

The Froglife Trust

**ANNUAL
REVIEW
2008/9**

FROGLife 



Oliver Katz

About Froglife

Froglife is a national wildlife conservation charity concerned with the conservation of the UK's amphibian and reptile species and their associated habitats. We strive to make a practical difference through carrying out on-the-ground conservation activities such as restoring and creating ponds and ensuring that suitable terrestrial habitats are provided for our species.

Central to Froglife's ethos is to involve as many people as possible in conservation activities. We believe that our role is not only to 'preach to the converted' but to reach those that are rarely given the opportunity to get involved in nature conservation activities. We do this by working with young offenders, 'at risk' young people, young carers and individuals with learning disabilities (for more on our social inclusion work: page 7).

Amphibians & reptiles in decline...

Many amphibian species are facing dramatic declines: nearly a third of all amphibian species globally are now threatened with extinction. In the UK, there are a number of reasons why many of our amphibian species are facing declines including: habitat loss, development, pollution, climate change and potentially non-native diseases such as ranavirus and chytridiomycosis.

Many of these threats are also impacting on the UK's reptiles. For a number of widespread UK species, including the Adder and Common Lizard, declines in some regions are of immense concern.

WELCOME

“ There have been a lot of exciting developments for Froglife during 2008. We have recruited new staff including two London Project Officers who are working on our London Standing Waters project and a Conservation Youth Worker who is working on our new Green Pathways Scheme (more about both these projects on pages 6 & 7). Staff numbers have risen during the year from six to eleven full time and one temporary, and in early 2009 we are delighted to add to the ranks our first Scotland project officer (for Glasgow Living Waters), courtesy of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Froglife has been out and about a great deal during the year, attending events and conferences across England, Wales and Scotland. Among the most successful was the British Birdwatching Fair – a total of 50 new members were recruited over the weekend. We have also had some outstanding press coverage during 2008, topped by Froglife's Jules Howard sitting next to Bette Midler on BBC1's The One Show! (more on page 5).

Our Froglife Friends responded very generously to our Frog Disease Appeal throughout the summer and their contributions have given the project a much needed financial boost (more on page 8). Also, thanks to the generous response of supporters to our 'Amphibian Asks', we were able to purchase a vehicle to help us transport young people around so that they can take part in a wider range of conservation activities.

We have been very successful in raising grants from various sources including a SITA Trust grant to carry out an extensive research project on Hampton Nature Reserve (see page 4); a Countdown 2010 grant for our Ponds in the Landscape project (page 4); a BBC Children In Need grant for our Green Pathways Scheme, a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for our Ponds for Life project (page 6) and a Cory Environment in Britain grant to enable our London Standing Water project to work in Bexley. We have also been successful in raising much needed core funding. This enables us to cover the salary costs of non-project related staff and office running costs.

We have made great progress in Scotland where we are now registered as a charity with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. We hosted a very successful event at Edinburgh Zoo on 14th November 2008. *Year of the Frog – a big leap forward* was chaired by the eminent Professor Aubrey Manning and talks were given by a range of star speakers in the field of amphibian conservation (page 9).

We could not have achieved as much as we have without the continued support of all our partners, donors, Froglife Friends, and our other long-standing supporters. Likewise this could not have been achieved without our very enthusiastic and effective staff, and the contributions of a dedicated Board of Trustees.”

Lin Wenlock, Chair



Kathy Wormald, CEO



Lin Wenlock

K. Wormald

FROGLIFE: MEETING THE THREAT

Froglife is managing a number of projects that are directly delivering conservation benefits for amphibians and reptiles. Because many of our species are so dependent on standing water habitats such as ponds and other wetlands, we feel it is appropriate for Froglife to take a leading role in conserving these habitats.

A pond is a small miracle, one that brings life to a place and joy to those all around. A new pond is a soft explosion of life.

Simon Barnes, Froglife's Patron
In foreword to Froglife's *Just Add Water* booklet

The number of ponds in the UK is estimated to have declined by over a third from the 1940s to the 1980s. The situation is now so serious that in August 2007, the UK Government included ponds as a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Published in November 2008, the UK's 'Countryside Survey 2007' underlined further this decline, stating that biological quality of lowland ponds declined between 1996 and 2007.

- Ponds are a vital habitat for a wide range of common and rare species, particularly plants, invertebrates and amphibians.
- Ponds provide species with 'stepping-stone' habitats enabling some wildlife to better react to the impacts of climate change.
- Ponds play a central role in our history and culture.
- Ponds link people and wildlife.
- Ponds provide excellent outdoor classroom opportunities

Habitat Action Plans (HAP)

Froglife stepped forward to take on Lead Partner role for the London Standing Water Habitat Action Plan (HAP) and the Cambridgeshire Pond, Lakes and Reservoirs HAP, but we felt very strongly that our role is not purely to develop the HAP but also to ensure that it is implemented. To this end we have secured funding for projects that are working on restoring and creating pond habitats and towards carrying out valuable research on pond restoration techniques.

Second Life for Ponds

Second Life for Ponds is a two year project funded by SITA Trust, carrying out research on pond management for stoneworts and other plants and animals (particularly great

crested newts). This project is designed for and will inform the implementation of the local and national pond HAPs. The project has elements of research alongside practical implementation of the knowledge gained through this research. The project is focusing on testing different pond restoration techniques through systematic assessments of: (a) their effectiveness for selected target species; (b) the impact on non-target species and water quality; and, (c) the economic and social sustainability of each technique. In order to ensure a holistic approach to pond restoration, phased surveys will be carried out by an invertebrate expert, botanist, vertebrate ecologists and freshwater ecologists.

Following the results from the Second Life for Ponds project, a Stonewort Conservation Strategy for Cambridgeshire will be developed with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership.

Ponds in the Landscape

Thanks to a grant from Countdown 2010 Froglife's Ponds in the Landscape project is now operating across Cambridgeshire. The overarching goal of this project is to halt the decline and degradation of the ecological quality of standing water habitats. By 2011 the project will have increased the ecological integrity of all sixteen sites on which we are working in the county.

A conservation strategy will be drafted for each site based on climate change adaptation and adaptive management principles. This strategy will strengthen and expand existing populations of target species by restoring habitats, creating buffer zones and connecting habitats to create pond landscapes.

London Living Water

Froglife has made a real splash in London with our London Living Water project, funded by The City Bridge Trust, Cory Environmental Trust in Britain and Baily Thomas Charitable Trust. The project is working in a number of London boroughs to restore and promote ponds and their surrounding habitats. The project is also developing volunteer groups to carry out the work.

The project is now employing two project officers who are very busy with 'hands-on' pond restoration/creation schemes and providing advice to community groups, schools, allotment holders and 'Friends of' groups. Froglife is also attending a number of events across London to raise awareness of the biodiversity value of standing water habitats.



FROGLIFE: GENERATING SUPPORT

Working with the media:

Helping people understand the threats that amphibians and reptiles face, and the actions that can be taken to help, is vital for conservation action to be both successful and sustainable.

Froglife has a long-standing reputation for working with the media effectively. In 2008 this was particularly true, with national coverage of our media stories on radio (highlights were featured on Radio 4's *Today Programme* in both March and August), on TV (*The One Show*, *Newsround* and numerous regional news pieces) and in print (*The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, *The Independent* and the *Daily Mirror* among a long list). Use of the Froglife website has also increased by 34%, from 64,211 unique visits in 2007 to 86,102 in 2008.

During the past year we have taken part in:

- 11 national radio interviews
- 35 local radio interviews
- 9 articles in national magazines
- 55 local & national newspapers/articles
- 10 national & regional TV interviews & features

Face-to-face awareness-raising:

Meeting people and talking face-to-face about amphibian and reptile conservation is a very effective means for raising conservation awareness. This year our Pond Doctor stand (with portable pond) attended five events across the UK and our staff spoke with over three thousand people.



Advising the public:

Froglife's advice service continues to receive numerous requests for assistance with a wide range of amphibian and reptile related issues. We have carried out a great deal of work on our website, which is now a hub for many things herpetological.

Froglife has encouraged partnership working within the conservation sector on a number of media issues covering amphibians and reptiles. These include work on amphibian disease with The Zoological Society of London, encouraging good practice for garden owners with Devon Wildlife Trust and leading on amphibian and reptile output from the BBC's Breathing Places partnership.

In many of our media stories we have voiced concerns on issues that impact negatively on our species. These issues include promoting pond safety (contravening safety announcements to fill-in ponds); giving clear information on the threat of adder bites (with The Herpetological Conservation Trust); and responding to media criticism of the law relating to Great Crested Newt conservation.

Survey training and identification:

Thanks to a grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership we delivered an extensive volunteer training programme for our Hampton Nature Reserve volunteers. Identification training included amphibians, aquatic plants, water vole and butterflies. We will be collecting more information about the number of water voles, butterflies, stoneworts and aquatic plants during 2009. Our volunteers were also instrumental in assisting us with the annual Great Crested Newt survey on the Reserve, with volunteers turning out to help our staff late at night and in all sorts of weather.

We have continued to work closely with several schools and we have hosted over thirty volunteer sessions on Hampton Nature Reserve in Peterborough. Over fifty volunteers support our work on the Reserve, along with support from young people as part of Froglife's Peterborough Environment Enrichment Project and our Green Pathways Scheme.

Publications:

A new booklet called *Just Add Water* will be launched early in 2009. Like Pond Heaven (now out-of-print) the new booklet will give people all the information that they need to create pond habitats, particularly of benefit for amphibians in urban areas. The booklet will be a central part of our *Just Add Water* campaign – a public awareness campaign to encourage garden (or community/school) pond building in urban areas.



FROGLIFE: VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Lots of exciting things have been happening on Hampton Nature Reserve in 2008.

Ponds for Life

Our Ponds for Life project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has enabled us to take Hampton Nature Reserve out to more people, and to bring new people and audiences onto the Reserve landscape. Numerous local groups have come to find out about the history of the area, to see the rich array of wildlife on the Reserve and come on walks to experience the incredible landscape for themselves. Lots of people turned out in October for our *Big Draw, Big Newt* event. Activities included creating a giant newt made of bricks, donated by local companies Mears Ltd, Wolseley and Cross Keys Homes.

London Living Waters

Working with individuals with learning disabilities is another aspect of conservation that we have moved forward on in 2008. Our London Living Waters project is working in partnership with Owl Housing – service providers for individuals with learning disabilities. A group of individuals of mixed abilities have set themselves up as the *Green Volunteers* and are assisting with pond restoration and habitat management at Bedfont Lakes Reserve in Hounslow. A total of 21 sessions have been hosted on this reserve and a great time has been had by all.



Rebecca Tuplin/Froglife



Outdoor Learning

Our new Outdoor Classroom has been an enormous boost to the activities that are run on the Reserve, with facilities that include a woodland classroom, bird-hide and pond-dipping platform. Francesca Barker (our Conservation Officer) has also completed the Forest School BTEC Level 3 training so is well-equipped to provide children with a wide range of exciting outdoor activities.

Peterborough Natural Networks

Froglife became involved in a trial project with Peterborough Natural Networks and we now have ten handheld computers (PDAs) with Mobile Explorer software – allowing access to GPS-guided information about the Reserve and its wildlife. Groups can follow a guided walk, stop and listen to recorded bird calls, and identify tracks and signs.

Peterborough Environment Enrichment Project

Our work with the Peterborough Youth Offending Service has gone from strength to strength. All of the young people with whom we work now contribute to local conservation initiatives, including taking part in habitat management on Hampton Nature Reserve, and building ponds on local allotments. Promising young people are being signposted to our Green Pathways Scheme giving them the opportunity to obtain additional conservation skills.

Green Pathways Scheme

Thanks to a BBC Children in Need grant, Froglife's Green Pathways Scheme is now up and running, working with young people aged 10-17 living in the Peterborough area. This unique scheme is providing young people with innovative opportunities to take part in wildlife conservation activities that will lead to them developing lifelong skills and an appreciation for nature. The scheme is working particularly with 'at risk' young people and is delivering informal conservation coaching and opportunities to gain qualifications through targeted 'on the job' training. The young people will be working towards completing their Youth Achievement Awards. Managed by UK Youth, these awards give young people the opportunities to plan and lead activities and take ownership of setting personal goals as well as listing the actions needed to achieve them – an invaluable skill.

Youth Inclusion Project

Froglife has been working in partnership with the YMCA on the Youth Inclusion Project. The project is working with young people mainly with a Pakistani background to plan and provide locally based conservation activities. Sessions include site visits, surveying for wildlife and carrying out habitat conservation work to make local spaces more attractive to both people and wildlife. We will also be training staff and volunteers in conservation and wildlife gardening to help make the project sustainable after Froglife's involvement in the project ends.

FROGLIFE: CITIZEN SCIENCE

Frog Mortality Project

Working with our colleagues at the Institute of Zoology (ZSL), we encouraged people to get out in their gardens and do a health-check of their amphibians as part of UK-wide actions to discover more about non-native amphibian disease in the wild. Much of our work centred around awareness-raising and developing Froglife's capacity to acquire information on disease incidents through web-based recording. These actions helped us acquire more information in 2008: overall we saw a two-fold increase in reports to Froglife of frog mortality 'events' consistent with ranavirus symptoms (87 out of 270 reports submitted in 2008).

Ranaviruses are a group of viruses that infect amphibians, fish and reptiles and some have been shown to kill spawn and tadpoles as well as adult amphibians. Studies have shown the virus to be closely related to those found in North American amphibians. One possibility, yet to be fully investigated, is that the virus was introduced with imports of North American bullfrogs or freshwater fish. Since 1992 Froglife has received over 5,600 disease reports and has collected information on the deaths of an estimated 80,000 frogs.

The Frog Mortality Project database held by Froglife is the largest of its kind in the world. In the next two years we will be looking to expand on the value of this dataset by developing our research on control populations.

Toads on Roads campaign

Our Toads on Roads project continues to provide toad patrols with advice on how to help migrating toads across roads. Thanks to the support that we received from Amphibian and Reptile Groups UK (ARG UK) we received data from 72 sites this year – a new record. With the help of our network of toad patrollers, we know that an incredible 30,000 toads were moved across UK roads this year. In addition we had over 30 new registrations and made contact with 21 sites we had not heard from in recent years. Our website now hosts a map showing all the registered crossings in the UK and whether they are active or not, or if their status is unknown. In addition soon, courtesy of Google Earth, you will be able to explore any site in the UK by zooming in on satellite maps that show where crossings occur, where ponds sit and how many toads made the crossing the previous year.



Buffy Kemp

FROGLIFE: LOOKING FORWARD

Froglife is committed to working as efficiently as possible to ensure that we optimise the resources available to us. To this end we work collaboratively with other specialist herpetofauna groups, especially The Herpetological Conservation Trust (HCT) and ARG UK. A significant development in 2008 has been discussions on possible closer working arrangements with The HCT. It is our ambition to have defined the working relationship by mid-2009.

2009 will be a big year for Froglife. We're celebrating twenty years of conservation work for amphibians and reptiles, and as well as developing our current projects – locally, regionally and nationally – we'll be adding a few more to the pot.

Just Add Water

One key campaign that we are hoping will be an enormous success is *Just Add Water*. This campaign will revive interest in making wildlife ponds, for the benefit of amphibians (and other wildlife) living in urban areas. The campaign will centre around a new booklet (titled *Just Add Water: How to build a wildlife pond*) which we are producing with support from a number of organisations. The booklet will provide updated advice on issues such as pond safety, creating other freshwater habitats, including smaller ponds and bog gardens along with important advice on reducing the spread of non-native invasive species and diseases.

Froglife Scotland

In 2009 we will be launching our Glasgow Living Water project. The response we have received from Glaswegians throughout the project's development has been overwhelmingly positive. We hope to be able to extend to other areas in Scotland over the next few years.

Snakes in the Landscape

Our native reptiles are very much a neglected group of species, with many landowners having little knowledge about the habitat requirements for widespread reptile species. Froglife has developed an exciting project in partnership with Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. The Snakes in the Landscape project will take place within Lee Valley Regional Park and will: improve habitat for grass snakes and other reptiles; gain a greater understanding of their distribution within the park; increase awareness of the needs of the species amongst operational staff, and establish a long term monitoring strategy for the park. Importantly, the project will also raise awareness of the habitat requirements for

the species amongst the general public. We are optimistic of securing funding for this project and being able to start this exciting work by mid-2009.

Froglife's vision is really refreshingly simple...

Ken Livingstone, Froglife's Patron

Other projects in development

In addition to Snakes in the Landscape, our proposed Leapfrog project will look to bring amphibians back into urban areas through school networks and Frogwatch – our national garden survey – will be gathering control data for our work on frog disease.

In 2009 we will also have completed updating all our advice sheets, and watch out for our new *Outdoor Classroom* pack which will be an amalgamation of all our education resources. The new pack will take people of all ages on a truly wild journey.

Our commitment to the environment

Froglife is committed to acting in an environmentally conscientious manner at all times. This applies to our staff, to our projects and to our workplace.

In 2008, we have made the following steps:

- All office-waste is recycled where possible (compostables are sent to the Froglife allotment).
- Froglife operates on principles of non-consumerism – at all times we encourage staff to recycle or re-use resources where possible and make conscientious economic decisions regarding project expenditure.
- All of our new Froglife publications are printed on FSC-approved or recycled paper.
- Froglife has committed to a local initiative to 'green-up' local offices as a showcase for Peterborough.
- Our staff use public transport wherever possible.
- 10% of our Froglife Friends have committed to 'Paperless Friendship'.
- We are committed to Fairtrade and organic produce. All new Froglife merchandise is now Fairtrade-approved and produced organically where possible.

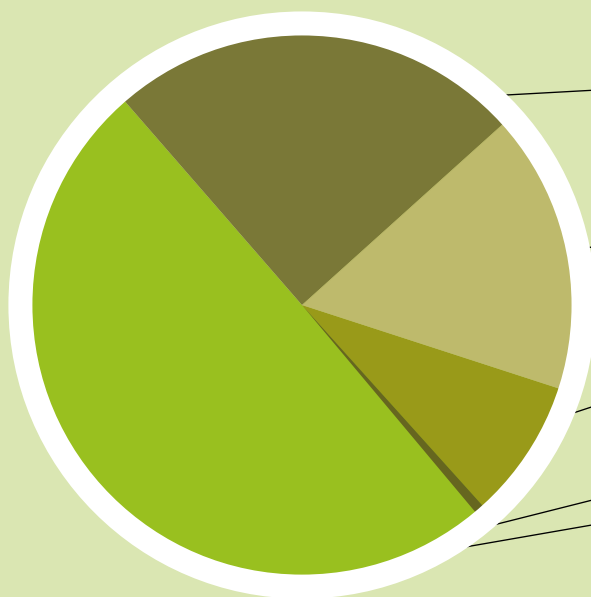
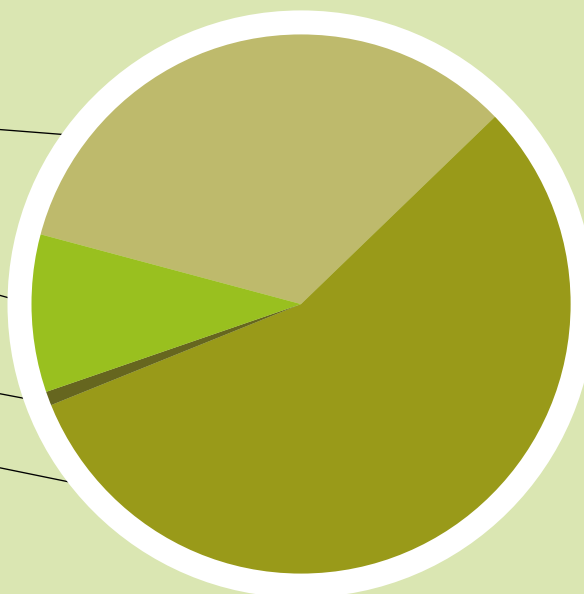
FROGLIFE: FINANCES

Grants and donations (unrestricted) 34%
£128,206

Trading and other activities 9%
£35,776

Investment Income 1%
£3,906

Grants and donations (restricted) 56%
£213,364



Education and training 24%
£89,360

Information and awareness 17%
£61,039

Cost of generating funds 8%
£30,771

Governance costs 1%
£2,066

Conservation of amphibians & reptiles 50%
£182,178

“Frogs have captured the human imagination for generations, yet we can see them also as ‘canaries in the coalmine’ for the survival of future generations.”

Professor Aubrey Manning
Opening address at Froglife’s Year of the Frog event, November 2008

A year in numbers...

54% increase in Froglife Friends in 2008. **26 million** – estimated reach through Froglife media work in 2008.

Over 3,000 answers given to public enquiries. **16** – number of projects that Froglife is currently coordinating.

32 – number of new ponds Froglife are working to create in the next two years. **50** – restored ponds we are working to produce in the next two years.

FROGLIFE: CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Froglife has gained an enviable reputation within the sector for carrying out ecological projects related to amphibian and reptile survey and mitigation. Very often we are the first port of call. The income that we earn from these contracts is paid into the charity and this funding helps us immensely in delivering our conservation priorities.

FROGLIFE: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Froglife has always valued partnership working and most of our projects do involve some form of partnership. We would particularly like to thank the following organisations for their continued help and support:

A&K Fencing Contractors; Amphibian Ark; Amphibian and Reptile Groups UK (ARG UK); BBC; Better Together Volunteers; BBC Breathing Places; British Waterways London; Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership; The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences; Cross Keys Homes; Connexions; The Environment Agency; Eco Arts; Farcet CoE Primary School; Flag Fen; Greater Dogsthorpe Partnership; Greater London Authority; Greater Peterborough Partnership; The Herpetological Conservation Trust; Lee Valley Regional Park Authorities; London Biodiversity Partnership; Marshall of Cambridge Aerospace Ltd; Natural England; Peterborough City Council; Peterborough Environment City Trust; Pond Conservation; Royal Parks; Royal Zoological Society of Scotland; Sparx Youth Project; Thames Water; University of Glasgow; University of Cambridge Zoological Museum; Wildlife and Countryside LINK; The Wildlife Trusts; Woodland Trust Scotland; YMCA; Young Lives; Zoological Society of London.

FROGLIFE: THANKS YOU...

...for the terrific support we have received from so many quarters this year. We would like to thank all of our volunteers including our Trustees who have given up enormous amount of their time to the organisation, and to our Froglife Friends whose donations and continued support have contributed greatly to our work.

We would particularly like to thank the following Froglife Friends for going the extra mile: Annemarie Hammond; Joan Butterfield; John Walker (www.artangel.co.uk), Jane Sandeman.

Thanks to the following organisations for their grant support: Baily Thomas Charitable Fund; BBC Children in Need; British Waterways; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership; The Centre for Environment; Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences; Chapman Charitable Trust; Cory Environmental Trust in Britain; City Bridge Trust; The Dulverton Trust; The Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust; Esmée; Essex and Suffolk Water; Fairbairn Charitable Trust; The Environment Agency; The Greater Dogsthorpe Partnership; Google Grants; Heritage Lottery Fund; The John Spedan Lewis Foundation; Kaiser Trust – supporting the community; Natural England Countdown 2010; Northumbria Water; O₂ 'It's your community' Award; O&H Hampton Ltd; Peterborough Youth Offending Service; Scottish Natural Heritage; SITA Trust; The Wakeham Trust; YMCA.

And our thanks to Herpetosure (www.herpetosure.com) for being our Gold Corporate Supporter, and to John Muir Country Store (www.johnmuircountrystore.com), a Bronze Corporate Supporter. Our additional thanks to the following companies who have supported Froglife in 2008: Perkins Engines (provision of premises); Mears Ltd (provision of premises, materials and financial support); Wolseley UK (provision of materials).

And last but not least thanks to our dedicated staff who have worked tirelessly to promote amphibian and reptile conservation.

Sign up for Frog-bites! Frog-bites are free email bulletins from Froglife, aimed at providing up to the minute information on upcoming events, updates on Froglife's campaigns, along with further details on the part you can play in helping conserve the UK's amphibians and reptiles. To sign up visit: www.froglife.org/sign_up.htm



protecting amphibians
and reptiles in the wild

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