

# SDFSFA Newsletter – Oct/Nov 2022

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## SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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## SDFSFA CAMPAIGN TO MAKE PERMANENT THE BAN ON FISHING GIANT CUTTLEFISH DURING THE AGGREGATION



*Photo provided by Lisa McLean in support of the Cuttlefish Alliance*

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# GIANT CUTTLEFISH POPULATION SURVEY RESULTS FOR 2022 RELEASED

Andrew Hunter and Heather Creech

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish migrates each year to the Upper Spencer Gulf breeding grounds near Point Lowly, South Australia, during the months of May through to early August. This is a globally unique mass aggregation event, recognized internationally by David Attenborough's Blue Planet and others. **In 2013, the population of the Giant Australian Cuttlefish collapsed to an estimated 13,000 individuals, down from circa 170,000+ individuals across the late 1990s/early 2000s, when detailed population census studies were first undertaken.**

## Key dates and numbers for Giant Cuttlefish population surveys

1990s-2000s: as many as 170,000/year  
2013: 13,000. Fishing ban declared  
2020: 247,000. Fishing ban lifted  
2021: 107,000. Fishing ban reinstated  
2022: 138,000: slow recovery  
**2022-23: Call for a permanent ban**

Due to this alarming population decline, a temporary fishing ban across the Upper Spencer Gulf was instated by the South Australian Government in the hope of preserving the species. The temporary fishing ban worked: it led to a recovery in the population, which by 2020 finally surpassed levels last seen during the late 1990s/early 2000s, with an estimate of 247,000 individuals.



In 2020, the temporary fishing ban was revoked. The following year, the population dropped precipitously by 56% to 107,000, well below the 24 year average of 120,000 individuals (the period in which there is a population data series).

In response to a vocal community campaign, driven in part by the SDFSA through The Cuttlefish Alliance, the temporary fishing ban was reinstated. This has seen the population recover somewhat during the past breeding season to 138,000 individuals, back above the average population estimates of the past couple of decades.

This gives hope that with proper protection, the Giant Australian Cuttlefish will again be able to recover, and eventually surpass the population levels seen back in the late 1990s, and indeed the record level seen during 2020.

However, the current fishing ban is temporary and ends this coming March of 2023. The SDFSA believes that the aggregation requires permanent protection, both for the health of the species and its importance for marine ecotourism. Marine ecotourism associated with the Giant Australian Cuttlefish mass aggregation and breeding has become a significant and growing contributor to the regional local economy of Whyalla. The accessibility of the sites around Point Lowly attract scuba

divers and snorkellers of all ages, making this event one of the most popular marine ecotourism events around the state, as well as attracting national and international tourists.

The SDFSA is reconvening The Cuttlefish Alliance to spearhead the campaign for the instatement of a permanent fishing ban in the Upper Spencer Gulf by the Government of South Australia during the migration and breeding season, between 1st May through to 31st July. The data from the past 24 years demonstrates that only through a permanent ban can we protect this globally unique event into the future. The temporary ban in 2013 led to a recovery from the near-collapse of the population. When this was lifted in 2021, the population dropped once again. The short-term recovery driven by the reinstatement of the ban in 2022 gives us a clarion call to ensure the collapse of this population is never risked again.

We hope to launch our campaign in the coming weeks, with a website, photo and video footage, a strong social media campaign, fund raising and direct calls to representatives of the State legislature and appropriate State government departments. Many thanks to Lisa McLean for the use of her photos, provided for the campaign in 2020.

## PRESERVING KEY JETTIES ACROSS THE STATE

The Sunday Mail broke the story recently (October 16, pp12, 69) that **the Department of Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) is reviewing the work that needs to be done to preserve a number of jetties that are in deteriorating condition across the State.** As Michael McGuire reported, “Tens of millions of dollars will have to be spent on aging and unsafe regional jetties”. In particular, DIT is developing a “comprehensive business plan for **jetties at Tumby Bay, Port Germain, Edithburgh, Kingston SE and Rapid Bay**” (emphasis added).

Your SDFSA has a seat on the committee working on the business plan, and we have provided as much information as possible on the economic value that diving, freediving and snorkelling contribute to the regions from the use of SA’s jetties, and Rapid Bay and Edithburgh in particular. The data is limited, but we hope that parallel studies into the value of maritime cultural heritage (Straiton, P. 2022. *Assessing the Economic and Sociocultural Value of Maritime Cultural Heritage Sites: An Interdisciplinary Pilot Study*. PhD thesis submitted to Flinders University. <https://theses.flinders.edu.au/view/8ea837fd-fcd6-4397-8f6b-641eaf4146c4/1>), shark diving, including an analysis of the Neptune Islands shark tourism (Huveneers, C. et al. 2017. *The economic value of shark-diving tourism in Australia* in *Rev Fish Biol Fisheries* (2017) 27:665–680) and SA outdoor education in general (Marsden Jacob. Revised 2020. *South Australia’s Nature based Outdoor Economy Key estimates and Recommendations*. Prepared for SkillsIQ ) will be helpful to DIT.

We agree with the Sunday Mail editorial that “a well-thought out, carefully considered plan is vital to safeguard the State’s jetties. They are too important and too well-loved to be abandoned to the sea.”

## SEEDS for SNAPPER: CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Seeds for Snapper** is a community driven project that relies heavily on ocean users to help collect, process and deploy seagrass seedlings into the ocean. You can watch a short video on the metropolitan coast project on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9mdQpHo6GY>.

As well as providing an important habitat for a range of marine species and nursery ground for snapper, calamari, whiting and blue swimmer crabs, seagrasses also help to stabilise soil and sediment on the ocean floor, helping to protect Australia’s shorelines from erosion and storms.

They also store carbon and nutrients, which helps to improve water quality and clarity – a hectare of seagrass stores 35 times more carbon than a hectare of rainforest.

OzFish, Australia's only fishing conservation charity has been successfully delivering the Seeds for Snapper restoration program in South Australia since 2020.

**Important dates:**

12 November: Fleurieu Peninsula Information Session

19 November: Adelaide Metro Information Session.

**You can participate in a number of ways:**

- Seeds For Snapper SA Volunteers Facebook group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/812919452879057>

**Adelaide Metro Seeds For Snapper**

- Project web page: <https://ozfish.org.au/projects/seeds-for-snapper-south-australia/>
- Register to volunteer: <https://ozfish.org.au/projects/seeds-for-snapper-sa-volunteer-interest-form-2022/>
- Register to attend info session (Nov 19) <https://ozfish.org.au/event/adelaide-seeds-for-snapper-2022-opening-day/>

**Fleurieu Peninsula Seeds For Snapper**

- Project webpage: <https://ozfish.org.au/projects/seeds-for-snapper-fleurieu-peninsula-south-australia-2022/>
- Register to volunteer: <https://ozfish.org.au/projects/seeds-for-snapper-fleurieu-peninsula-volunteer-interest-form-2022/?swcfpc=1>
- Register to attend info session (Nov 12): <https://ozfish.org.au/event/fleurieu-peninsula-seeds-for-snapper-2022-opening-day/>

For more information, contact [rachelwilliams@ozfish.org.au](mailto:rachelwilliams@ozfish.org.au).

## IMPORTANT NOTICES

**Edithburgh Jetty:** The Jetty was closed briefly due to a piece of rock wall collapsing but is open again. Steve Simmons reports that some repairs have been made to the northern step as well as railing repairs to the southern side. We've been informed that there will be a co-design workshop for the Edithburgh Diving Platform 18<sup>th</sup> November 10am to 12 noon at the Edithburgh Town Hall, 30 Blanche St. This is being organised by the Yorke Peninsula Council.

**The 150 year anniversary of the Edithburgh Jetty** will be held 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> October 2023. SDFSA will be planning events over the two days.

**DHILBA GUURANDA-INNES NATIONAL PARK AND YORKE PENINSULA PARKS DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN is open for comment.** Feedback closes on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022. See <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/dhilba-guuranda-innes-national-park-and-yorke-peninsula-parks-draft-management-plan>. The Draft Plan outlines objectives and strategies that set the direction for the long-term management of 12 parks across Yorke Peninsula, including a number of sites important for divers: Dhilba Guuranda-Innes National Park and Warrenben, Thidna, Carribie, Point Davenport,



Leven Beach, Minlacowie, Ramsay, Bird Islands, Troubridge Island, Goose Island and Althorpe Islands conservation parks. Your feedback will be important.

**PROPOSED ROCKET RANGE, WHALERS WAY, Eyre Peninsula.** There are plans to build a rocket range at Whalers Way on the Eyre Peninsula. Concerned residents have formed the Eyre Peninsula Environmental Protection Alliance to lobby against the proposal. The group's spokesman said that marine mammals either live or migrate through the area, and thousands of plants, birds and other animals live there. Many of them are listed as rare, threatened, vulnerable or endangered. People from the Southern Launch rocket facility insist that any such concerns were addressed in an EIS. For more information, contact <https://eyrepeninsulaepa.org>.

## INTRODUCING YOUR SDFSFA Vice President: Alex Suslin

Alex gained his Open Water certification in 1995 through the Adelaide Skindiving Centre. He was Service Manager there the following year and became an Instructor 3 years later. His career highlights, apart from overseas dive trips and certifying an Adelaide-born US model, included being on the Reef Watch founding committee, doing its first fish survey dive and running the first Reclink dive course. He supports Reclink, Dive for Cancer and the Diving Veterans and First Responders team and has had a long involvement with the SDFSFA.

Having the top Level 3 Technicians Qualification System rating, he runs the "boutique" Scuba Servicing; Sales, specialising in older diving equipment, including double hose regulators, for local and interstate customers.

Apart from diving, hobbies include collecting and restoring vintage dive gear, responsible four wheel driving, being a Nature Foundation SA volunteer and gardening – he admits, the weeds win every time!

Alex is a Coffee Plunger, member of the Historical Diving Society and Coastal Waters Dive Club.



## SDFSFA COMMITTEE BUSINESS

We are sorry to see Emma Johnson step down from the Committee, but thank her for her contribution, in particular her diligent research into SDFSFA insurance.

We are delighted to have Andrew Hunter rejoin the SDFSFA Committee. Andrew will be leading The Cuttlefish Alliance campaign to have a permanent fishing ban in place during the cuttlefish aggregation in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

The next SDFSFA Committee meeting will held Wednesday 23 November at the Arab Steed, Gilles St, Adelaide, 7-9pm in the upstairs meeting room.

## NEWS FROM SHOPS AND CLUBS

**South Australia Archaeology Society:** The AIMA conference was held in Adelaide during September. This year marked both the 40th anniversary of AIMA and the 20th anniversary of the Maritime Archaeology Program at Flinders University. The theme for this year's conference was 'Decolonizing

Maritime Archaeology'. Speakers at the conference discussed topics such as the SAAS/SUHR and the *City of Adelaide*.

**Coffin Bay Scuba:** <https://www.coffinbayscuba.com/>. Coffin Bay Scuba Co. are posting some of their underwater sightings on iNaturalist – see <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/people/coffinbayscubaco> . In order to catalogue “the local marine flora and fauna on the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula”.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- Karolyn Landat on winning the macro division of the Liquid Lens Oztek photography competition.
- Dr Mike Bossley and the other award winners at the 2022 South Australian Environment Awards. Mike was one of five people to be given a Lifetime Achievers Award. See <https://www.greenadelaide.sa.gov.au/news/2022-environment-awards-winners> for more details.
- Andy Burnell of Crab.e.cam fame on making headline news recently after reviewing his GoPro footage after kayaking about 1.5 km off the end of Grange Jetty. That’s when he discovered that a white pointer shark had been under his kayak for about 12 minutes.
- The Marine Discovery Centre at Henley Beach on finding a white pointer shark tooth on the local beach recently.
- Mike Scotland on the release of his new book titled “Marine Biology in the wild”. He says that it is written to help marine lovers to learn more about the sea and marine life. “It also features 299 photos from all over the Pacific, which will appeal to underwater photographers,” he says.
- Gretta Pecl, Chair of Redmap for winning the 2022 University of Tasmania's College Executive Dean's Leadership Award.
- Acclaimed technical diver and photographer, Vic Verlinden on the publication of “Lusitania: The Underwater Collection” The 200-page, A4 hard-back book contains 160 underwater photographs and 240 historical photographs and illustrations. See [https://www.scubadivermag.com/new-discoveries-on-the-lusitania/?utm\\_source=mailpoet&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=the-daily-deco-stop](https://www.scubadivermag.com/new-discoveries-on-the-lusitania/?utm_source=mailpoet&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=the-daily-deco-stop)
- The International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame 2022 inductees. They include Jill Heinerth, Tom Ingram, Jim Gatacre and Avi Klapfer.
- Andrea Marshall, Elizabeth (Liz) Taylor, Erika Lopez on being the three people inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame for Class 2023. You can read more about Andrea at [Ocean Giants Magazine — Marine Megafauna Foundation](#).
- Stephen Fordyce on being awarded 2022 Technical Diver of the Year at OZTek 22.

## DIVE GEAR REPORT: IT’S TIME TO GET YOUR GEAR READY!

By Alex Suslin

Spring is that wonderful time when the sun finally shines, the curtains fade from the extra hour of daylight savings, the sea looks inviting and a diver’s thoughts turn to ... well, diving, of course. Before taking the first plunge, check some things out – starting with you. If you haven’t dived over the colder months, have you maintained your fitness level with other activities? If not and you’re of “a certain age”, a health check would not go astray. If it has been a long time between dives and you’re feeling a tad rusty, go to your favourite dive shop and arrange a refresher.

Regulators and bcds should be serviced annually, as per the manufacturers’ recommendations. No good just putting them on a tank, turning on the air, purging a couple of times and thinking, “she’ll be right.” An undetected pinhole in the mouthpiece or a dirty filter will go un-noticed when surface

breathing. At 20 meters, expect problems! And though it's only happened once in nearly 30 years of equipment servicing, I did find a Redback in a customer's second stage. "I always hang them up in the shed over Winter."

Don't forget the mask and fin straps. Torch and strobe batteries should be re-charged or replaced. Check zips on wetsuit, boots and dive bags. If they're seized, free them by melting the salt crystals that are the most likely problem, with hot water, then apply some zip lube. Don't use petrochemical spray lubricants like CRC or WD40.

Finally, wetsuits shrink when not used for a long time. That's my theory and I'm sticking to it! Trying it on at home to see it still fits could save some embarrassment at the dive site.

#### **And a note on New Folding Fins:**

Steve Reynolds recently received an email message from Max Szymański ([max@foldingfins.com](mailto:max@foldingfins.com)). He told Steve that they had just started the production of the "World's First Folding Fins": "Please take a look at the photos, videos from the production and action as well. Be sure to visit our website: <https://foldingfins.com/>." Steve encourages everyone to take a look at an innovative product now on the market.

## **HISTORY and MARINE ARCHAEOLOGY NOTES**

By Steve Reynolds

### **THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY & SHIPWRECKS**

When I attended a couple of sessions at the recent AIMA conference held in Adelaide, I learned that technology is playing an increasing role in maritime archaeology & shipwrecks (think *Titanic*. Not that *Titanic* is a dive wreck!).

Much of what I heard regarding shipwreck technology at the conference was way over my head though. I just read something in Scuba Diver Magazine. It is related to the *Titanic* though! It is titled "Ship That Sent Iceberg Warning To Titanic Found In Irish Sea". It can be read at [https://www.scubadivermag.com/ship-that-sent-iceberg-warning-to-titanic-found-in-irish-sea/?utm\\_source=mailpoet&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=the-daily-deco-stop](https://www.scubadivermag.com/ship-that-sent-iceberg-warning-to-titanic-found-in-irish-sea/?utm_source=mailpoet&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=the-daily-deco-stop). According to the article, researchers have found the broken remains of the ship that sent the ill-fated *Titanic* an iceberg warning before the *Titanic* hit one and sank. Researchers from Bangor University found the SS *Mesaba* in the depths of the Irish Sea.

A torpedo from the German U-boat *U-118* sank the *Mesaba* in WWI in 1918. The *Mesaba* was making a convoy voyage from Liverpool to Philadelphia at the time. Twenty lives were lost in the incident. The Bangor University team used advanced multibeam sonar to pinpoint *Mesaba*'s location about 21 miles off Tuskar Rock, southeast of Rosslare in Ireland. The team's vessel "scanned an area of some 7,500 square miles, and cross-referenced the shipwrecks found against the Hydrographic Office's database of wrecks and other sources. "A total of 273 shipwrecks were found, including trawlers, cargo vessels, submarines, ocean liners and tankers, as well as the aforementioned *Mesaba*." A new book titled "Echoes from the Deep" by Dr Innes McCartney gives details of all the wrecks located.

Something else that I read in Scuba Diver Magazine is titled "'Incredibly Rare' Anchor Unveiled To Public" (<https://www.scubadivermag.com/incredibly-rare-anchor-unveiled-to-public/>). It describes how an 'incredibly rare' distinctive wrought-iron anchor was discovered at the bottom of the southern North Sea during survey works for ScottishPower Renewables' East Anglia ONE offshore

windfarm. This anchor was to be unveiled at a special media event at Ipswich Museum on 26th September.

Believed to be a rare example from the Roman Age, or possibly late-Iron Age, the anchor is thought to be somewhere between 1,600-2,000 years old. It also thought that it could “provide material evidence of ancient Roman seafaring and trading in the Southern North Sea, off the coast of the East of England”.

The anchor is more than 2m long and weighs around 100kg. It is estimated to have come from a 500-600 tonne vessel. It’s quite likely to have come from one of the larger merchant ships of the Roman fleet if dated to the time of the Roman occupation of Britain. There are several features suggesting that the anchor could come from the Imperial Roman period, but analytical work is still ongoing to confirm the date. The anchor was located around 40km off the coast of Suffolk. It was first discovered in 2018 thanks to marine seabed survey works being undertaken by ScottishPower Renewables. The anchor was safely and carefully recovered from the water in 2021. It had been protected by an exclusion zone installed on the seabed during the construction works. It had been monitored using remote underwater technology due to concerns over its long-term preservation.

The anchor is currently undergoing detailed imaging and analysis to better pinpoint its age and provenance. It will be on display at Ipswich Museum briefly before being taken back to the laboratory. The anchor will go on permanent display in conjunction with Colchester and Ipswich Museums once the analysis and conservations works are complete.

The conservation work is being carried out by Maritime Archaeology Ltd in conjunction with the Mary Rose Archaeological Services. Historic England’s material science experts are providing advice and guidance throughout the process.

Other important historical and archaeological finds during the work on the East Anglia ONE windfarm, include a missing WWI German submarine, numerous artefacts from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval periods, and a prehistoric monument. The monument, complete with a rare Neolithic wooden trackway and platform, dates back more than 4,000 years. There is also an ancient wild cattle (Auroch) skull radiocarbon-dating to around over 6,000 years old.

## STEVE’S SCIENCE STORY for the month

By Steve Reynolds

### **ALASKA'S SNOW CRABS HAVE VANISHED**

According to “The 'Deadliest Catch' Disappears: Alaska's Snow Crabs Have Vanished” at <https://www.msn.com/en-au/weather/topstories/the-deadliest-catch-disappears-alaska-s-snow-crabs-have-vanished/ar-AA12YcYU?ocid=msedgdhp&pc=U531&cvid=a4d7693f108f42dcbd21f959f0a05286> , “Snow crab fishing season in Alaska’s Bering Sea has been canceled for the first time in history. Bristol Bay’s red king crab fishery will also be closed, for the second year in a row. Both decisions follow shellfish surveys that revealed startling population collapses.

Crabbing in Alaska is a big industry—big enough to inspire television franchises and bring in hundreds of millions of dollars. But this year, in the Bering Sea, there will be no king or snow crabs harvest.



Between 2019 and 2021, snow crab numbers in the Bering Sea fell by about 90%. 2022 counts have dropped even further, said Miranda Westphal, a state Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) biologist, to Alaska Public Media. “In 2021 when they surveyed, we saw the largest decline we’ve ever seen in the snow crab population, which was very startling, I think, for everyone,” Westphal told the outlet.

“Management of Bering Sea snow crab must now focus on conservation and rebuilding given the condition of the stock,” said the ADF&G in its announcement. “Efforts to advance our science and understanding of crab population dynamics are underway.” “

THE RESULT OF ALL THE COMMERCIAL FISHING GEAR THAT IS LOST OR DISCARDED EVERY YEAR  
Researcher found that nearly 2% of all commercial fishing gear is lost or discarded every year. That gear becomes a major component of global marine plastic pollution. The fishing line alone could wrap around the earth 18 times (each year).

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### *South Australia*

**Saturday 26th November:** the **Deeper Darker Waters Marine Art Exhibition** is the second instalment of marine art by AZZURRO at the interactive **Marine Discovery Centre** 2–4 pm. It is a follow up to the Strange Tides exhibition held last July. The exhibition is a new collection of paintings featuring marine species and encounters, from the South Aussie shallows to much Deeper Darker Waters. Artist Talk, Marine Adventures of AZZURRO, is at 3pm. Tickets are \$10 ea. Bookings can be made at [www.eventbrite.com.au/e/deeper-darker-waters-exhibition-tickets-404000023947](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/deeper-darker-waters-exhibition-tickets-404000023947). Visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/743474363625411> for more details.

**Sunday 5th March 2023:** **Dive for Cancer** returns with diving at Port Noarlunga reef followed by food and drinks, a guest speaker, some prize giveaways, silent and live auctions. See [www.diveforcancer.com.au](http://www.diveforcancer.com.au).

**7-8 October 2023:** **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Edithburg Jetty** celebrations.

### *Interstate/International*

**6th – 10th November:** the Australian Society for Fish Biology conference is being held at Crown Plaza at Surfers Paradise - see [www.asfb.org.au](http://www.asfb.org.au).

**18th-21st November:** The 2022 Nautical Archaeology Society Conference will be held in Ireland – see [https://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/annual-conference?fbclid=IwAR2fi13zFeWkYOayVaXAYlaVnyqrHMNfthi9ebjioL4eWcXqVL\\_xpGm8rAM](https://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/annual-conference?fbclid=IwAR2fi13zFeWkYOayVaXAYlaVnyqrHMNfthi9ebjioL4eWcXqVL_xpGm8rAM).

**2<sup>nd</sup> to 7th July 2023:** The 57th Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) 2023 annual conference will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. “This is a national marine science forum that will provide a space to exchange traditional knowledge and modern science. Together, this will provide a strong foundation for understanding marine ecosystems, and inform marine management decisions”

## ABOUT THE SDFSFA...

**SDFSFA is a non-profit, incorporated membership association dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our unique underwater world.**

### **JOIN US FOR FREE!**

**<https://sdfsfa.net/membership-categories/>**

The more members we have, the stronger our influence. We serve as a peak body representing the interests of South Australian recreational scuba divers and the related sports of freediving and snorkelling, including the provision of information to government and the general public. Together we can have real impact on the issues affecting the South Australian diving community.

If you wish to be added to the mailing list for this Newsletter, join the SDFSFA!

You can also read about the Federation's work in monthly issues of DiveLog Australasia, Scubadiver ANZ and on our website at <https://sdfsfa.net>. Stay up to date with the latest news through our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/scubadivesa/>. And follow our FB group, SA Dive Sites Vlz and Conditions for current diving conditions shared by the group members.

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### *Disclaimer*

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