

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 22, 2016

Contact: Mary Finelli (landline) (301) 625-9321 - (cell) (301) 364-6806

Info@FishFeel.org

Stu Chaifetz (856) 428-2635

SChaifetz@Sharkonline.org

Legislators and Media Invited to Witness Firsthand the Bloody,
Abusive Killing Contest Targeting Cownose Rays Sunday/June 26

Background information and videos:

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

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 26, STARTING 6 A.M. AT SOLOMONS BOAT RAMP, IN SOLOMONS, MD.

SHARK AND FISH FEEL WILL HAVE BOATS ON THE WATER DOCUMENTING THE SLAUGHTER JUNE 26. REPORTERS WHO WISH TO SEE FIRST-HAND THE KILLING ARE INVITED TO CONTACT MARY FINELLI DIRECTLY AT (301) 625-9321 TO RESERVE A SPOT AND TIME.

Accusations that the rays are responsible for decreases in oyster populations have been refuted by scientific reports which note the rays have instead been "a convenient scapegoat" for human-caused problems. (Oyster populations had, in actuality, declined due to over collection 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 surface, these gentle animals are easy targets for bowfishers who ride their boats right up to the rays, 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 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.

"The public was rightly horrified and disgusted when they saw our videos of last year's slaughter," states SHARK President Steve Hindi. "These killing contests are some of the most depraved acts of animal cruelty we have ever witnessed. They must be banned."

Kurt Wall, organizer of the impending June 26 slaughter, was challenged by SHARK President Steve Hindi to debate, but he has refused to respond. Said Hindi: "The truth is, Wall cannot respond - he has planned an event where pregnant mother rays will be slaughtered and their dead babies considered nothing more than extra weight for a cash prize."

--END--