Harris (1902)
- Harris (1903)

#### Faxonius causeyi (Jester 1967), Western Plains Crayfish

#### Synonyms:

Orconectes causeyi Jester

#### Faxonius immunis (Hagen 1870), Calico [Papershell] Crayfish

#### Synonyms:

Cambarus immunis Hagen Cambarus immunis spinirostris Faxon Faxonius immunis pedianus Creaser Orconectes immunis (Hagen)

#### Faxonius luteus Creaser 1933, Golden Crayfish

#### Synonyms:

*Cambarus rusticus* Girard [= *Faxonius rusticus* (Girard); assumed misidentification] *Orconectes luteus* (Creaser)

#### Faxonius macrus (Williams 1952), Neosho Midget Crayfish (SINC)

## Synonyms:

Orconectes macrus (Williams)

#### Faxonius nais (Faxon 1885), Water Nymph Crayfish

#### Synonyms:

Cambarus nais Faxon Cambarus pilosus Hay Orconectes nais (Faxon)

#### Faxonius neglectus neglectus (Faxon 1885), Ringed Crayfish

#### Synonyms:

*Cambarus neglectus* Faxon *Orconectes neglectus* (Faxon)

## Faxonius palmeri longimanus (Faxon 1898), Western Painted Crayfish

## Synonyms:

Orconectes palmeri longimanus (Faxon)

## Faxonius virilis (Hagen 1870), Virile [Northern] Crayfish

#### • Holmgren (2019)

#### Synonyms:

*Cambarus virilis* Hagen *Orconectes virilis* (Hagen)

Ortometies virius (Hagen)

Faxonius immunis pedianus Creaser = Faxonius immunis (Hagen)

• Creaser (1933); described as a new "western plains subspecies"

## Lacunicambarus diogenes (Girard 1852), Devil Crayfish Synonyms:

Cambarus diogenes Girard

Orconectes causeyi Jester = Faxonius causeyi (Jester)

• Beasley and Branson (1971)

Orconectes immunis (Hagen) = Faxonius immunis (Hagen)

- Ghedotti (1998)
- Wiens and Armitage (1961)

Orconectes luteus (Creaser) = Faxonius luteus Creaser

- Ghedotti (1998)
- Metcalf and Distler (1961)
- Minckley and Deacon (1959)
- Williams (1954a)
- Williams and Leonard (1952)

Orconectes macrus (Williams) = Faxonius macrus (Williams)

• Ghedotti (1998)

Orconectes nais (Faxon) = Faxonius nais (Faxon)

- Armitage et al. (1972)
- Armitage et al. (1973)
- Armitage and Wall (1982)
- Bengtson et al. (2008)
- Evans-White et al. (2001)
- Evans-White et al. (2003)
- Fetzner (1996)
- Fetzner et al. (1997)
- Filipová et al. (2010)
- Gali-Muhtasib and Smith (1998)
- Klaassen (1997)
- Mathews et al. (2008)
- Morrissey and Edds (1994)
- Pippitt (1977)
- Rice and Armitage (1974)
- Shivers (1967)
- Wiens and Armitage (1961)
- Williams (1954a)
- Williams and Leonard (1952)

Orconectes neglectus (Faxon) = Faxonius neglectus neglectus (Faxon)

- Allert et al. (2012)
- Beasley and Branson (1971)
- Bengtson et al. (2008)
- Durbian et al. (1994)
- Evans-White et al. (2001)
- Evans-White et al. (2003)
- Ghedotti (1998)
- Schainost (2011)
- Williams (1954a)
- Williams (1954b)
- Williams and Leonard (1952)

Orconectes palmeri longimanus (Faxon) = Faxonius palmeri longimanus (Faxon)

- Metcalf and Distler (1963)
- Ghedotti (1998)

Orconectes virilis (Hagen) = Faxonius virilis (Hagen)

- Durbian et al. (1994)
- Eberle et al. (1986)
- Fetzner et al. (1997)
- Filipová et al. (2010)
- Ghedotti (1998)
- Li and Neufeld (2001)
- Mathews et al. (2008)

#### Procambarus acutus (Girard 1852), White River Crayfish

• Ghedotti (1998)

## Procambarus gracilis (Bundy 1876), Prairie [Grassland] Crayfish

- Ghedotti (1998)
- Holmgren (2019)
- Minckley and Deacon (1959)
- Williams (1954a)
- Williams and Leonard (1952)

#### Synonyms:

Cambarus gracilis Bundy

## Procambarus simulans (Faxon 1884), Southern Plains Crayfish

- Ghedotti (1998)
- Williams (1954a)
- Williams and Leonard (1952)

#### Synonyms:

*Cambarus gallinas* Cockerell & Porter *Cambarus simulans* Faxon

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