

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) – 2009-2012 version

Available for download from http://www.ramsar.org/ris/key_ris_index.htm.

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX. 22 of the 9th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).

Notes for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 14, 3rd edition). A 4th edition of the Handbook is in preparation and will be available in 2009.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

March 2014

3. Country:

BULGARIA

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

The precise name of the designated site in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parentheses after the precise name.

IBISHA ISLAND

5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for (tick one box only):

a) Designation of a new Ramsar site ; or

b) Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

a) Site boundary and area

The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged:

or

If the site boundary has changed:

i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ; or

ii) the boundary has been extended or

iii) the boundary has been restricted**

and/or

If the site area has changed:

i) the area has been measured more accurately ; or

ii) the area has been extended or

iii) the area has been reduced**

** **Important note:** If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:

To protect more rare bird species and habitats the Ramsar site was enlarged and are included land territory with natural marshes and flooded area and additional islands which are used as a breeding, feeding and resting places.

7. Map of site:

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:

i) a hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): ;

ii) an electronic format (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image)

iii) a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables .

b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park, etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

The boundary of the Ramsar site Ibisha Island covers the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites under the Birds Directive: BG0002007 “Ostrov Ibisha”, BG0002008 “Ostrov do Gorni Tsibar”, BG0002009 “Zlatiyata” and BG0002104 “Tsibarsko blato”, and the territory of Natura 2000 site under Habitats Directive BG0000199 “Tsibar”.

8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes):

Provide the coordinates of the approximate centre of the site and/or the limits of the site. If the site is composed of more than one separate area, provide coordinates for each of these areas.

43°49'40"N 023°31'00"E

9. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s) the site lies and the location of the nearest large town.

Ibisha Island Ramsar site is located between 711 km and 726 km on the Danube River and the south border is the outflow of the Tsibrishka river up to the village Zlatia. The near villages are also Dolni Tsibar, Ignatovo, Gorni Tsibar at the Valchedram Municipality and Stanevo village at the Lom Municipality.

10. Elevation: (in metres: average and/or maximum & minimum)

Average: 93 m.a.s.l

Minimum 20 m.a.s.l

Maximum 169 m.a.s.l

11. Area: (in hectares)

3364,7 ha

12. General overview of the site:

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

The islands in the site are covered mainly by seasonally flooded forest. It is of global importance for the Pygmy Cormorant */Phalacrocorax pygmeus/* as well as one of the most important sites in the country for the Night heron */Nycticorax nycticorax/*, Squacco Heron */Ardeola ralloides/*, and Spoonbill */Platalea leucorodia/*. On the land territory there is a Tsibar marsh which is about 185 ha area with flooded poplar trees, with shallow water pools, overgrown with reed, reed mace surrounded by canals. The open water surface is partly covered by Water Chestnut */Trapa natans/*, Yellow floating heart */Nymphoides peltata/*, *Lemna frislca*, *Lemna minor*, *Persicaria amphibia*, *Oenanthe aquatica* and etc.

13. Ramsar Criteria:

Tick the box under each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11). All Criteria which apply should be ticked.

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9

14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

Criteria 1: The Ilisha Island is a good representative example of seasonally flooded forested and open wetland typical to the Danube River. The natural floodplain forests along the Danube were converted into intensive hybrid poplar plantations. The natural floodplain forest on the river banks is represented only by few patches covering less than 5% (mature natural forest probably 1%) of its distribution in the first half the 20th century. The man-made poplar plantations dominate even on the Danube islands which are characterized by the difficult access.

The site contains a specific habitat type – flooded riverine forest, which is rare in Europe and thus contributes to conservation of biological diversity in the biogeographic region.

The most valuable element of the island vegetation are the flooded forests, associations dominated by Black Alder */Alnus glutinosa/*, Crack Willow */Salix fragilis/*, White Poplar */Populus alba/* and Black Poplar */Populus nigra/*.

The most important habitats protected under Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC are:

1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes;

2340 * Pannonic inland dunes

3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or of the Isoeto-Nanojuncetea;

3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition type vegetation;

3270 Rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodium rubri* p.p. and *Bidention* p.p. vegetation;

6250 * Pannonic loess steppic grasslands;

91E0 * Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae);

Criteria 2: The Site supports vulnerable and endangered species of:

Mammals – From Mammals one species have been recorded in the site is included in IUCN Red List categories - European Ground Squirrel */Spermophilus citellus/* (VU). There are 3 mammal species from Annex 2 of the Habitats Directive 92/43 EEC : Eurasian Otter */Lutra lutra/*, Dobrudja (Romanian) Hamster */Mesocricetus newtonii/*, European Ground Squirrel */Spermophilus citellus/*. The Eurasian Otter */Lutra lutra/* and European Ground Squirrel */Spermophilus citellus/* are included also in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria (2011).

Birds - The following bird species from the IUCN Red List categories have been recorded in the site (4 species): Lesser White-fronted Goose */Anser erythropus/* (VU), Red-breasted Goose */Branta ruficollis/* (EN), Dalmatian Pelican */Pelecanus crispus/* (VU), Aquatic Warbler */Acrocephalus paludicola/* (VU).

The Ramsar site is important for Dalmatian Pelican */Pelecanus crispus/* as a feeding and resting place, and for during the migration period.

The Ramsar site is an important place for the protection of habitats of following 20 birds species listed in Annex 2 of the Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds: White Pelican */Pelecanus onocrotalus/*, Dalmatian Pelican */Pelecanus crispus/*, Pygmy Cormorant */Phalacrocorax pygmeus/*, Night Heron */Nycticorax nycticorax/*, Squacco Heron */Ardeola ralloides/*, Little Egret */Egretta garzetta/*, Purple Heron */Ardea purpurea/*, Black Stork */Ciconia nigra/*, Spoonbill */Platalea leucorodia/*, Whooper Swan */Cygnus cygnus/*, Marsh Harriers */Circus aeruginosus/*, Red-footed Falcon */Falco vespertinus/*, Common Tern */Sterna hirundo/*, Common Kingfisher */Alcedo atthis/*, Grey-headed Woodpecker */Picus canus/*, Syrian Woodpecker */Dendrocopos syriacus/*, Ferruginous Duck */Aythya nyroca/*, Great Bittern */Botaurus stellaris/*, Little Bittern */Ixobrychus minutus/*, Whiskered Tern */Chlidonias hybridus/*. 18 of these 20 bird species are included also in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria (2011).

Reptiles – 5 species are found: European Pond Turtle */Emys orbicularis/*, Caspian whipsnake */Coluber caspius/*, Nose-horned Viper */Vipera ammodytes/*, Dice Snake */Natrix tessellata/*, Green Lizard */Lacerta viridis/*. One of them from Annex II of Directive 92/43 EEC - European Pond Turtle */Emys orbicularis/*.

Amphibians – 7 species are found: Danube Crested Newt */Triturus dobrogicus/*, Fire-bellied Toad */Bombina Bombina/*, European Tree Frog */Hyla arborea/*, Eastern Spadefoot */Pelobates syriacus/*, Common Spadefoot */Pelobates fuscus/*, Agile Frog */Rana dalmatina/*, Green toad */Bufo viridis/* and 2 of them are from Annex II of Directive 92/43 EEC - Danube Crested Newt */Triturus dobrogicus/* and Fire-bellied Toad */Bombina Bombina/*. One of them Danube Crested Newt */Triturus dobrogicus/* (VU) is included also in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria (2011).

Criteria 4: The international importance of Ilisha Island Ramsar site is defined by the presence of one of the biggest mixed population of herons and cormorants in Bulgaria. It is a site of global importance for nesting Pygmy Cormorant */Phalacrocorax pygmeus/* - 57 pairs, Night Heron */Nycticorax nycticorax/* – 130-250 pairs, Squacco Heron */Ardeola ralloides/*, Spoonbill */Platalea leucorodia/* – 14 pairs, Ferruginous Duck */Aythya nyroca/* - 5-20 pairs, Purple Heron */Ardea purpurea/* – 1-5 pairs.

Criteria 8: Migration path and potentially still spawning ground and nursery for 3 critically endangered and 1 vulnerable sturgeon species, according to IUCN Red List. The Lower Danube is considered to be the last river section in the Black Sea basin with vital sturgeon population:

Russian Sturgeon *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii* (CE), Ship Sturgeon *Acipenser nudiventris* (CE) considered extinct in the entire Lower Danube, Sterlet *Acipenser ruthenus* (VU) the only sturgeon species form the currently existing in the river which is resident or with short distance migrations within the Danube river, Stellate Sturgeon *Acipenser stellatus* (CE) Atlantic Sturgeon *Acipenser sturio* (CE) – considered extinct for the Lower Danube and the entire Black Sea basin, Beluga *Huso huso* (CE).

The area around Ibisha Island and the two smaller islands downstream used to be one of the key sites for commercial sturgeon fishery in the Danube River section between Bulgaria and Romania. Despite of the tendency for steady decline the sturgeon populations were intensively exploited until the year 2000. After that a dramatic decline in the populations were reported and fishing was limited due to the lack of fish resources. Since 2007 Bulgaria has no quota for export of wild caviar from sturgeons. Currently there is a ban on sturgeon fishing (covering all sturgeon species) for the period 2011-2015.

15. Biogeography (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

a) biogeographic region:

Continental biogeographic region

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

The Biogeographical Regions Map of Europe 2009, European Environment Agency;

16. Physical features of the site:

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

- **Origin**

Ibisha island has naturally originated as a result of simultaneously creative and destructive influence of the river stream. It has evolved due to the sand and mud sedimentation in the parts where the stream is lower.

- **Geology & geomorphology (including soils)**

The soils are sandy-clay rich in organic substances.

- **Hydrogeology & hydrology**

The hydrology of the island fully depends of the hydrology of the Danube River. During the high water levels the water from the Danube flow into the island and floods the forest. The water regime of Danube River highly depends on Iron Gates Reservoirs upstream.

According to the results of the Joint Danube Survey 2 organized by ICPDR in 2007 the pollution in the Lower Danube can be classified as low to moderate with generally no significant changes since the first Joint Danube Survey in 2001. The pH value for the Danube River is quite stable and depending on the river section varies between 7.3 and 8.10. The pH value range for the Ibisha island section of the Danube River is 7.6 - 7.8.

- Climate

The climate is continental. The average annual rainfall is 571.8 mm with February minimum and May or June maximum. The average monthly maximum temperature (August) is 36,8°C and the minimum temperature (January) is 14,7°C below zero.

17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, and climate (including climate type).

The catchment area of site cover most of the Danube River catchment. The main physical features of the catchment area are mostly the same as described in the previous (16) point.

18. Hydrological values:

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

Not specially studied, but some of the known hydrological values are water retention, flood control, sediment trapping.

19. Wetland Types

a) presence:

Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar "Classification System for Wetland Type" present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines*.

Marine/coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K • Zk(a)

Inland: L • M • N • O • P • Q • R • Sp • Ss • Tp • Ts • U • Va •
Vt • W • Xf • Xp • Y • Zg • Zk(b)

Human-made: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • Zk(c)

b) dominance:

List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

4 – M – Ts – Xf – 9

20. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

Riverine seasonally flooded forests – association dominated by Black Alder */Alnus glutinosa/*, Crack Willow */Salix fragilis/*, White Poplar */Populus alba/* and Black Poplar */Populus nigra/* with combination of dense liana and shrub layer dominated by *Rubus sp.*;

Cultivated tree-plantations of *Populus hybridus* (in the western part of the island);

Sand bars without vegetation;

River stream and its banks at the Bulgarian side;

Seasonally flooded and permanent marshes, bordered by agricultural lands;

21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

The present type of the natural flooded forest is threatened at European level. The flora presented by *Salvinia natans*, *Alkanna tinctoria*, *Astragalus ponticus*, *Centaurea arenaria*, *Centaurea rumelica*, *Lemna gibba*, *Leucojum aestivum*.

22. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Fish – The river stream around the island is important for the protection of the Danube sturgeon species. Other important fish species for this section of Danube River are: Northern Pike */Esox lucius/*, Wild Common Carp */Cyprinus carpio/*, Tench */Tinca tinca/*, Common Rudd */Scardinius erythrophthalmus/*, etc. During the high water level fish enter the island (through a channel) serve as a trophic base for the bird species nesting in the colony.

Birds – The Ramsar site Ibisha Island is important for conservation as place where during the period of breeding, moulting, wintering or migration considerable numbers of following bird species assemble: Great Cormorant */Phalacrocorax carbo/*, Grey Heron */Ardea cinerea/*, Mallard */Anas platyrhynchos/*, Water Rail */Rallus aquaticus/*, Common Moorhen */Gallinula chloropus/*, Northern Lapwing */Vanellus vanellus/*, Black-headed Gull */Larus ridibundus/*. Two of these bird species Grey Heron */Ardea cinerea/* (VU) and Black-headed Gull */Larus ridibundus/* (EN) are included in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria (2011).

23. Social and cultural values:

a) Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values:

The main social values of the site are related to fishery and forestry. In the near past sturgeons used to be an important source of income (see Criteria 8)

b) Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning?

If Yes, tick the box and describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland:
- ii) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland:
- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:
- iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland:

24. Land tenure/ownership:

a) within the Ramsar site:

State public – 25 %

State private – 5 %

Municipality – 35 %

Private – 35 %

b) in the surrounding area:

Private, Municipality, State

25. Current land (including water) use:

a) within the Ramsar site:

Nature conservation, Forestry, Fishery, Agriculture

b) in the surroundings/catchment:

Fishery; Shipping; Hunting; Agriculture

26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:

a) within the Ramsar site:

Introduction of intensive forestry based on non-native species cause changing of the habitat types and reduction of the threatened riverine forest communities.

Forestry activities close to the colony during the breeding season cause disturbance of birds.

b) in the surrounding area:

Due to the constructions at the Iron Gates dike, regulating the water level of the Danube, spring floods are less pronounced and the forest loosed its riverine type.

27. Conservation measures taken:

a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:

In particular, if the site is partly or wholly a World Heritage Site and/or a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, please give the names of the site under these designations.

Part of the Ibisha Island territory is placed under strict protection as a managed reserve - "Ibisha Managed Reserve", according to national legislation – Protected areas act.

The boundary of the Ramsar site Ibisha Island covers the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites under the Birds Directive: BG0002007 "Ostrov Ibisha", BG0002008 "Ostrov do Gorni Tsibar" and BG0002104 "Tsibarsko blato", and the territory of Natura 2000 site under Habitats Directive BG0000199 "Tsibar".

b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site (tick the box or boxes as appropriate):

Ia ; Ib ; II ; III ; IV ; V ; VI

c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?:

A management plan of the "Ibisha Managed Reserve" is under development.

Management plans for the NATURA 2000 sites within the boundaries of the Ramsar site also will be prepared.

d) Describe any other current management practices:

In 1997 the territory was designated as Important Bird Area by BirdLife International. Since 1998 it is also a CORINE Site because of its European importance to the protection of rare and threatened habitats, plants and animals, including birds.

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

A management plan of the "Ibisha Managed Reserve" is under development. Management plans for the NATURA 2000 sites within the boundaries of the Ramsar site also will be prepared.

The hybridized poplars and the withered trees should be removed. The utilization of the island as a poplar plantation should be restricted to sustainable forestry based on native species.

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

Bird monitoring carried out by Executive Environmental Agency at the MOEW, WWF-Bulgaria and BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria.

30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:

e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

The area was included in the special brochure and in the slide show produced by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds about Important Bird Areas along the Danube. They are spreaded in the main Bulgarian towns along the river.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

The site is not a popular place for tourism and it is used for scientific and study research.

32. Jurisdiction:

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

The described territory is under the general jurisdiction of the Municipality of Valchedram, and in parallel under the jurisdiction of the District Body, based in the city of Montana.

From functional point of view:

“Ibisha Managed Reserve” is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water in Montana.

The forest areas and the agricultural lands which are state property are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Foods.

33. Management authority:

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

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34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

1. Antonov, A. 1997. Ibishia Island. In: Important Bird Areas in Bulgaria. BSPB Conservation Series. Book 1. Kostadinova, I. (comp.). BSPB, Sofia, BG, 55-56
 2. Antonov, A. 1997. Island near Gorni Tsibar. In: Important Bird Areas in Bulgaria. BSPB Conservation Series. Book 1. Kostadinova, I. (comp.). BSPB, Sofia, BG, 55-56
 3. Petkov N., 1997. Tsibarsko marsh. In: Important Bird Areas in Bulgaria. BSPB Conservation Series. Book 1. Kostadinova, I. (comp.). BSPB, Sofia, BG, 55-56
 4. Rose, P.M., D.A.Scot. 1997. Waterfowl Population Estimates. IWRB Publication 44, Slimbridge, UK.
 5. Natura2000 Database in Bulgaria, Standard Data Forms at the MOEW.
 6. Register for Protected areas in Bulgaria at the EEA.
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Please return to: **Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**
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