

# New Strawn District Fisheries News

Spring 2014

Woodson Wildlife Area 738 Fegan Rd. Toronto, KS 66777

[www.kdwpt.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwpt.state.ks.us) [justin.morrison@ksoutdoors.com](mailto:justin.morrison@ksoutdoors.com) Office: 620-637-2748

## 2014 Fishing Forecast

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### John Redmond Reservoir

**Channel Catfish** – Good – Fishing for channel cats will remain good in 2014. Last year there was a good harvest of catfish that ranged from 2 lbs. up to 10 lbs. According to the 2013 creel survey 7,127 catfish were harvested making it the most harvested species at John Redmond. Fishing below the dam during high releases remains the best way to be successful.

**Crappie** – Good – Only 4 trap nets were set out during fall sampling, but in those 4 nets we caught 332 fish. Most of the fish in the sample was 10" or larger with a good number of 12 and 13" fish available. Barring any extreme flooding event that results in high flushing rates, crappie fishing will be good along the rocks this spring. It was estimated that 1,401 crappie were harvested last year.

**White Bass** – Excellent – Fall sampling indicated a good white bass population in John Redmond. A good number of fish over 13" is present and fish up to 17" are also available. Anglers should have good luck this year above the dam along the rip rap or the upper end near the river. Anglers should also be successful below the dam during releases. Last year there was an estimated 2,515 white bass that was harvested.

### Coffey County Lake

**Smallmouth Bass** – Excellent – Spring electrofishing yielded an all-time high of 66 stock length fish/hr of electrofishing. The sampled population showed almost equal representation of the stock (7-11"), quality (11-14"), and preferred length (14-17") classes with each group representing roughly 1/3 of the sample. About 4%

of the sample was comprised of memorable length fish (17-20"). The largest fish sampled weighed just under 3 lbs. This lake offers some of the best smallmouth fishing in the state, and should be on any bass angler's list this year. See the chart below to look at monthly catch and release numbers.

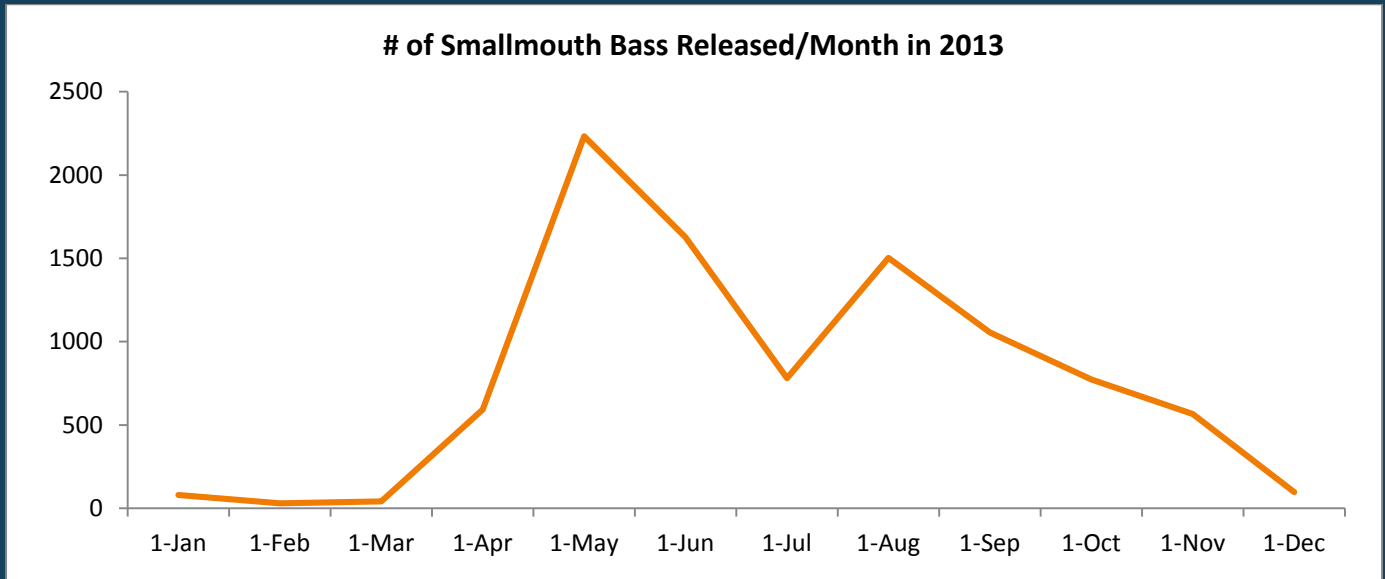


Chart 1. The monthly catch and release data for smallmouth bass through 2013. Since the total harvest was only 30 fish in 2013, the harvest data was left out. A total of 9,378 smallmouth were caught and released in 2014, making it the second most caught species in Coffey County Lake.

**Blue Catfish** – Good – Blue cat opportunities will remain good in 2014. Most of the population seems to be dominated by 20-30" fish, but we did see an increase in the number of 30-35" (preferred length) fish. The biggest 4 fish we sampled weighed 14, 16, 22, and 27 lbs. unfortunately; I did not get any pictures of these fish to publish in this newsletter. However, I did put together a chart that shows the monthly catch and release and harvest data for 2013.

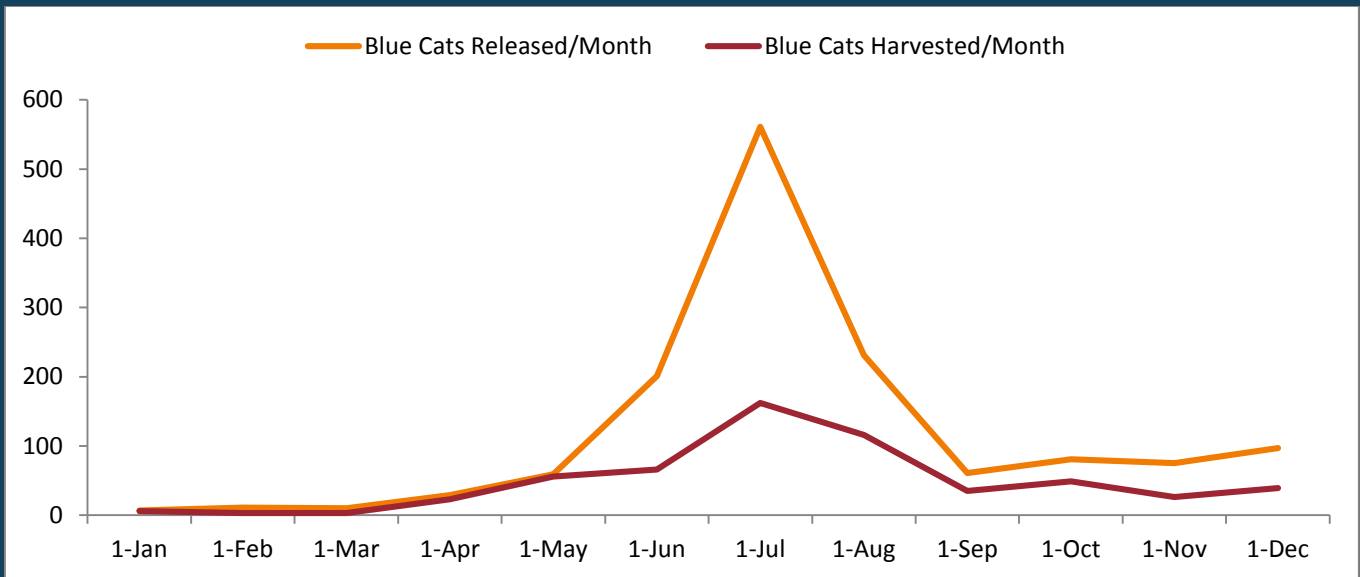


Chart 2. The monthly catch and release and harvest data for blue catfish in 2013. In 2013, 1,483 blue cats were caught and released, and 584 blues were harvested.

**Crappie – Good –** Crappie fishing will be good again this year. This is a low density population, but that is good because it allows these fish to grow bigger faster. A total of 73 white crappie were sampled during fall netting. Almost 16% of the 73 fish were over 10”, and almost 38% were over 12”. Needless to say this population is dominated by large fish, and the opportunity to catch a trophy sized crappie definitely exists.

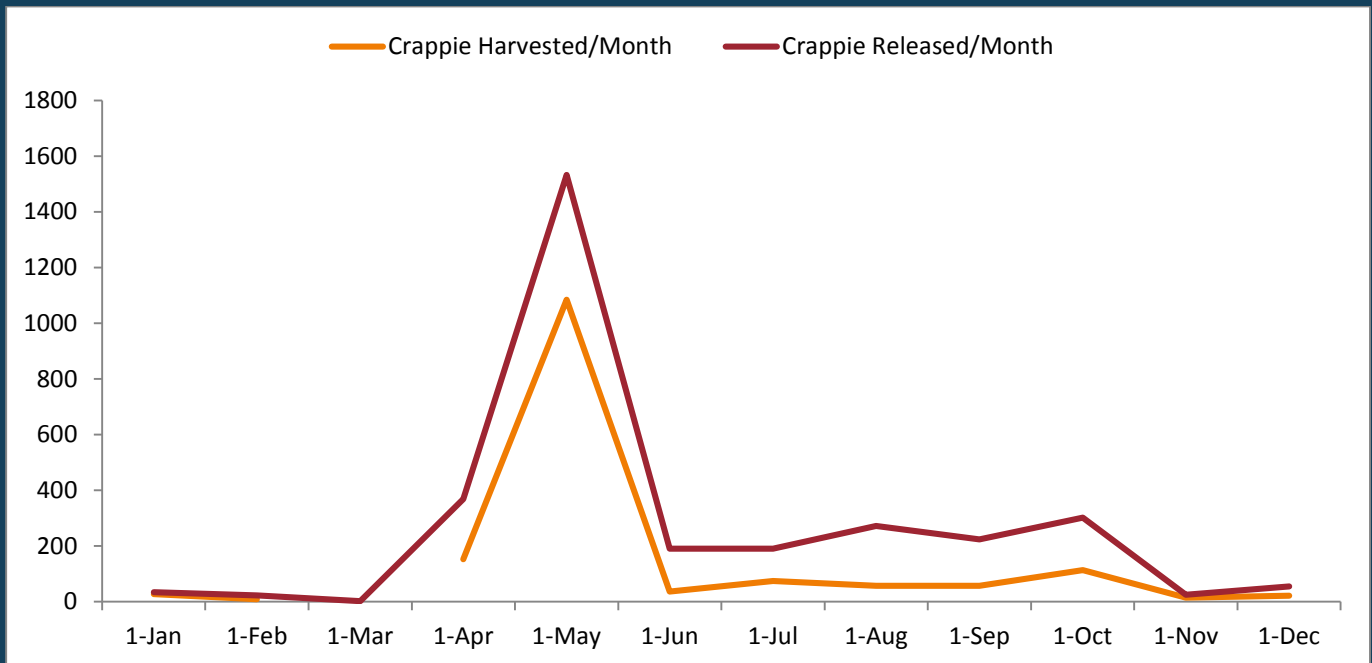


Chart 3. The monthly catch and release and harvest of crappie in 2013. We saw an all-time record high harvest of crappie during the month of May in which 1,084 crappie were harvested, and 1,532 fish were caught and released.

**White Bass** – Excellent – White Bass has accounted for the most caught and most harvested fish in Coffey County Lake for the past three years. The population is in good shape with 71% of the sampled fish measuring over 12", but 14% of the sampled fish were over 15". White bass provide an excellent catch and release opportunity for anglers who are just looking to catch anything. These fish are easily caught year round on small jigs and spinners and like their hybrid counter-part (wiper) they put up a good fight.

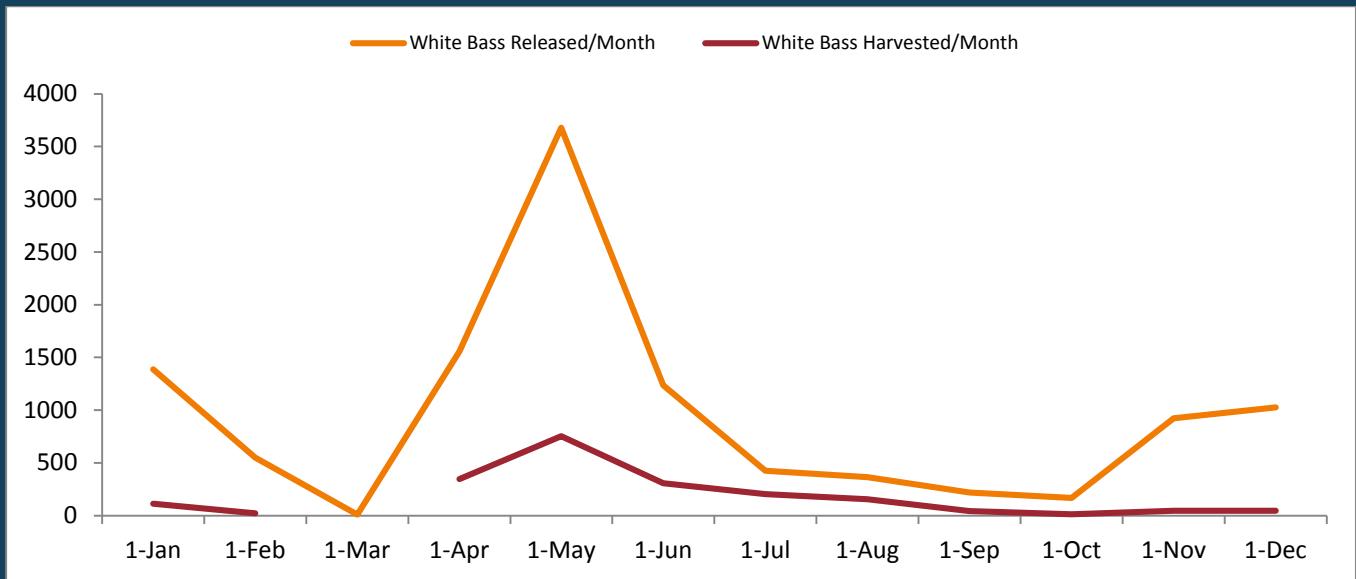


Chart 4. Monthly catch and release and harvest data of white bass in 2013. In 2013, 11,547 white bass were caught and released, and a total of 2,051 were harvested.

**Channel Catfish** – Good – Along with the previous species listed channel cat fishing will also be good. The fall sample showed good numbers of channel cats, but we did not see anything bigger than 5lbs. I'm sure larger fish are in the lake, but sometimes we just don't see them show up in a sample. There is a lot of nice harvestable sized fish in the lake which should satisfy most anglers who are looking for a nice catfish dinner.

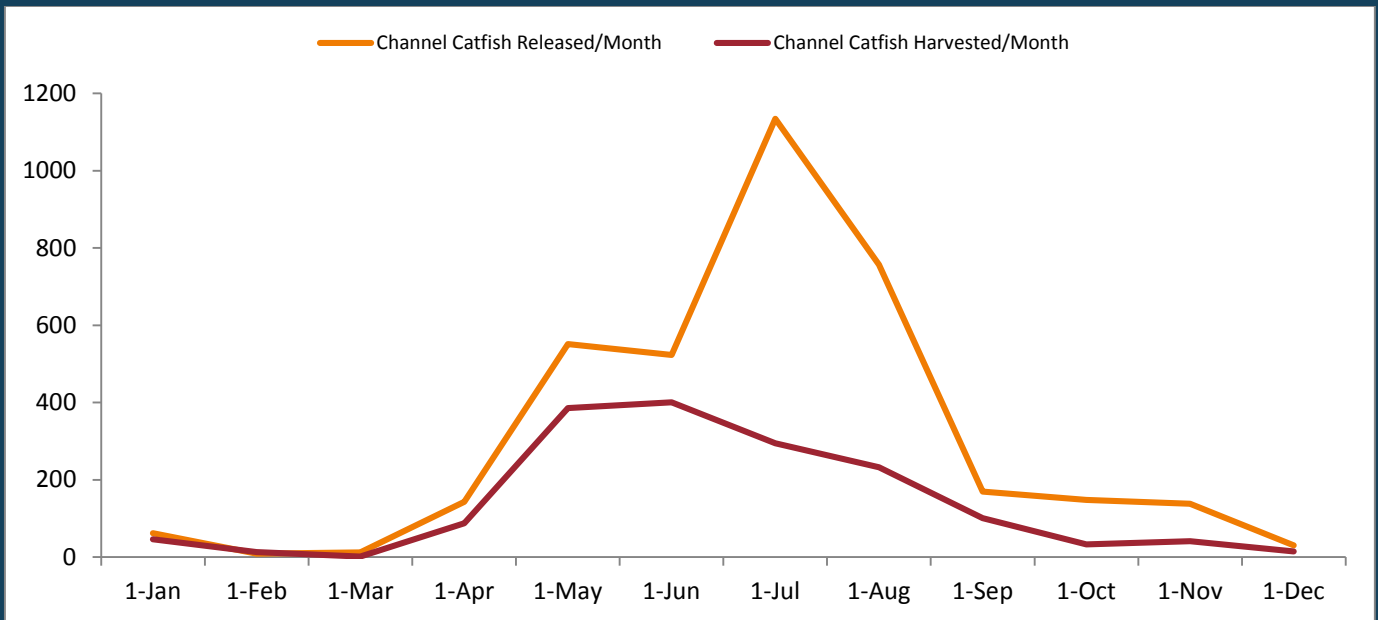
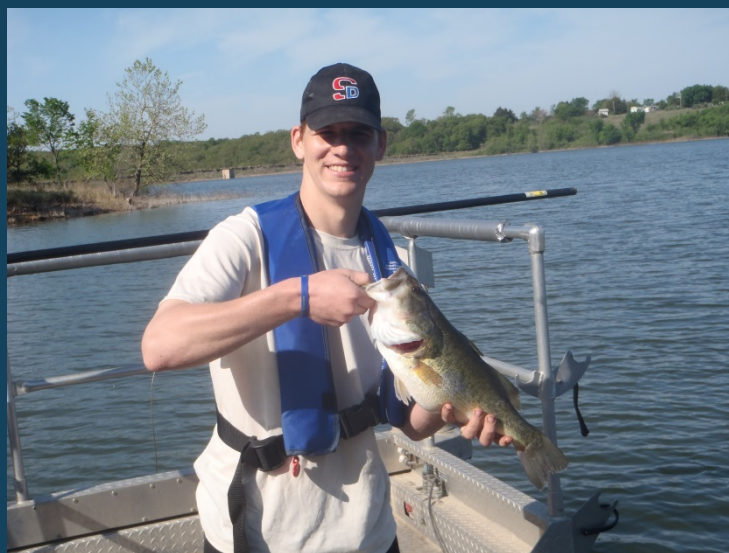


Chart 5. The monthly catch and release and harvest data of channel catfish for 2013. In 2013, 3,678 channel catfish were caught and released, and 1,654 channel catfish were harvested.

## Woodson State Fishing Lake

**Largemouth Bass** –Good – This population continues to show signs of recovery. More quality (12-15”) and preferred length (15-20”) fish were caught this year compared to the previous two samples. Angler reports of fish up to 5 lbs. are not uncommon. The largest fish of the spring sample was just over 4 lbs.



**Channel Catfish** – Good – The 2013 fall sample was a vast improvement over the 2012 sample. The population seems to still be dominated by 16-24” fish, however more preferred length (24-28”) fish and

memorable (28-35") fish were sampled this year than the previous four years. The largest fish of the sample was 15 lbs.



**Crappie** – Fair – The catch rate improved this year from the 2012 sample, but the sample is indicating a population that may be stunted. Only 1 fish over 10" was sampled, the rest of the fish ranged from 5-9". I changed the creel limit to 50 and dropped the length limit for 2014. This regulation change is designed to enhance angler harvest and to improve the population in a few years.

**Wiper** – Fair – Fall sampling showed a low abundance of wipers. Only 3 fish were caught in the sample 1 stock length (8-10"), 1 quality length (10-15"), and 1 preferred length (15-20"). It was good to see the stock sized fish which indicates the recent stocking was successful. I have requested the stocking of 1,500 more intermediate wipers in 2014 to supplement the population.

## 2014 Reg. Changes within the New Strawn District

### Woodson State Fishing Lake

**Crappie:** The creel limit on crappie has been increased to 50 with no length limit.

**Largemouth Bass:** The creel limit has been increased to 5 fish/day. The protected slot limit of 13-18" remains in effect.

## Yates Center City Lake

Crappie: The length limit of 10" has been dropped and the daily creel has been increased to 20 fish/day.

## Gridley City Lake

Largemouth Bass: An 18" minimum length limit has replaced the protected slot limit of 13-18" but the creel of 2/day remains in effect.

Crappie: A 10" length limit and 10 fish/day creel has been implemented until the population establishes itself.

## Garnett Cedar Creek Lake

Crappie: The daily creel limit of crappie has been increased to 50 fish/day with no length limit.

## Garnett City Lake North

Largemouth Bass: The creel limit has been increased to 5 fish/day, but the protected slot limit of 13-18" remains in effect.

## 2013 Fall Sampling Pics.



An 18lb. catfish was sampled at Garnett City Lake South. The picture on the left is the fish getting measured, on the right it is getting ready to be weighed. A 16 lb. catfish was also sampled at this lake.



Both of these fish were sampled at Yates Center City Lake. The one on the left was a nice 9.5" redear sunfish, while the one on the right was a rather surprising catch. Yellow perch were stocked in Yates Center City Lake in the early 2,000's, but none have showed up in samples of recent years. Two yellow perch were captured so a small population still remains.





Both of these fish were captured in Lebo City Lake. The flathead weighed in at a healthy 22 lbs., while the crappie pictured on right is a good representation of the larger crappie available at Lebo City Lake.



Both of these fish were captured in the same net at Garnett Cedar Creek Lake. We typically do not see largemouth in trap nets, especially largemouth pushing 5 lbs. The slab pictured on the right measured 14" and weighed 1.63 lbs. Several crappie over 12" were captured in the nets, however, the crappie population at this lake seems to be dominated by fish under 10".



## Got Weeds?

Do you have a pond? If you do, chances are it has some type of aquatic vegetation. As a fisheries biologist I am always getting questions about aquatic vegetation. A large majority of private pond owners see aquatic vegetation as a hindrance, and they are always wanting to kill every last plant in their pond. However, that is not usually the best management practice especially if they desire to have a highly productive fishing spot. Aquatic plants are vital to a pond's ecosystem. They provide oxygen, they help improve water quality by taking up excess nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, they aid in water clarity by preventing bank erosion, and they provide critical habitat for multiple species of fish. So when does aquatic vegetation become a hindrance? When plants occupy more than 1/3 of the pond's area, it is time to take action. Depending on the situation there are various options a pond owner has in order to control the problem. Prevention is always the best method for controlling unwanted aquatic vegetation. Limiting fertilizers within the drainage or deepening the shorelines are good preventative methods to take. Mechanical or physical removal of the plant is another option that one has to control aquatic vegetation. This involves either pulling the weeds out by hand or utilizing a rake or cutter to set back the growth. Another option is chemical treatment with aquatically labeled herbicides. This is usually an effective method, but it can be expensive and it may take more than one treatment to get the desired results. Biological control or the use of grass carp is the last option for pond owners. Many pond owners think grass carp are the cure all for aquatic vegetation problems, but more often

than not the owners are disappointed with the results. Grass carp like humans can be picky eaters and generally will eat more leafy succulent vegetation as opposed to “stemmy” vegetation and filamentous algae. Often times the stocking rate of grass carp is too high or too low and the desired results are not achieved. Before any action is taken, it is extremely important to know what type of plant is causing the problem. Pictured on the next page are six very common aquatic plants that grow in Kansas ponds.



1.

Chara (Muskgrass) – is actually a type of algae and is effectively controlled by copper sulfate or a copper chelate product, it can be mechanically removed, and grass carp will also consume this plant.



2.

Filamentous Algae – most commonly referred to as “moss” is another type of algae that is also effectively controlled by copper products, but is usually not consumed by grass carp.



3.

Coontail – is a submerged plant that can be controlled by mechanical removal, various aquatically labeled herbicides, and grass carp.



4.

American Pondweed – is a submerged plant, which has floating leaves, and can be controlled utilizing the same methods that are available for coontail control.



5.

Water Primrose is an emergent plant and can be controlled utilizing mechanical methods, herbicidal applications, and grass carp.



6.

Duckweed is a floating plant that is best controlled by herbicidal application.

Remember proper identification is key to successful vegetation control. If you do decide to use herbicides read the label carefully and follow the application instructions. Some herbicides can be dangerous to humans, pets, and livestock and may also damage crops if treated water is used for irrigation. To learn more, click [HERE](#) to download free literature on aquatic vegetation management and pond management.



HUNGRY FISH AWAIT!!!



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