BLOOM ASSOCIATION HONG KONG

ANNUAL REPORT

2015 – 2016

VISION AND MISSION

To resist the fate of an overfished, barren ocean in the future, by proving that dedicated action can reverse the course of environmental and human tragedy. Giving a voice to the voiceless; ensuring that humanity has a future where children have food and fishermen have jobs, by restoring ocean ecosystems to their full biological capacity.

4 PRINCIPLES OF OUR WORK

ONE. SHARING WHAT WE KNOW

Bringing knowledge of the many problems and solutions to ocean conservation issues, both local and global, to people, both local and global.

TWO. RESEARCH

Creating new information and filling knowledge gaps about ocean conservation and the marine world by carrying out scientifically rigorous research.

THREE. ADVOCACY

Assisting Hong Kong's progression towards a future of sustainable oceans and fisheries by working with governments in establishing and enforcing marine policies.

FOUR. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Engaging the public through creative media to spread the word about our work, and restoring a sense of personal responsibility to marine conservation in all levels of the general public.

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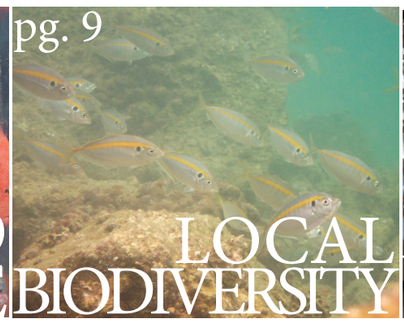
pg. 8 SEAFOOD TRADE



pg. 9 LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

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SHARKS

PREPARING FOR CITES CoP17

The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17) will be held from 24 September to 5 October 2016 at Johannesburg, South Africa.

Four species of shark and all species of mobula rays are proposed for listing onto Appendix II of CITES this meeting. These include:

Big eye thresher
Alopias superciliosus

Common thresher
Alopias vulpinus

Pelagic thresher
Alopias pelagius

Silky sharks
Carcharhinus falciformis

Mobula rays
Mobula spp.

Collaborating with The Pew Charitable Trust and Abercrombie & Fish, BLOOM HK continued to meet with governments of major shark fin trading nations/territories to garner support for the shark and ray species listings of CoP17.

Capacity Building

As the meeting approaches, interest among governments to prepare for the potential listing of the proposed species is also rising.

Identification guides for the newly proposed shark species were prepared and distributed. On this project, BLOOM HK has provided support for the editing and translation of the shark fin ID guides.

In addition, BLOOM HK has also had the pleasure of joining the shark fin identification workshops hosted for governments around the world, to share our knowledge on shark fin identification, the Hong Kong market, and perspectives on shark conservation. More detail on these workshops can be found in page 13.

The shark fin identification guides prepared by The Pew Charitable Trust and Abercrombie & Fish.

BLOOM HK has had the pleasure of presenting in shark and ray conservation workshops for governments around the world.

SHARKS IN RESEARCH

SHARK FIN IN THE MARKET

The quest for greater understanding for the local shark fin market continues. This year's research have showed promising results.

Species Composition Through DNA Analysis

BLOOM HK continues to collaborate with the Stony Book University in the study to identify shark species involved in Hong Kong's shark fin market.

This year, results from the initial years of survey work have shown interesting implications. The study is undergoing review for journal publication. Updates will be uploaded to the BLOOM website in due course.

Market Study

Hong Kong has a large local market for shark fin, and retail and wholesale markets contain shark fins from all over the world. BLOOM HK is keeping track of changes in the market, maintaining a list of all shark fin-offering stores found in one of the major dried seafood market districts -- and area stretching from Sheung Wan to Sai Ying Pun.

Trade Dynamics

Hong Kong is one of the largest trade hubs of shark fin in the world. Advantaged with a tax-free port and accessibility into mainland China, Hong Kong stands in a unique position for the collection of data to do with shark fin trade into and out of Hong Kong.

BLOOM HK has drafted a co-authored paper to document these trades. Bringing together extensive research in transportation modes, imports, re-exports and highlighting where there are possibilities of illegal trades, the paper provides a reference for how shark fin has been traded through Hong Kong since 1997. The paper is now under review.

INTO MAINLAND CHINA

A large portion of shark fins imported into Hong Kong are then re-exported, most of which is believed to end up in mainland China through various routes. This highlights China's crucial role as a major shark fin trader and consumer.

Similar to Hong Kong, major shark fin retail and wholesale markets are also found in mainland China's Guangzhou. These markets are typically found as specialized stores clustered in designated malls (whereas Hong Kong's markets offer a great variety of dried seafoods, Guangzhou's specialize in only 1-3 products at a time). Little more is known about how shark fin is sold in those Guangzhou markets.

To better understand mainland China's market, both the market study and the DNA survey has been expanded into Guangzhou.

Gill plates retailed by weight in Hong Kong's Sheung Wan market

MANTA & MOBULA GILL PLATE RESEARCH

BLOOM HK has overseen several undergraduate students of The University of Hong Kong. One of the students is currently engaged in a Final Year Project, to conduct a market study comparing the availability of manta and mobula ray gill plates between Hong Kong's Sheung Wan dried seafood market and Guangzhou's Yide Lu and Qingping markets.

The student, Hau Cheuk Yu's research will be published before CITES CoP17, as a resource supporting the listings of mobula rays onto CITES Appendix II.

Hau Cheuk Yu's research is supervised by Professor Yvonne Sadovy of the School of Biological Sciences, The University of Hong Kong.

Report will be available soon.

SEAFOOD TRADE

Pregnant grouper, ready for spawning in Fiji

SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS

The Science and Conservation of Fish Aggregations (SCRFA) seeks to understand fish species engaging in reproductive aggregations, and protect those species from targeted fisheries.

Many fish species are discovered to engage in aggregation behaviour during mating seasons, forming groups of thousands of individuals. The behaviour is believed to be strategic for increasing rate of success in mating. However, in parts of the world such aggregations are being targeted by fisheries to achieve extremely high harvests. As a result, success of mating is drastically reduced. This method of fishing is, needless to say, highly unsustainable.

BLOOM HK has joined SCRFA in part of their work this year to build a database of all spawning aggregations in the world. Through examining scientific literature, over 950 records of the world's spawning aggregations were recorded, in a joint effort bringing together several local and overseas experts. BLOOM HK is honoured to have participated in this project.

SCRFA Database link:
http://www.scrfa.org/database/

Spawning in Fiji

Alongside Professor Yvonne Sadovy of The University of Hong Kong, BLOOM HK once again traveled to Fiji in July 2015 in an assessment of local spawning grouper aggregations.

HONG KONG 114°E
REEF FISH
SURVEY

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

Lemon damsel
Pomacentrus moluccensis

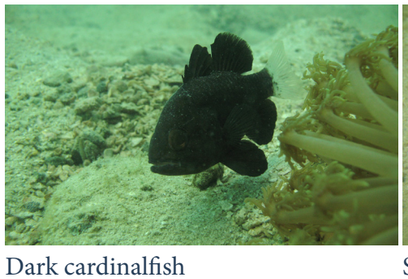
Rock grouper
Epinephelus fasciatomaculosus

Longfin grouper
Epinephelus quoyanus

Broadbanded cardinalfish
Ostorhinchus fasciatus

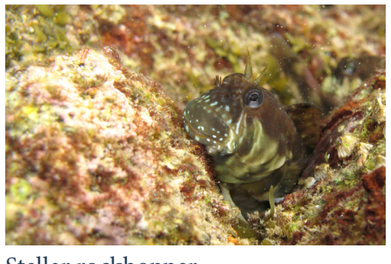
Neon damselfish
Pomacentrus coelestis

Yellowstripe scad
Selaroides leptolepis



Dark cardinalfish
Apogonichthyoides niger

Striped poison fangblenny mimic
Petroscirtes breviceps



Stellar rockhopper
Entomacrodus stellifer lighti

HONG KONG REEF FISHES

The 114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey is an initiative to systematically update the marine reef fish biodiversity records of Hong Kong.

Funded by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Hong Kong, the 114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey continues in its second survey year with encouraging results. This year, the survey has recorded 218 reef fish species, including 2 Endangered (EN), 2 Vulnerable (VU), and 3 Near Threatened (NT) species as categorized by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The findngs also contained 62 species considered rare in Hong Kong.

Night-time Exploration

To expand efforts, the dive surveys have begun to include night dives as trials for the next survey year. The night dive surveys are expected to bring about findings of species not commonly encountered during the day and known to be more active at night, as well as encounters of diurnal speices in their night-time colour variations and showing their night-time behaviours.

Photographic data of these are valuable and will be added to the current collection of information about Hong Kong reef fishes.

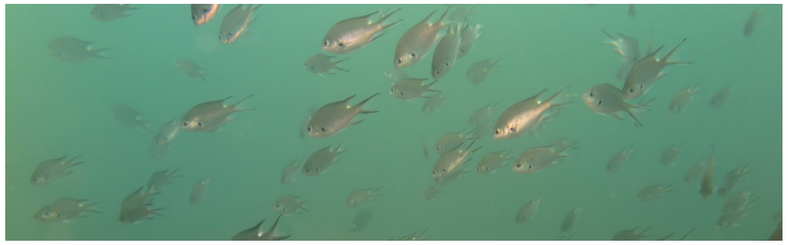
What is 114°E?

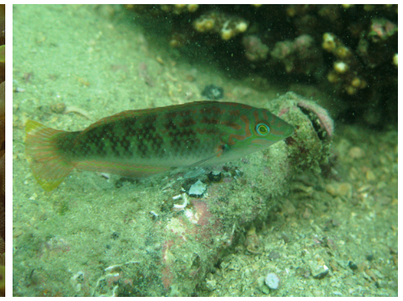
The name "114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey" is newly assigned to the project this year. "114 °E" is the longitude coordinate marking the beginning of the the eastern wasters of Hong Kong, where the water, unaffected by the sediments washing in from the Pearl River Delta, is relatively higher in visibility and is where the surveys take place. With this new name, a new official logo was also designed as the new face of the survey project.

Citizenship Science

A core objective of the project is to engage non-scientists and recreational divers in the survey team in the collection of scientifically sound data.

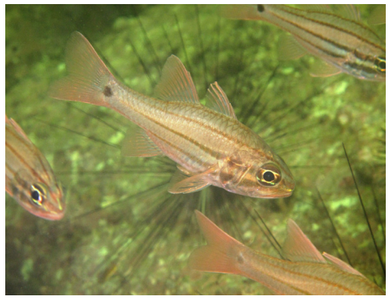
To date, at least 60 divers have joined the project as volunteers. The survey will continue to grow in the years ahead, bringing knowledge of Hong Kong's reef fishes to wider audiences.

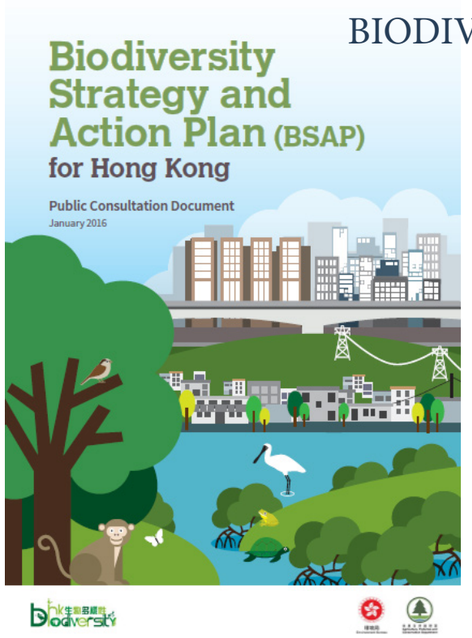




THIS YEAR'S TOP 10
MOST FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED SPECIES

From top to bottom, left to right: Pearl-spot chromis (*Chromis notata*), Chinese demoiselle (*Neopomacentrus bankieri*), Yellowtail clownfish (*Amphprion clarkii*), Bubblefin wrasse (*Haliochoeres nigrescens*), Doublebar cardinalfish (*Apogonichthyoides pseudotaeniatus*), Doederlein's cardinalfish (*Apogon doederleini*), Chocolate hind (*Cephalopholis boenak*), False kelpfish (*Sebasticus marmoratus*), U-mark sandperch (*Parapercis snyderi*), White-spotted spinefoot (*Siganus canaliculatus*)





BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

BLOOM HK has been involved in Hong Kong's BSAP work since the beginning in 2013. In the year past, BLOOM HK was represented in 5 of BSAP's working and focus groups to strategize an action plan for the consideration and implementation by AFCD. These included:

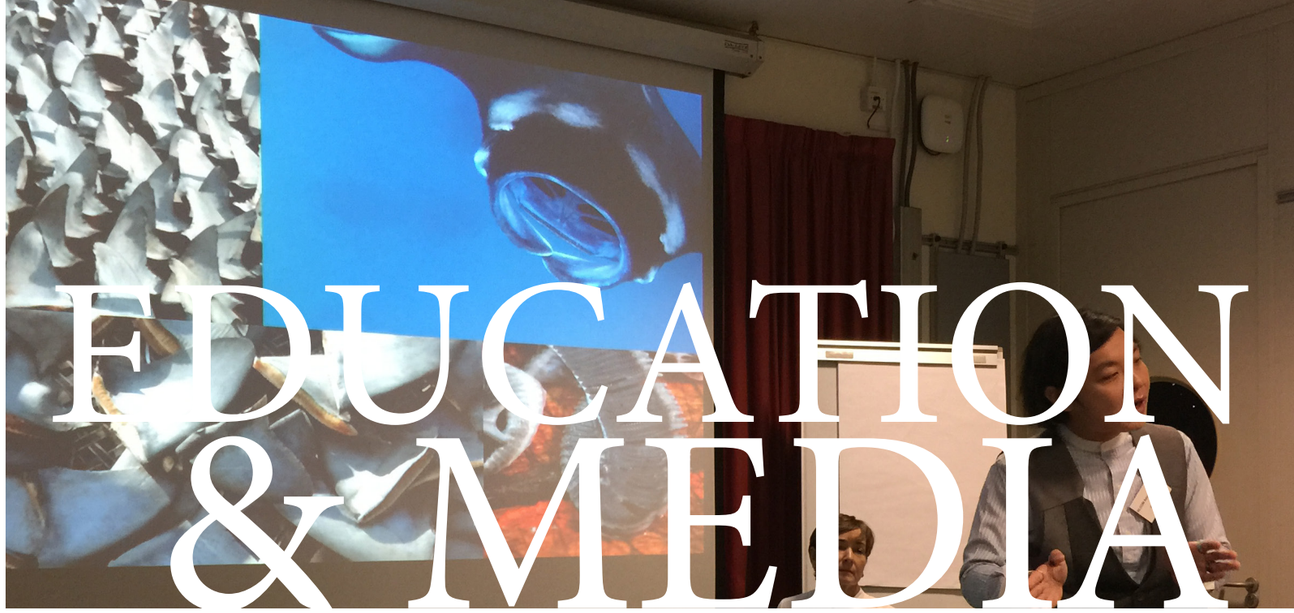
1. Sustainable Use, Ecological Footprint and Ecosystem Services
2. Marine Habitat
3. NGO
4. Standards and Red List -- Marine fishes
5. Sustainable Use of Marine Resources

This year, the AFCD held it's first public consultation on the drafted BSAP. BLOOM HK will continue to be actively involved in the plan's formulation where possible.

The BSAP for Hong Kong Public Consultation Document was released on January 2016. BLOOM HK has submitted an individual response.

Hong Kong's local marine biodiversity used to be able to support the consumption of the entire city. Now, our seafood is imported from 150 countries/territories, and local yields are reportedly in decline. How can the local fish stocks be restored? What is left of our once abundant marine resources?

From this year onwards, BLOOM HK will be investing added resources into the issues of local marine biodiversity conservation, as well for understanding the local seafood trade and consumption.



EDUCATION & MEDIA

Sharing information about marine science and conservation is one of the core principles of BLOOM HK's work. BLOOM HK has provided numerous seminars each year to a variety of audiences, on topics of sharks and marine protection, both locally and around the world.

SHARKS TALKS:
HONG KONG SHARK TALE

BLOOM HK was invited to give seminars on several occassions, arranged by and for various other organizations and causes. Some of these included:

- AFCD Summer Series
- Wildlife Crime Report press event
- Take Action! Youth Biodiversity Conservation Leadership and Training Scheme 2015/16
- Rotary Club
- Discovery College
- Mainland China's Marine Traders Association
- China Ocean Philanthropy Forum, Hainan
- IUCN Workshop, Fiji

CITES SHARK
FIN IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

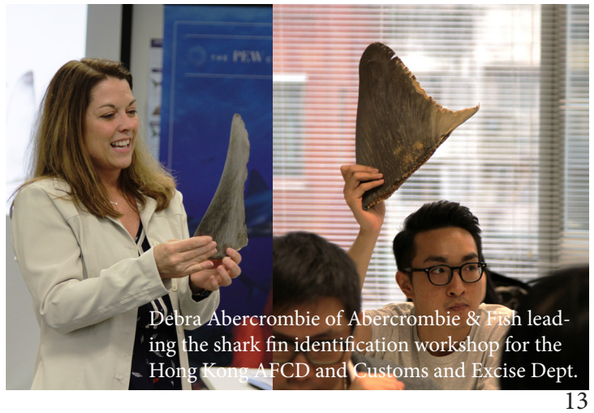
As part of the capacity building work in collaboration with governments around the world, BLOOM HK has joined in the effort to assist in the shark fin identification workshops for frontline government officials.

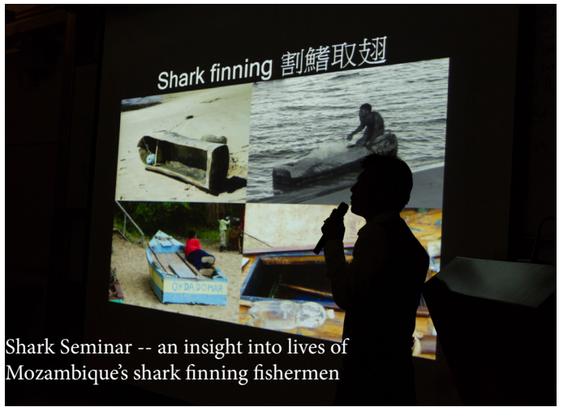
The objective of the workshops is to enable government officials to visually identify shark fins belonging to CITES-regulated species. Since Hong Kong's implementation day in November 2014, the regulated species have expanded to include the oceanic white-tip, porbeagle, great hammerhead, smooth hammerhead and scalloped hammerhead sharks. A further four species have been proposed for the upcoming CITES CoP17 (as detailed in page 6).

Real fins, including those of these five regulated shark species, are used in the workshops. Using the identificaiton guide prepared by The Pew Charitable Trust and Abercrombie & Fish, the visual identification of the regulated species is made possible, increasing the efficiency of inspections at port.

Along with The Pew Charibale Trust and Abercrombie & Fish, this workshop was taken to the following governments this year:

- AFCD, Hong Kong SAR
- Customs and Excise Department, Hong Kong SAR
- Various governments attending the CITES Animals Committee, Israel 2015
- Mainland China's Marine Traders Association, Guangzhou
- Government of Maldives

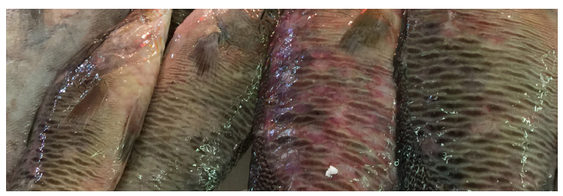

Debra Abercrombie of Abercrombie & Fish leading the shark fin identification workshop for the Hong Kong AFCD and Customs and Excise Dept.



Shark Seminar -- an insight into lives of Mozambique's shark finning fishermen

Introducing the 114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey at the Take Action! Scheme


Conservation seminar at the City University of Hong Kong



SEAFOOD TRADE SEMINARS:

HONG KONG SEAFOOD TALE

Hong Kong is not only a trade hub for shark fins, but also for a wide array of live seafood and dried seafood. As the underlying issues related to the sustainability of the trade in various types of seafood gain attention, BLOOM HK's talks have also expanded to discuss such topics with various audiences and occasions, including:

- AFCD Summer Series
- Take Action! Youth Biodiversity Conservation Leadership and Training Scheme 2015/16
- Discovery College
- Live Reef Food Fish seminar, Government of Fiji

Groupers and wrasses, including the humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*), are fishes of particular concern given Hong Kong's appetite for those species. In the coming year, BLOOM HK will be working increasingly on these topics.

LOCAL MARINE BIODIVERSITY:

HONG KONG FISH TALE

One of the objectives of the114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey is to spread knowledge about the level of Hong Kong's underwater biodiveresity. Sharings are arranged for a range of audiences, including:

- 2015 Yorko Summer: My Footprints in the Sea
- 114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey: Reef Fish Identification and Hong Kong Marine Conservation
- City University of Hong Kong

The sharing includes a short section on basic reef fish species underwater identification skills. Invitations for these seminars are welcome.

MEDIA

Media interviews about any of BLOOM HK's work and topics of interest are welcome. For more information, please contact Ms. Kathleen Ho (contact in the following page).

REPORT PUBLICATIONS THIS YEAR

All reports are available for download on the BLOOM Association Hong Kong webpage

- Summary Report: Survey on shark consumption habits and attitudes in Hong Kong 2009/2010
  A summary of the results of a survey conducted between 2009 and 2010, examining the sentiments of Hong Kong people towards shark fin consumption and shark and ocean conservation.
- Dining on Shark Fins: A snapshot of shark fins offered by Macau's leading casino-hotels
  A summary of the results of a study conducted in 2013 on Macau's hospitality industry to understsand the provision of shark fin-related dishes.

THE HONG KONG TEAM

Stan Shea
Marine Programme Director, Hong Kong

Stan is the most long-standing member of BLOOM Association Hong Kong. Joined in 2009, he is the face and steer of all of BLOOM's projects in Hong Kong, whether in research, advocacy or outreach. He believes strongly in spreading the message of conservation as a key step in protecting the oceans. To date his seminars have reached over 8000 individuals worldwide.

Stan holds a BSc in Environmental Sciences from Oxford Brookes University and a Master's degree in Ecology and Biodiversity from The University of Hong Kong.

Stan's Publications:

To, A.W.L., Ching, K.S.H., and Shea, S.K.H. (2013). Hong Kong Reef Fish Photo Guide. Hong Kong: Eco-Education and Resources Centre.

To, A.W.L., and Shea, S.K.H. (2012). Patterns and dynamics of bêche-de-mer trade in Hong Kong and mainland China: Implications for monitoring and management. TRAFFIC Bulletin 24 (2), pp 65 - 76.

Kathleen Ho
Marine Pogramme Co-ordinator, Hong Kong

Kathleen joined the BLOOM Hong Kong office in January 2015, after obtaining a BSocSc degree in Geography and an M.Phil. in environmental ethics, both from The University of Hong Kong.

At BLOOM, Kathleen is chiefly responsible for managing ongoing projects of the marine programme, assisting with field research and engaging the younger audiences for information sharing seminars. She also handles all administrative and accounting tasks.

Funding

This year, BLOOM HK was 100% funded by, in alphabetical order, ADM Capital Foundation, Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Hong Kong, Research Foundation of SUNY, Stony Brook University, Simon K. Y. Lee Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trust and donations from the Herbert Smith Freehills Dragon-boat fundraising event.

Contact

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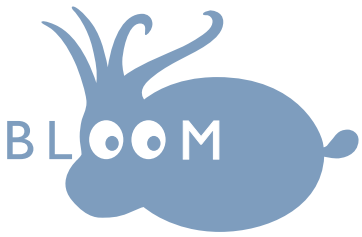
Visit our website: www.bloomassociation.org/en/

BLOOM HK meets the France team in Paris, January 2016

This report was prepared by Kathleen Ho, BLOOM HK
All photos in this report are provided by Stan Shea, BLOOM HK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