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Background information and videos:

<http://fishfeel.org/stop-savage-killing-contests>

Legislators and Media Invited to Witness Abusive Killing Contests
Targeting Cownose Rays

MARYLAND – Fish Feel and SHARK (Showing Animals Respect and Kindness) are inviting legislators and media to join them aboard a boat to witness firsthand the savage killing contests that target cownose rays of the Chesapeake Bay.

Flouting scientific warnings and public outrage, bowfishers are persisting with a contest to torture and kill cownose rays of the Chesapeake Bay. The contest is planned for Sunday, June 26th, starting 7 a.m. at Solomons Boat Ramp, in Solomons, MD.

Accusations that the rays are responsible for decreases in oyster populations have been refuted by scientific reports which note that the rays have instead been "a convenient scapegoat" for human-caused problems. Oyster populations had, in actuality, declined due to overcollection for human consumption, pollution, and disease.)

Cownose rays arrive in the Bay area each spring to mate and give birth to their pups. Gliding on the water's surfact, these gentle animals are easy targets for bowfishers who ride their boats up on them, shoot them with arrows, impale them, mercilessly beat them, and throw them in a pile to suffocate. Later, their bodies are dumped back into the water.

Taking years to reach maturity, rays have long gestational periods and females only birth a single pup each year, making the species highly vulnerable to predation. With gender indistinguishable from the water's

surface, bowfishers kill indiscriminately, essentially killing two rays with each female caught.

Fish Feel and SHARK have urgently implored the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to heed scientific advice and public outcry by stopping these contests. Over 137,000 people have signed a petition calling for an end to them.

We will have boats in the water documenting the massacre and invite concerned legislators and the media to come aboard with us.

"We can continue exposing the brutal and ecologically reckless killing but what is really needed is for the government to step up and give the rays the protection they desperately need and the public wants them to have by banning this animal abuse, said Mary Finelli, President of Fish Feel.

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