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# Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries

2023 Year in Review  
January – August



**HMS Advisory Panel Meeting  
September 2023**

# 2023 Bluefin Tuna Year In Review

## 2023 Recreational BFT Fishery

- Rec Trophy season and successful implementation of 4<sup>th</sup> Trophy area

## 2023 Commercial Handgear BFT Fishery

- June – August General/CHB
- General/CHB September, October/November, December

## 2023 Pelagic Longline Update

- 2022 Dead Discard Estimate
- 2023 IBQ Adjudications
- 2024 IBQ Allocation process

## Domestic Management Issues

- Annual underharvest carryover
- Restricted Fishing Days
- Harpoon category feedback
- Dealer permit/state permit



# 2023 Bluefin Tuna Baseline Quotas and Subquotas - Detailed

Category	Annual Baseline Quota (mt) and (%)	Subquotas	Subquota Amounts (mt)
General	710.7 (54%)	January-March	37.7 (5.3%)
		June-August	355.4 (50%)
		September	188.3 (26.5%)
		October-November	92.4 (13%)
		December	37.0 (5.2%)
Harpoon	59.2 (4.5%)		
Longline	209.3 (15.9%)		
Trap	1.3 (0.1%)		
Angling	297.4 (22.6%)	School	134.1
		Reserve	24.8
		North of 39°18' N. lat.	51.6
		South of 39°18' N. lat.	57.7
		Large School/Small Medium	154.1
		North of 39°18' N. lat.	72.7
		South of 39°18' N. lat.	81.4
		Trophy	9.2
		North of 42° N. lat.	2.3
		North of 39°18' N. lat.	2.3
		South of 39°18' N. lat.	2.3
Gulf of Mexico	2.3		
Reserve	38.2 (2.9%)		
<b>U.S. Baseline Quota</b>	<b>1,316.14</b>		
<b>Including 25 mt for NED</b>	<b>1,341.14</b>		



# Adjustments to the 2023 Albacore, Swordfish, and Bluefin Reserve Category Quotas

Temporary, final rule to adjust 2023 baseline quotas based on 2022 underharvest & ICCAT limitations

- Species: North Atlantic albacore, North and South Atlantic swordfish, Atlantic bluefin tuna
- Timing: Not effective yet, anticipated to publish Fall 2023

The proposed 2023 adjusted quotas would be:

- **Atlantic bluefin tuna Reserve category: 133.9 mt**
- North Atlantic albacore tuna: 889.4 mt dressed weight
- North Atlantic swordfish: 3,378.2 mt
- South Atlantic swordfish: 75.2 mt

This action would be effective through December 31, 2023



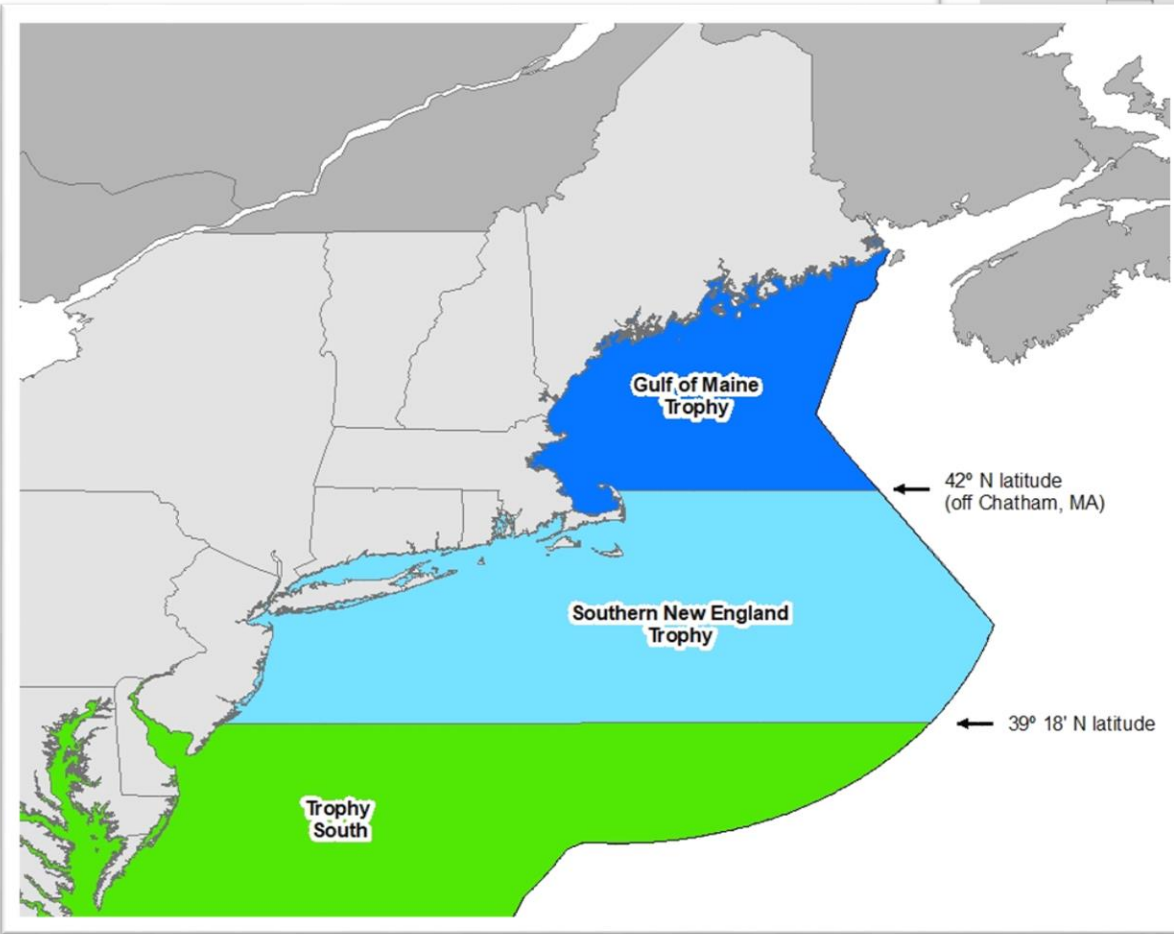
# Angling Category Retention Limits (Recreational)

Default daily limit (private and charter vessels) effective January 1 each year until changed: 1 school, large school, or small medium bluefin tuna (BFT)/vessel/day

	2023	2022	2021
Permit Category (Vessel Type)	Retention Limit per Vessel per Day/Trip		
HMS Angling (Private)	2 school BFT and 1 large school/small medium BFT		
HMS Charter/Headboat (Charter boat)	3 school BFT and 1 large school/small medium BFT		
HMS Charter/Headboat (Headboat)	6 school BFT and 2 large school/small medium BFT		



# New Recreational Trophy Areas for 2023



Amendment 13 divided Northern area into:

- Gulf of Maine
- Southern New England



# Angling Category Trophy Fishery

Retention limit: 1 large medium/giant (73"+) BFT/vessel/year

		Gulf of Maine				S. New England				Southern				Gulf of Mexico			
Year	Quota	MT	No. of Fish	% Quota Used	Date Closed	MT	No. of Fish	% Quota Used	Date Closed	MT	No. of Fish	% quota used	Date Closed	MT	No. of Fish	% Quota used	Date Closed
2023	2.3	2.5	15	107	5-Aug	2.7	15	119	5-Jun	3.9	20	168	2-Feb	4.0	14	174	9-May
		Northern Area						Southern				Gulf of Mexico					
Year	Quota	MT	No. of Fish		% Quota Used	Date Closed		MT	No. of Fish	% quota used	Date Closed	MT	No. of Fish	% Quota used	Date Closed		
2022	1.9	2.1	12		111	29-Jun		5.5	26	289	12-Feb	2.3	8	121	17-May		
2021	1.8	3.6	15		200	11-May		6.6	26	367	1-Mar	2.1	7	117	4-May		



# Harpoon Category Retention Limits, Quota Transfers and Closures via Inseason Action

<b>June 1 - July 13</b>	<b>10 BFT/vessel/day with max of 2 large medium</b>
<b>July 14 - 30</b>	<b>5 BFT/vessel/day with max of 2 large medium</b>
<b>July 21</b>	<b>Add 10.8 mt to Quota</b>
<b>July 30 - December 31</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>

Amendment 13 established the daily retention limit range of 5 to a maximum of 10 BFT/vessel/day (2-4 large medium sized; the rest giants)





## 2023 Harpoon Category Landings

	Landings (mt)	Notes
Large Medium (73 - < 81" )	6.9	9% of Harpoon category landings
Giant (81" +)	66.3	91% of Harpoon category landings
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>124% of the 59.2-mt baseline Harpoon category quota; 105% of the 70-mt adjusted quota</b>

***2023 Of those trips landing at least one BFT , \_\_ % landed :***  
 1 Fish: 48% 2 Fish: 23% 3 Fish: 10% 4-8 Fish: 16% 9-10: Fish: 2%

***2022 Of those trips landing at least one BFT , \_\_ % landed :***  
 1 Fish: 55% 2 Fish: 19% 3 Fish: 11% 4-8 Fish: 14% 9+ Fish: 0%

Preliminary data through August 31, 2023



## Harpoon (Gear) Landings by the General and Harpoon Categories

	2023			2022		
	Number of vessels with landings	Number of fish	Weight (mt)	Number of vessels with landings	Number of fish	Weight (mt)
<b>General category</b>	12	30	4.9	10	27	4.5
<b>Harpoon category</b>	33	393	73.2	25	417	70.8
<b>TOTALS</b>	45	423	78.1	35	444	75.3

Preliminary data through August 31, 2023



# Harpoon Category Feedback

- NMFS continues to receive feedback regarding Harpoon fishing behind New England groundfish vessels
- Fishing at night, bait use, not weather dependent, discards, etc.



Photo sources: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok



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## Harpoon Category Feedback (cont.)

Request to ban harpoon fishing around trawl vessels (groundfish, scallop, or clam dredge vessels)

2022 Petition for Rulemaking denied, yet concerns and requests for action continue

Requesters are concerned that:

- Activity goes against the intent of the Harpoon category fishery and traditional practices
- Could cause the Harpoon category quota to be harvested quickly
- Could bring more and larger vessels into the fishery
- Activity purportedly creates a dangerous situation in which vessels could collide or become tangled in one another's lines
- Increasing number of vessels participating in behavior could exacerbate the above concerns



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# General category Retention Limits, Quota Transfers and Closures via Inseason Action

<b>January 1</b>	<b>Transfer 20.5 mt from December to January-March</b>
<b>January 1 - February 14</b>	<b>1 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day</b>
<b>February 15 - May 31</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>June 1 - 30</b>	<b>3 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day</b>
<b>July 1 - August 17</b>	<b>1 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day, RFDs Tu, Fri, Sat</b>
<b>August 18 - August 31</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b><i>September 1 - November 30</i></b>	<b><i>1 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day RFDs Tu, Fri, Sat</i></b>
<b><i>December 1 - 31</i></b>	<b><i>1 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day</i></b>



## 2023 General Category Landings

	Daily Retention Limit	Landings (mt)	Notes
January 1 – February 14	1	70.1	“January” period subquota of 37.7 adjusted to 58.2 mt
June 1 – 30	3	45.8	Base June-August subquota of 355.4
July 1 – August 17	1	330.6	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>446.4</b>	<b>Cumulative adjusted quota, after inseason transfers, is 413.6 mt</b> <b>106% of the 355.4-mt June through August subquota landed</b>

Preliminary data through August 31, 2023



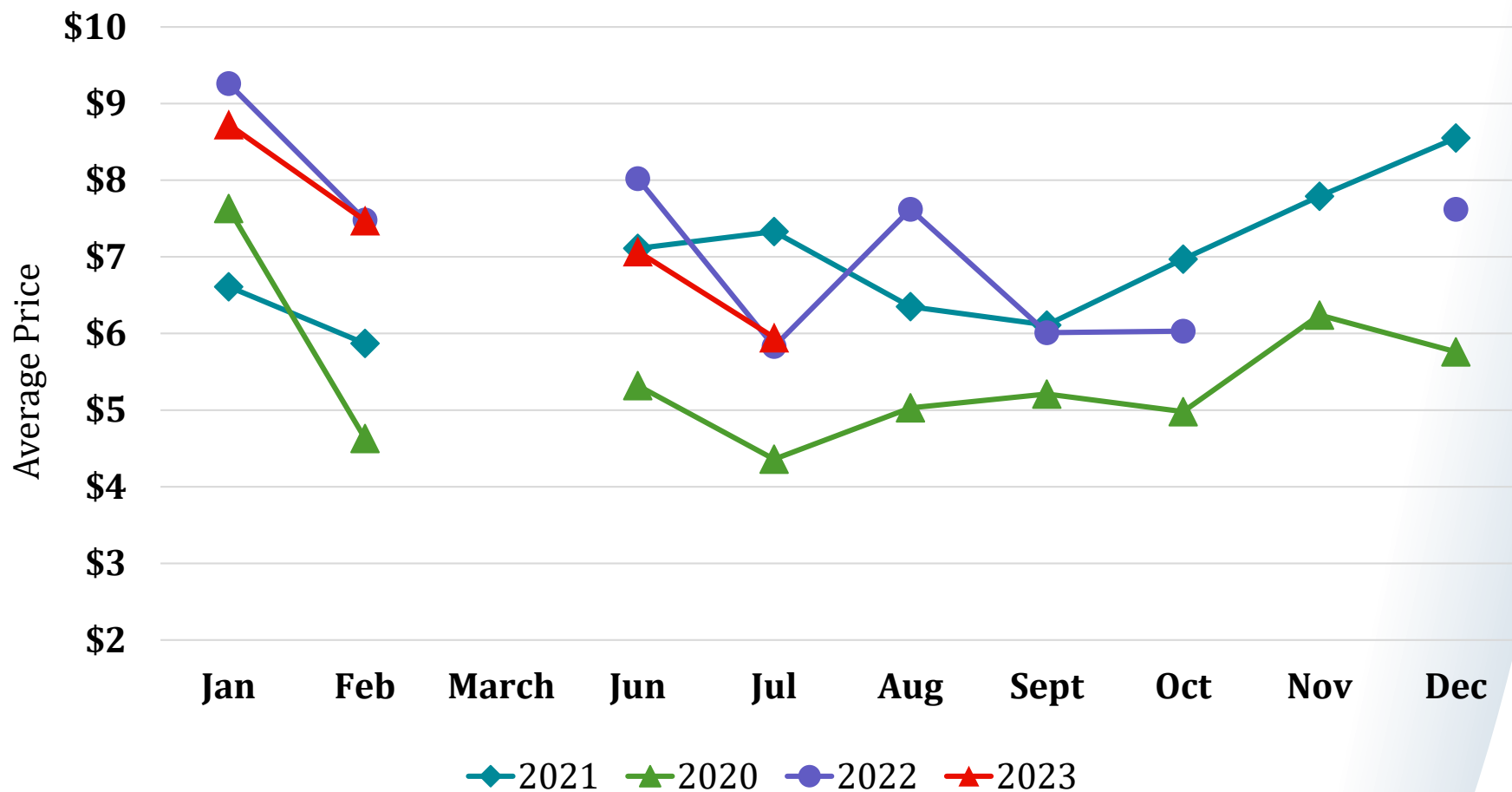
## 2023 General Category Landings

<b>June 1 - 30, 2023</b> <b>(3 large medium/giant (73"+) BFT/vessel/day)</b>		
	<b>Number of trips</b>	<b>% landing BFT</b>
<b>1 fish</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>2 fish</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3 fish</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100</b>

90% of General category trips landed 1 BFT during the period when the retention limit was 3/day.



## General Category Average Price/lb,



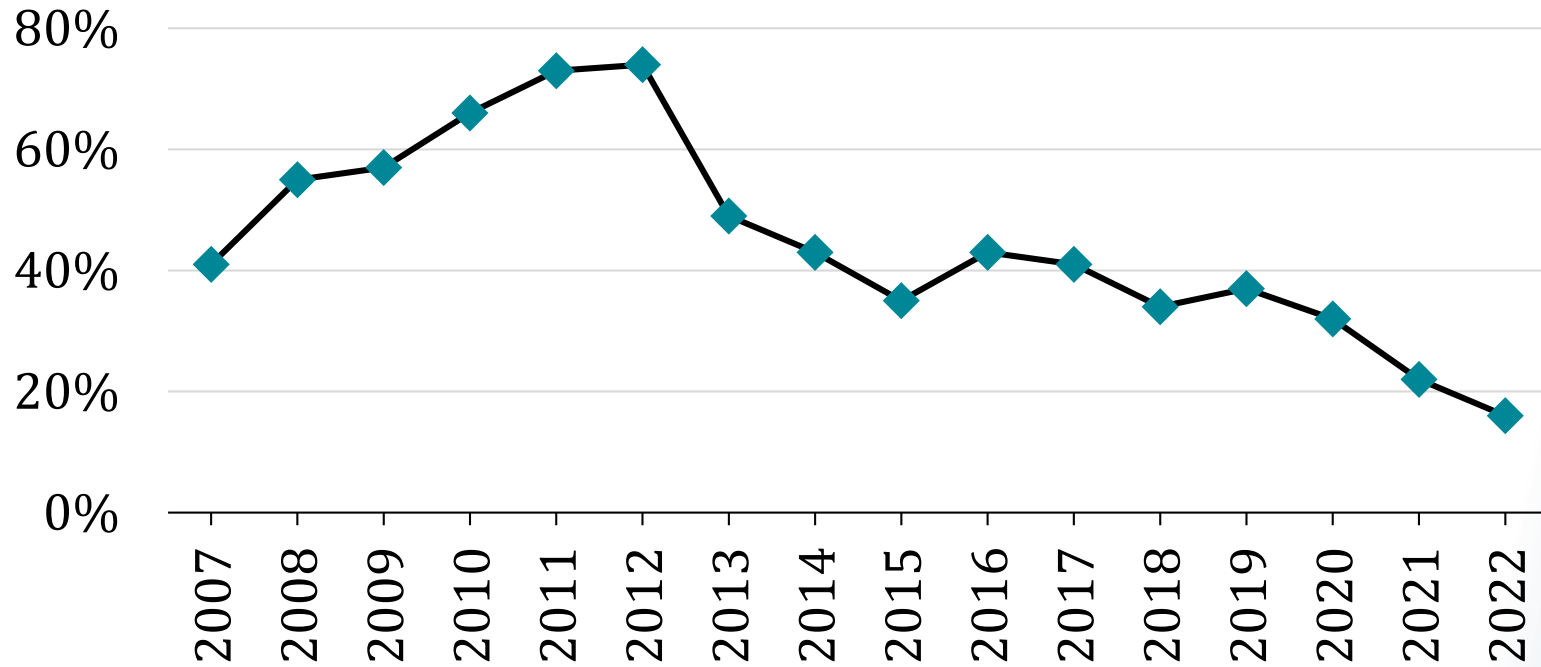
Prices through July 31, 2023



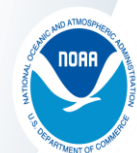


# Exported vs. Domestic Landings

## Percent of BFT Landings that are Exported

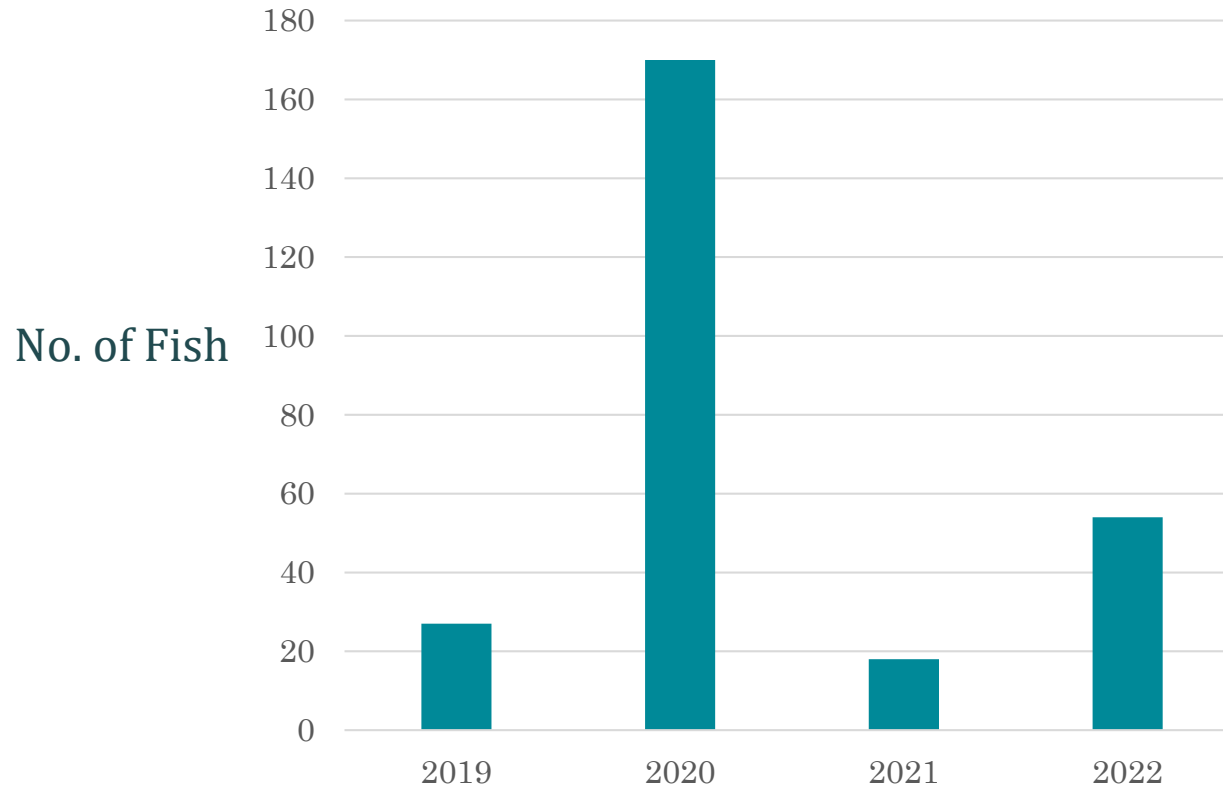


2022	Exports	Domestic
Average Price per lb.	\$6.54	\$6.70
Total Ex-Vessel Value	\$1,968,515	\$10,467,789



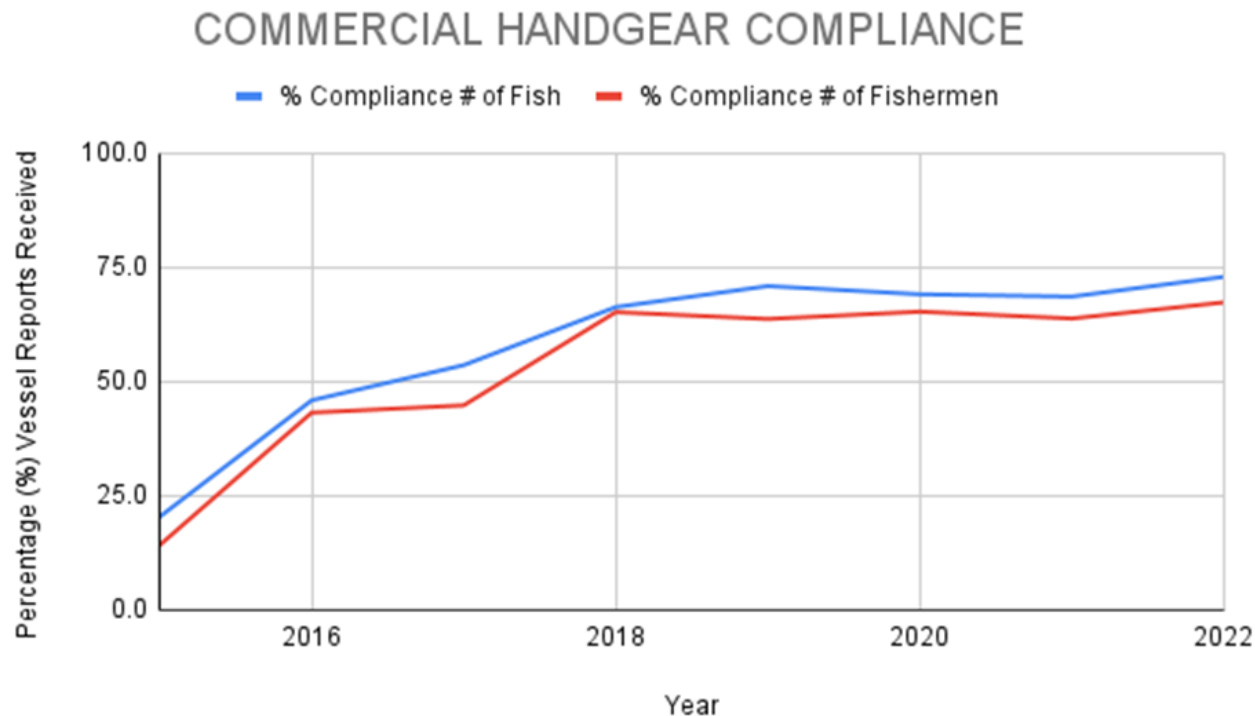
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# Unsold General Category Bluefin Tuna



# BFT Reporting Requirement for General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat Categories

- Vessels are required to report the catch of all BFT retained or discarded dead, within 24 hours of landing or end of each trip, by accessing [hmspermits.noaa.gov](https://hmspermits.noaa.gov) or by using the HMS Catch Reporting app
- Outreach to the fishery continues, including by NOAA Office of Law Enforcement



# General Category Restricted Fishing Days (RFDs)

## Proposed RFDs in the Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fishery for 2023 and 2024 (Feedback):

- 2023 December and 2024 Jan-March time periods; no support
- Support to maintain the Tues, Fri, and Sat RFD schedule
- Received comments to consider 3 and/or 4 consecutive RFDs per week (Thurs, Fri, Sat) or (Fri, Sat, Sun)
- Received comments to eliminate RFDs

## 2023 RFD Observations to date:

- Concerns/violations associated with fish NOT being offloaded before RFD starts.
  - *On an RFD, no vessels may fish for, possess, retain, land, or sell a BFT of any size class, 50 CFR 635.23(a)(2)*
  - *A dealer or a dealer's agent must affix a tag to each BFT purchased or received immediately upon offloading or immediately upon the vessel being removed from the water. 50 CFR 635.5(b)(2)(ii)(A)*
- Dealer reporting delays around RFDs
  - *Reports must be no later than 24 hours after receipt of the BFT. 50 CFR 635.5(b)(2)(i)(A)*



# Federal Atlantic Tunas Dealer Permits

The Greater Atlantic Regional Permitting Office issues federal tuna dealer permits for all states

States issue seafood wholesale permits/licenses and these are the conduit to FDA food safety requirements

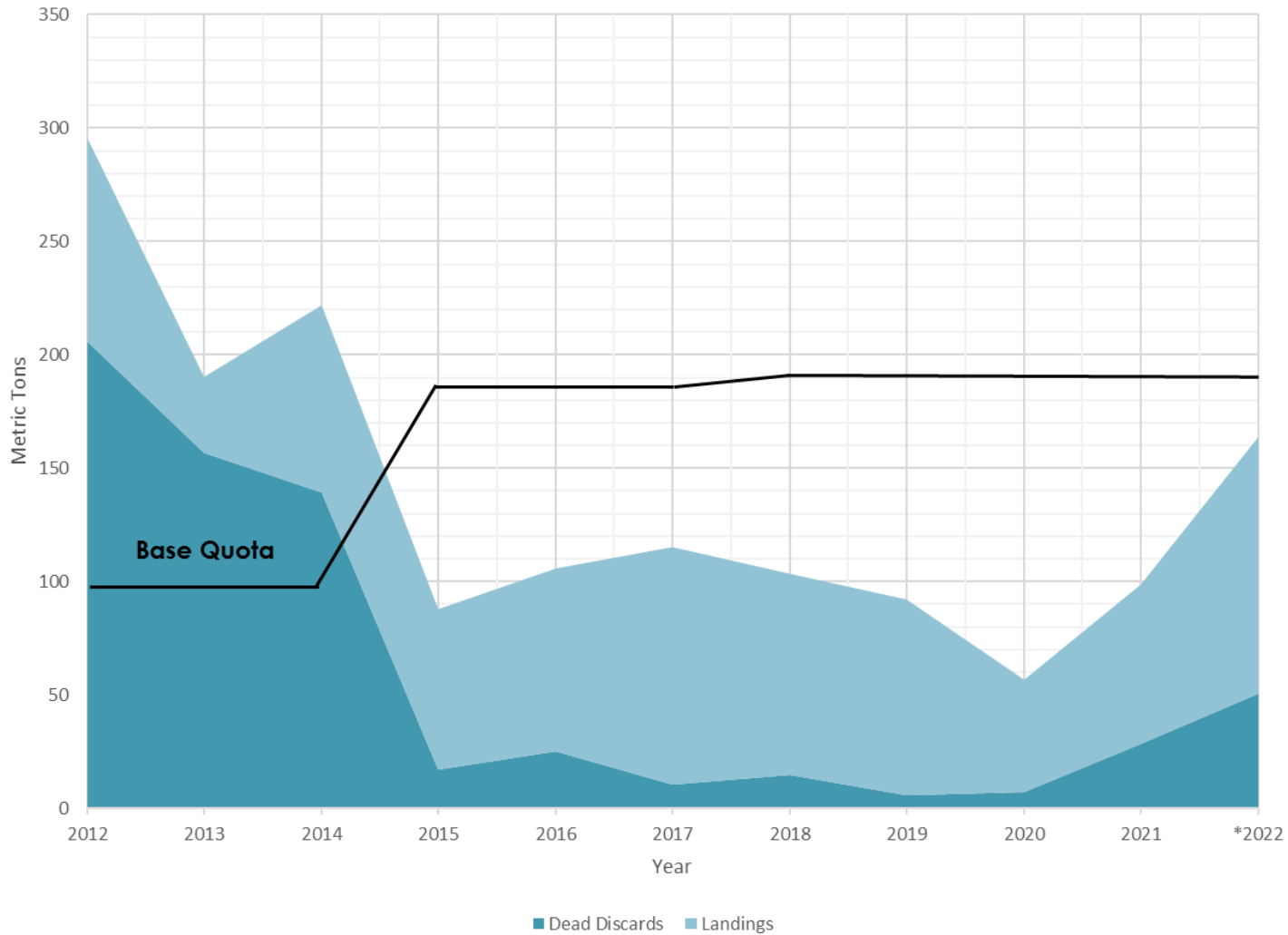
Tunas - Scombroid fish poisoning concerns

FDA - Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)

*50 CFR 635.4(h)(3)(ii): An applicant must also submit a copy of each state wholesaler's license held by the dealer...*



# Pelagic Longline Bluefin Tuna Catch by Year



\* 2022 dead discard value preliminary



## 2022 BFT Dead Discards

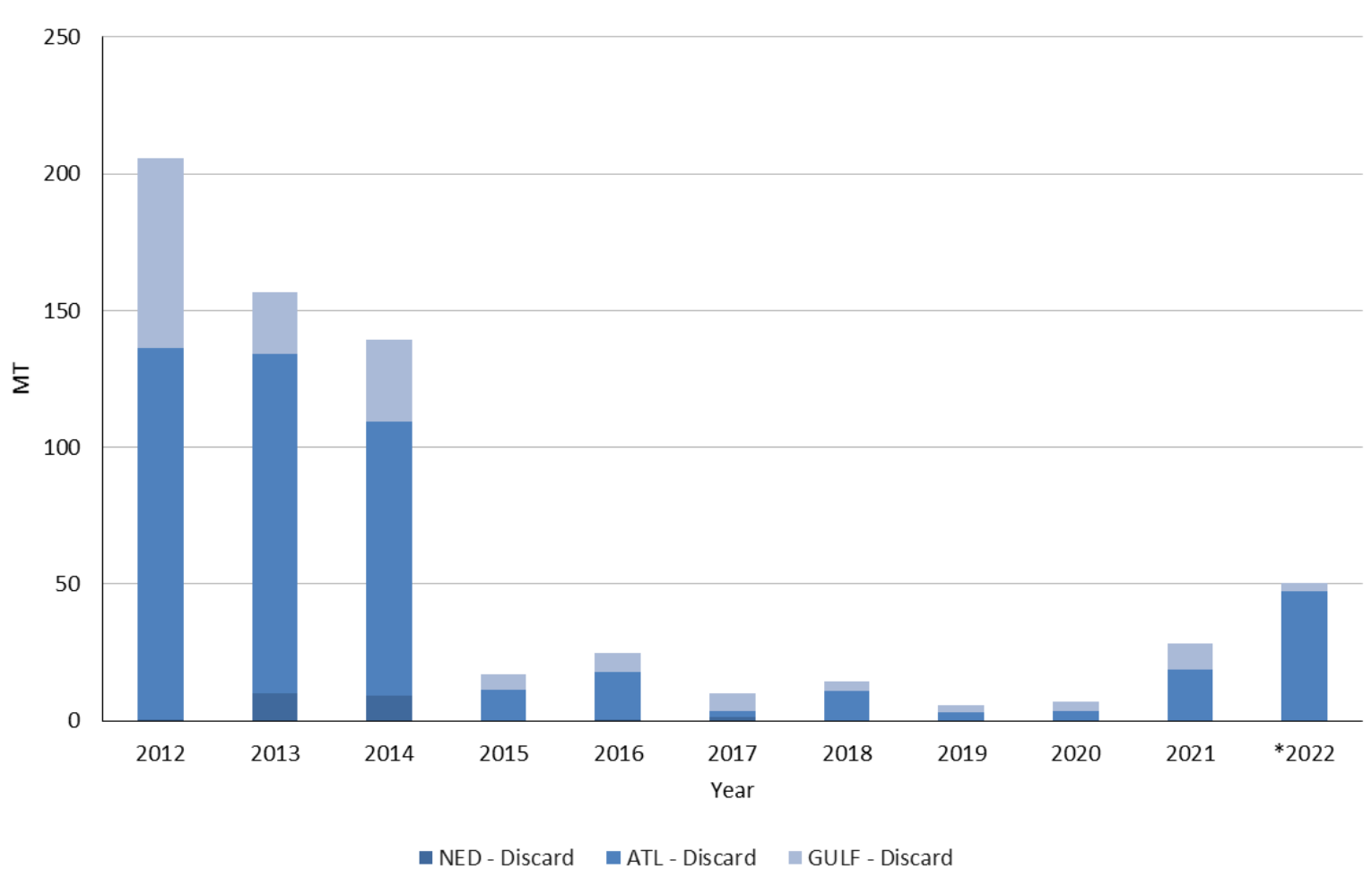
Currently, the best available annual estimate of U.S. dead discards for 2023 is the 2022 preliminary estimate of 50.4 mt for the pelagic longline fishery.

The United States accounts for dead discards annually and reports them to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

NOAA Fisheries continues to refine reporting methodologies for both pelagic longline and commercial/recreational handgear dead discards



# Annual Pelagic Longline Dead Discards by Area

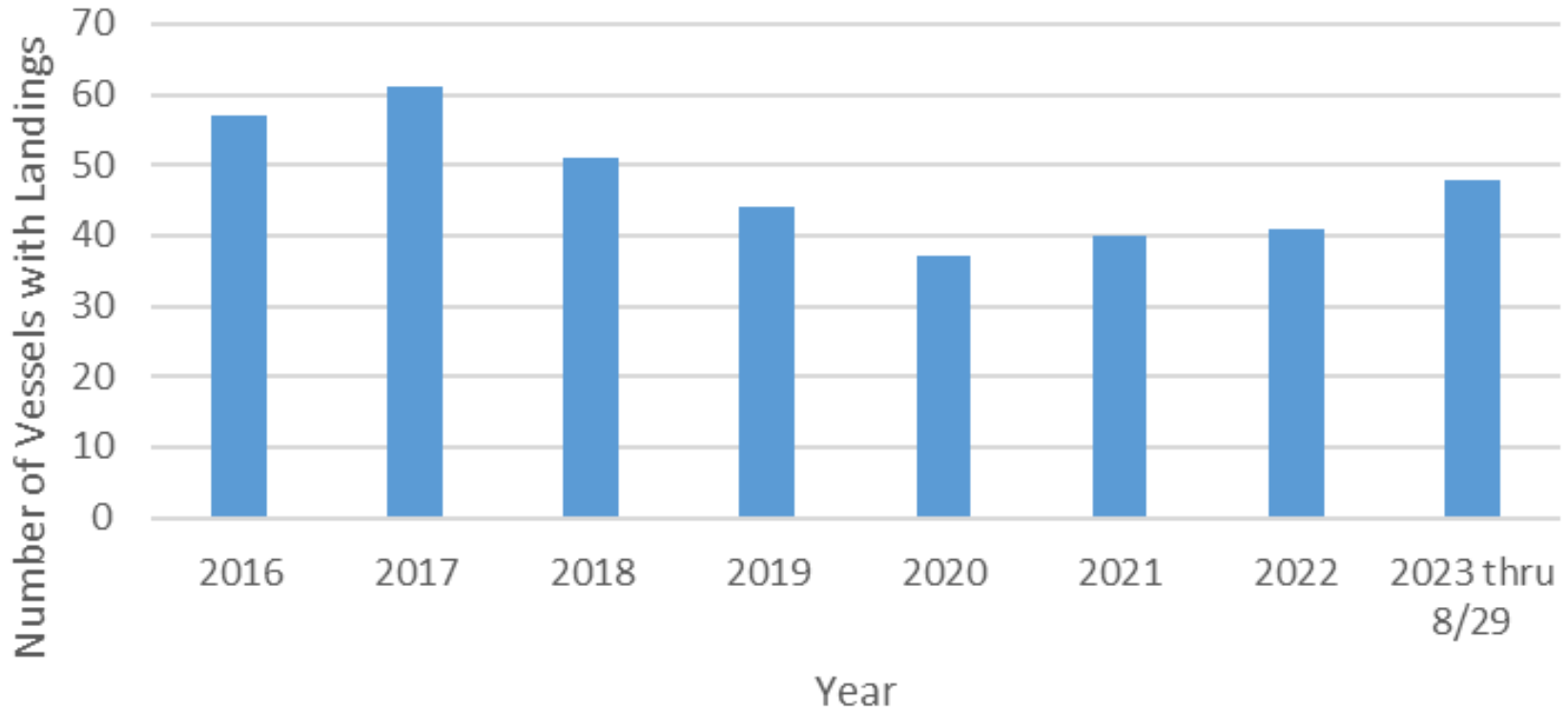


\* 2022 dead discard value preliminary

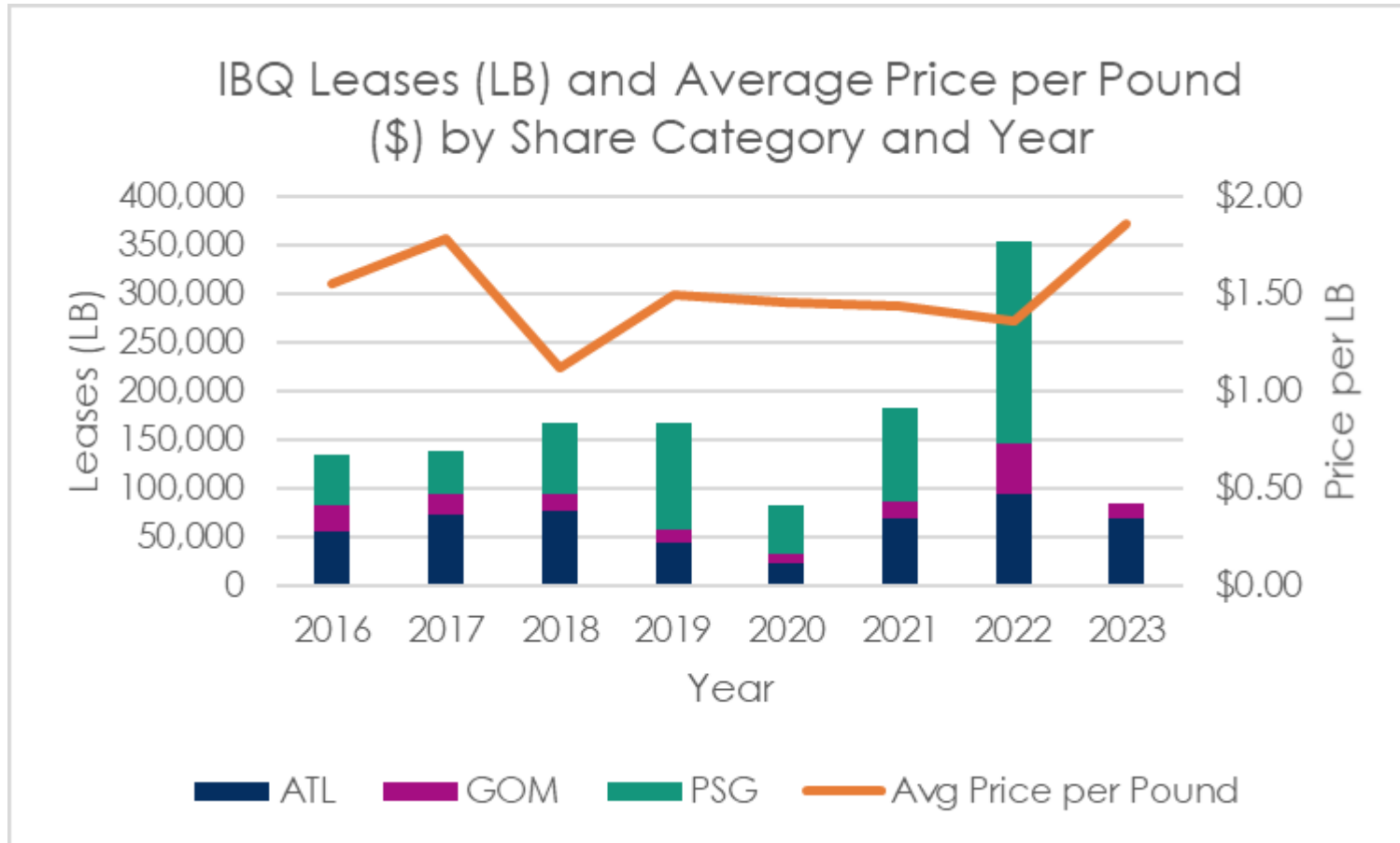




# Number of Pelagic Longline Vessels with Bluefin Tuna Landings by Year



# Atlantic Pelagic Longline Fishery



2023: 45 leases (total lbs: 85,270, total price: \$126,481); Total of six vessels in quota debt at quarters 1 through 3 end (all resolved)



# IBQ Dynamic Allocation Process 2023 Lookback

## Basis: Amendment 13

- Relevant 36 months of best available data (VMS, Logbook or various combinations)

## Data Sources:

- VMS Set Reports – 12 hours from the completion of the retrieval of each set.
- Logbooks - 7 days from offloading; data finalized by SEFSC ~ May following year

## Initial allocation letter (Dec 15, 2022):

- 234 letters sent; 87 qualified for IBQ allocations

## Corrected allocation letter (Dec 20, 2022):

- IBQs recalculated to be inclusive of 25-mt set aside

## Appeals process:

- National Appeal Office - provides an objective review in accordance with their established protocols.
- 45 days after the initial administrative determination is issued (2/2/23)
- 25 appeals submitted

Most adjudicated between July/August 2023



# IBQ Dynamic Allocation Process looking toward 2024

## Goals:

- Mitigate the need for vessel owners to appeal initial allocations
- Adapt processes to the findings of NAO adjudicated appeals
- More transparency to the process to empower vessel owners to ensure mandatory data is up to date

## Amendment 13:

- Relevant 36 months of best available data (VMS, Logbook or various combinations)
- November 1, 2020 through October 31, 2023

## Data Sources:

- VMS Set Reports – 12 hours from the completion of the retrieval of each set.
  - Technical issues discovered with a specific VMS unit
  - Addressing non-compliance
- Logbook - 7 days from offloading; finalized by SEFSC ~ May following year
  - Addressing lag time in finalized date

## Initial allocation letter (Mid-December):

## Appeals process:

- 45 days after the initial administrative determination is issued



# Questions?

## Let's Discuss

For further information on Atlantic tunas  
management, contact (978) 281-9260



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