



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Local Catch Network

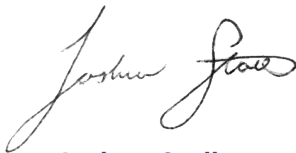
As we reflect back on the past year, it is with great pleasure that we share our annual report for 2023. It has been another BIG year for our network, and I am excited to highlight some of our accomplishments and the impact we are collectively making.

Over the last twelve months, our team has continued to advance our mission to strengthen local and regional seafood systems in support of healthy and resilient communities through network building, technical assistance, and research. Together, we have achieved significant milestones and overcome challenges, reinforcing the strength and commitment of our network.

One of the key themes that is evident in this year's report is the power of bringing people together. In a world that seems increasingly divisive, our network continues to demonstrate the value of collaboration, learning, and shared purpose. Whether it was through the personal stories that you shared on our podcast, the coming together around our national survey on direct marketing practices, or the launch of our national action plan, our collective efforts underscored the positive outcomes that can be achieved when a diverse group of people come together around a common purpose.

I invite you to explore this annual report, celebrate our shared accomplishments, and join us in our continued efforts to grow and expand our community. Together, we are on a path to creating just, equitable, healthy, and prosperous seafood systems.

Thank you for your support and commitment to the Local Catch Network.



Joshua Stoll
University of Maine



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Join Our Community

LOCAL CATCH NETWORK

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Frances Bursch, Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association

Elizabeth Dubovsky, Policy and Advocacy Consultant

Buck Jones, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Jordyn Kastlunger, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Tyson Rasor, Ecotrust

Sonia Strobel, Skipper Otto Community Supported Fishery

Amanda Waysewski, Kvichak Fish Company / Nakeen Homepack

Christy Whitmore, Skeena Fisheries Commission

Feini Yin, Fishadelphia / North American Marine Alliance

ARTWORK, PHOTOGRAPHY, & DESIGN

Fairhope Fish House

Joshua Stoll

Julianna Stoll

Laughton Elliott-DeAngelis

Oriana Poindexter

Sena Sea

Tyson Rasor

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

University of Maine

North American Marine Alliance

NETWORK COORDINATION

Laughton Elliott-DeAngelis, University of Maine

Jon Russell, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

Joshua Stoll, PhD, University of Maine

Cover photo by Fairhope Fish House

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Our Network

Established in 2011, the Local Catch Network (LCN) is a hub for knowledge exchange and innovation to support and catalyze local and community-based seafood systems.

Today, the network, which is anchored at the University of Maine, is made up of more than **2,000 people**, including over **200 seafood businesses** from across North America. Members of the Local Catch Network align with a set of core values that aim to create a higher level of accountability and trust, both internally within the network and externally to the public. Local Catch Network members include seafood harvesters who sell their catch locally and regionally through direct marketing channels as well as those engaged in research, technical assistance, and community organizing. We invite you to **join our community**.

Vision

Local Catch Network works to strengthen local and regional seafood systems in support of healthy and resilient communities across North America.

Values

Our network centers around 10 core values that aim to foster accountability and trust.



Community Based Fisheries



Fair Access



Fair Pricing



Eating with the Ecosystem



Simple Supply Chains



Honor the Ocean



Catch and Handle with Honor



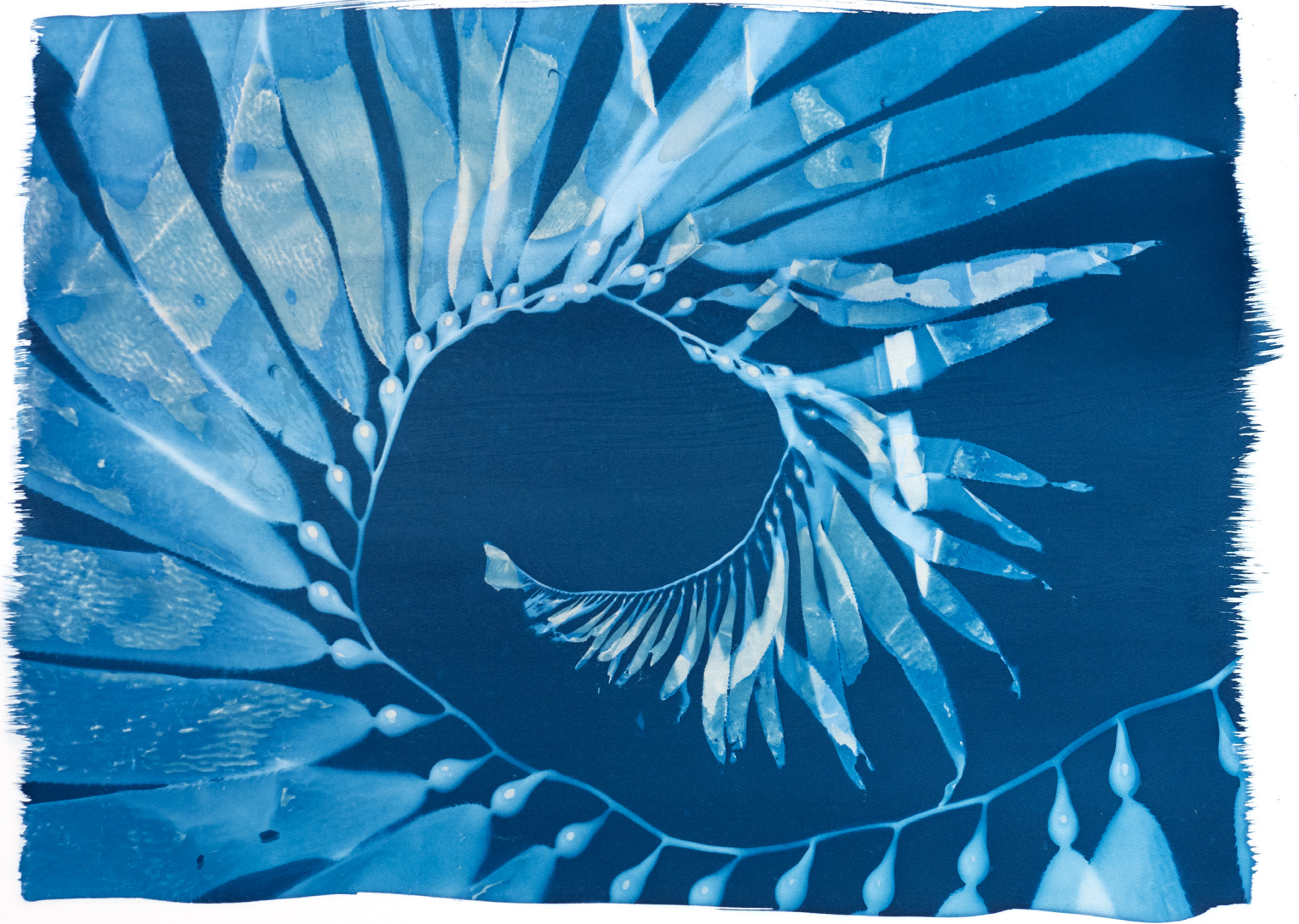
Ecosystem Based Approaches



Creativity and Collaboration



Equitable Seafood Systems



Giant Kelp Study 42, Point La Jolla, August 26, 2022. Cyanotype on paper, 30 in x 22 in.
 ORIANA POINDEXTER



Oriana Poindexter is a photographer and marine scientist who is part of the Local Catch Network. Her work opens dialogues about our relationship with the changing biodiversity of the ocean using traditional and alternative photo processes. She received a M.A.S. in Marine Biodiversity & Conservation from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego in 2015, and a B.A. in Visual Arts from Princeton University in 2011. Oriana's work has been featured in the publications of Smithsonian Magazine, the Getty Center and the Wall Street Journal, and she has created interpretive visual exhibits focused for the Birch Aquarium, the Aquarium of the Pacific, and the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.

The artwork shown above is a cyanotype photogram, created by laying a piece of giant kelp directly over the photo-sensitive paper before exposing it in sunlight. Oriana free dives in the kelp forests of Southern California to collect specimens of seaweed and other materials with which to create photograms documenting the biodiversity of the environment.

Areas of Impact: Our year in review

Endeavoring to support vibrant, just, and equitable local and regional seafood systems, our work centers on: (1) network building; (2) technical assistance, and (3) research.

#1

Largest network in North America dedicated to small-scale fisheries and food systems

150

Seafood businesses participated in our technical assistance programs

\$1,137,000

Funding raised to strengthen local and regional seafood systems

24,000

People visited the Local Catch Network **Seafood Finder**

35

New members that joined the network (**become a member**)

12

Newsletters highlighting up-to-date resources, funding, and technical assistances (**sign up today**)



Local Catch Executive Committee Retreat October 2023
LAUGHTON ELLIOTT-DEANGELIS

Network Building

Over the past year, our network has achieved significant milestones and welcomed new developments across various fronts. We kicked off the year by welcoming fifteen companies into our business accelerator program, **Scale Your Local Catch** (SYLC), a nation-wide initiative focused on strengthening local and regional seafood systems. SYLC aims to tackle challenges in direct marketing by equipping participants with the knowledge, skills, and networks necessary for enhancing business capacity and long-term resilience. Additionally, our Local Catch Network Executive Committee expanded with the inclusion of **Frances Bursch**, **Buck Jones**,

and **Christy Whitmore**, each bringing unique expertise and perspectives from their work in fisheries and food systems. We also launched the **Surf & Turf podcast**, delving into the often overlooked issues of access, equity, and justice in the U.S. seafood system. Hosted by **Dr. Caroline Ferguson**, the podcast features discussions with individuals actively contributing to a more just seafood system. Lastly, we welcomed **Laughton Elliott-DeAngelis** as the Local Catch Network coordinator, adding his extensive background in sustainable fisheries, entrepreneurship, and community building to our dynamic and diverse community.

Surf & Turf Podcast

This year we launched, Surf & Turf, a seafood justice podcast that dives deep into the complex and often overlooked issues of access, equity, and justice in the U.S. seafood system.

From the docks to the dinner plate, seafood supports communities and economies up and down the coasts, but social, political, and environmental conditions pose significant challenges to the health and well-being of the people who rely on fish for their food and livelihoods. Each week, host Dr. Caroline Ferguson speaks with an extraordinary individual working to create a more just seafood system that nourishes us all. Listen at localcatch.org/surf-and-turf-podcast



Hosted by Dr. Caroline Ferguson



About the Host

Caroline Ferguson Irlanda is the host of Surf & Turf: a seafood justice podcast and a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Social Ocean Lab at the University of Maine. Her research centers food sovereignty for coastal communities. She co-teaches Decolonizing Environmental Social Science Research for high schoolers in Palau. Her current work with students supports fishing communities confronted with militarization and associated environmental contamination.

About Her Favorite Seafood Dish

"I grew-up in east Arkansas. In the summers, we'd go to Horseshoe Lake and eat catfish, hushpuppies, and fried okra at this place right on the water called Kamp Karefree. We ate it all the time, but it always tasted best at the lake. Those are all fried with a cornmeal crust, so it's a big plate of crispy brown food best enjoyed with sweet tea. We always caught catfish from that lake recreationally, and it wasn't till I was older that I learned the catfish at restaurants came from nearby farms. I was really happy to finally learn more about catfish farming and the people who put it on our plates on the podcast last year, in my conversation with Amal Bouhabib."



TYSON RASOR

Technical Assistance

We continued our partnership with Ecotrust to facilitate our 14-week small business development program Scale Your Local Catch, designed to aid small-to-mid scale fishing businesses in building their networks and skill set in order to operate a sustainable, values-based company.

This year we had another fifteen businesses in the program. Of these businesses, 44% are BIPOC-owned. As part of the program, participants attended 18 sessions on a wide range of topics related to business structures and entity formation, taxation, accounting and bookkeeping, cashflow, insurance, marketing, labor, access to capital, and contracts and partnerships. The cohort also participated in a number of networking sessions to allow program participants to connect more deeply with each other through sharing resources, insights, experience, and asking questions to receive feedback. This included an in-person cohort gathering in Portland, Maine. Complementary core training topics were paired with additional learning opportunities provided to the larger Local Catch Network on topics regarding USDA Value Added Producer Grants and Institutional Purchasing.

15

New business added this year to the Scale Your Local Catch program

44%

Of these newly added businesses are BIPOC-owned



JOSHUA STOLL

Research

We have been actively engaged in diverse research activities aimed at advancing the understanding and sustainability of the seafood sector in the United States. Firstly, a groundbreaking national assessment of seafood marketing practices was initiated in collaboration with the University of Maine, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Services, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. This effort, represented by the **American Seafood Harvesters Marketing Practices Survey**, is the first-ever attempt to comprehensively grasp the scope and diversity of direct seafood marketing practices in the US. Preliminary results, based on responses from 5,160 seafood harvesters, are being compiled and will be. Secondly, the organization has undertaken **regional assessments of seafood self-reliance**, analyzing production, utilization, yield, and consumption data across six U.S. regions from 1970 to 2021. Despite being the second-largest global importer of seafood, the study suggests the potential for national-level self-reliance, contingent on

shifts in consumer behavior, infrastructure investments, and adaptation to climate change. In conjunction with the research endeavors, the organization is developing a **national action plan**, inspired by the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Implementation Plan. Launched at the Local Seafood Summit in October 2022, the plan involves a multi-sited case study approach and supply chain "dialogs" in collaboration with the USDA. The goal is to understand the benefits, mechanisms, barriers, and possibilities for just and equitable access to local and regional seafood systems in the U.S. and its territories. The organization has received approval for its Institutional Review Board and is set to initiate supply chain dialogs in the Fall of 2023 with the support of collaborating teams across the U.S. and U.S. territories.

Researchers, students, and other interested parties who are interested in collaborating can contact Joshua Stoll (joshua.stoll@maine.edu)



Georgia: Black women as historically marginalized stakeholders within the emerging oyster aquaculture system



Palau: U.S. militarization impacts on access to safe & sustainable seafood, culturally important sites, and seafood livelihoods



Alaska: Statewide Seafood Distribution Network to study rural salmon access issues and food security



Rhode Island: Self- and community-provisioning seafood practices among marginalized ethnic and racialized groups (MER) through 'recreational' fishers



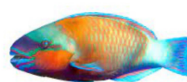
Puerto Rico: Relationship between coastal displacement and lack of access to local seafood, strategies for enhancing access



California: Urban fishermen's market in the face of luxury waterfront development
**



North Carolina: Values and benefits of access to public infrastructure (piers) for 'fishing for food,' particularly among women and African American communities. Focus on socio-cultural values, networks, practices, and informal economies.



CNMI: Community perceptions of access to and management of seafood in the context of an unincorporated US territory with high food import rates, complex laws, high dependence on fish for cultural reasons and food security sourced from SSF.



Great Lakes: Baseline mapping of seafood supply chains and the degree of vertical integration to understand where processing occurs, what is being processed, where it comes from, and barriers.



Maine: Mapping physical access to mudflats in the face of changing coastal land ownership.



Philadelphia: Tracing different seafoods along the supply chain from fishing to consuming w/ focus on urban and BIPOC consumers



Oregon: How changing environment conditions (biological, hydrologic, and ecological) shape tribal access along 31 sites in the Columbia River
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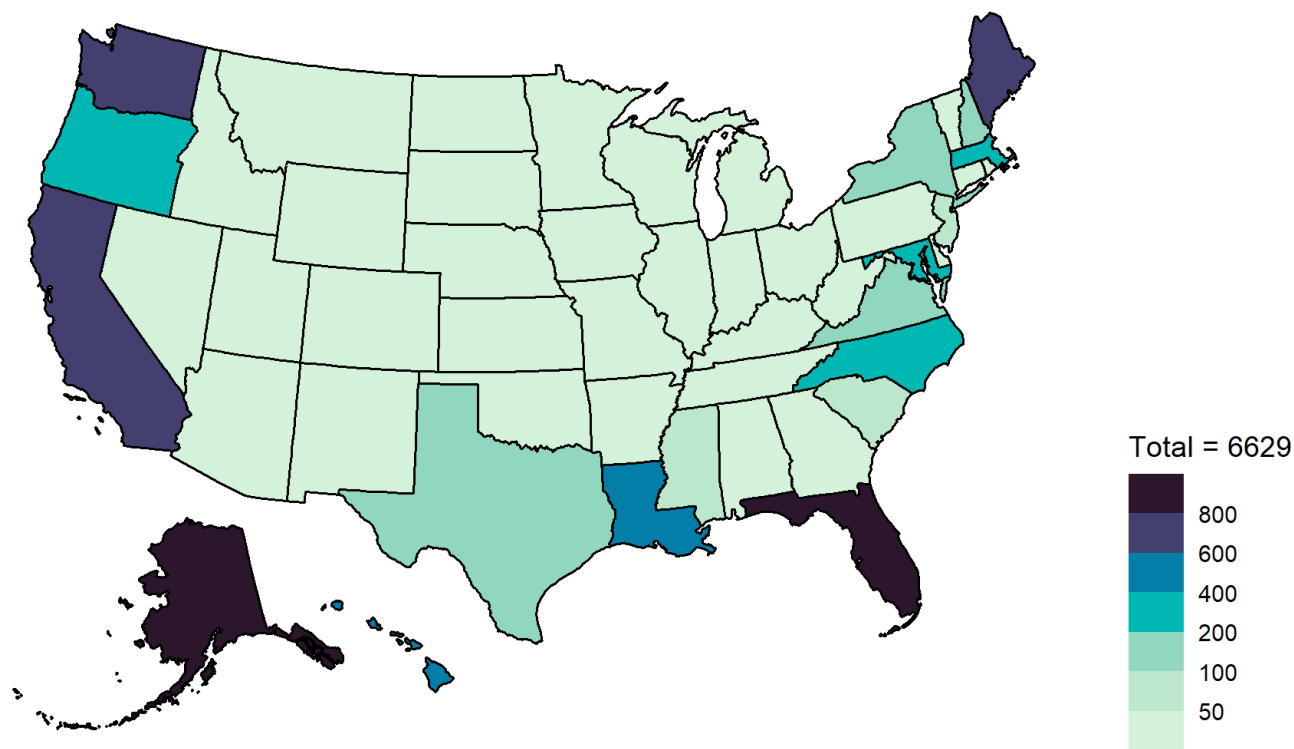


JOSHUA STOLL

American Seafood Harvesters Marketing Practices Survey

The **American Seafood Harvesters Marketing Practices Survey (ASHMPS)** is the first-ever national assessment of the direct seafood sector. The survey was developed through close collaboration between the University of Maine and the Local Catch Network and was funded by the USDA and NOAA Fisheries. The survey aims to fill a gap in our understanding of the domestic seafood market in the US and bring greater focus to the socioeconomic contributions of seafood in the nation's local and regional food systems.

Number of Direct Seafood Marketers Contacted



Based on commercial fishing and sales permits as well as a short survey, we identified 6629 individuals and businesses across the US who likely engaged in direct seafood marketing. In March 2023, the survey was distributed to all of these individuals (see the map of potential survey respondents), and by the end of 2023 we heard back from 18% of the individuals and businesses contacted. Of these, 603 survey respondents (or 49%) indicated that they were actively engaged in direct seafood sales in 2022.

We will be sharing the results of the survey as a series of fact sheets and an in-depth report in the coming months. But the table below provides information on the most common aspects of direct seafood marketing in different regions of the US. Direct to consumer sales via Off-the-boat seafood sales was the most common marketing strategy used in nearly every region of the US. Direct seafood businesses are clearly important to fishing communities, as nearly 90% of direct seafood businesses were reported to be family-owned.

Table X: The numbers of direct seafood marketers who responded to the survey along with the most popular aspects of direct marketing.

Region	Direct Marketing Survey Respondents	Direct Seafood Marketing Channel	Seafood Types	Seafood Processing Method
U.S. Total	603	Direct to Consumer 68.8%	Finfish	Fresh / chilled
Alaska	63	Direct to Consumer 77.8%	Finfish	Fresh / chilled
West Coast	109	Direct to Consumer 77.1%	Finfish	Fresh / chilled
Hawaii	54	Direct to Consumer 90.7%	Finfish	Fresh / chilled
New England	127	Direct to Consumer 63%	Crustaceans	Live
Mid-Atlantic	87	Direct to Consumer 70.1%	Crustaceans	Live
South Atlantic	95	Direct to Consumer 60%	Crustaceans	Fresh / chilled
Gulf of Mexico	61	Source Identified Distributors 63.9%	Crustaceans	Fresh / chilled
Great Lakes	7	Direct to Consumer 83.3%	Finfish	Frozen

West Coast = Washington, Oregon, California; New England = Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts; Mid-Atlantic = New York, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia; South Atlantic = Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida; Gulf of Mexico = Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas; Great Lakes = Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin

This survey offers initial insights into the direct seafood sector and its role in the nation's food system. Over half of survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to provide more information about barriers and enabling factors related to direct seafood marketing. Clearly, there's more information to explore to enhance local and regional seafood systems and support fishing communities. We are looking forward to collaborating with Local Catch Network members to delve deeper.

Future Outlook

2024

The upcoming year promises to be a period of innovation, growth, and collaboration as we advance multiple ongoing projects and launch several new ones. Here are a few highlights to set the stage for the next 12 months:

We invite
you to
**Join
Us**
in this
work

We are recruiting new members to our Executive Committee

Applications will be due early in the new year.

We are kicking off our first-ever strategic planning process.

With support from the Meridian Institute we are kicking off a collaborative strategic planning process to help guide our work in the coming years.

We are creating a national action plan to strengthen local and regional seafood systems.

Using case studies from around the country, we are developing a national action plan to catalyze and strengthen community-based seafood systems.

We are launching the Seafood Accelerator and Innovation Lab (SAIL).

SAIL will include a business accelerator program and a mentorship program designed to build capacity and resilience of the participating businesses.

We are publishing the results of the American Seafood Harvesters Marketing Practices Survey.

This survey is the first-ever assessment of the size and geographic distribution of direct seafood marketing in the United States.

We are kicking off our planning for the 2025 Local Seafood Summit.

Stay tuned for opportunities to be involved.



Funding Support

Our work is made possible by the generous financial support of the following organizations:

University of Maine

Builders Initiative

National Marine Fisheries Service

Oak Foundation

Sitka Salmon Shares

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Support Our Work

localcatch.org/how-to-support

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Join The Network

localcatch.org/join

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