

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIDEO AVAILABLE:

DNR Called On to Stop Imminent, Brutal Attacks on Cownose Rays;  
Bowfishers Ignore Scientific Findings and Public Outrage

MARYLAND – Animal protection groups are asking the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to prevent bowfishers from carrying out yet more bloodbaths on native and beloved cownose rays of the Chesapeake Bay – another cownose ray killing "contest" is set for June 26, in Solomons, MD.

FULL LETTER:

[http://fishfeel.org/wp-content/uploads/FishFeel-Shark\\_lettertoDNR.pdf](http://fishfeel.org/wp-content/uploads/FishFeel-Shark_lettertoDNR.pdf)

The groups, Fish Feel and SHARK (SHowing Animals Respect and Kindness) appealed to Maryland DNR Secretary Mark Belton to stop these renewed attacks by declaring cownose rays a species in need of conservation or by taking whatever other action necessary to protect the animals.

A year ago, on June 2015, Fish Feel and SHARK documented the vicious and ecologically reckless bowfishing contests targeting the cownose rays of the Chesapeake Bay.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2H-aY-5s6I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyLZaOS9zDs>

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The video documentation graphically showed the rays, who are native to the Bay and beloved by many, as they were shot with arrows, impaled, mercilessly beaten, and piled on top of each other to suffocate. Afterwards their bodies are dumped back into the water.

Widely covered in the media, the SHARK/Fish Feel investigation generated great public outrage – about 136,000 people so far have signed a petition against this animal abuse, prompting the Chesapeake Bay Program to conduct a scientific workshop about the rays. The workshop report, along with a subsequent scientific report, vindicate the rays, who have been "a convenient scapegoat" for human-caused problems.

The reports also warn that the rays are highly vulnerable to human predation. Marine scientists have, in fact, for years been urging Atlantic states --Maryland and Virginia in particular-- to take immediate action to protect the threatened cownose ray population.

The Solomons' cownose ray killing contest will be held at the Solomon Pier and Boat Ramp. SHARK and Fish Feel will soon be making a major announcement regarding plans for that slaughter.

"The scientific community is warning that cownose rays urgently need protection, and the public is demanding it. Is the state going to act responsibly or stand by and let countless more of these animals be massacred?" asks Mary Finelli, president of Fish Feel.

"The video we took at last year's killing contest, where pregnant mother rays were brutally shot and beaten, broke the hearts of people worldwide. We will be back this year at the brutal slaughter, and we will continue the fight to forever ban these barbaric killing contests," said Stuart Chaifetz, SHARK investigator.

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