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November 25, 2025



photo: Flickr - Josef Gelernter

You may recall, we were **successful** in obtaining a moratorium on bowfishing contests that targeted cownose rays in Maryland waters. The rays had been falsely blamed for the oyster population crash, which was shown to instead be due to human causes. The moratorium was to remain in place until a “fishery management plan” was developed. The goal of such a plan is to “protect the resource while allowing sustainable harvest.” :-)

A draft of the plan is now available for public input and comments are being accepted on it through November 30th. Please submit a **comment** urging that the moratorium on the contests be made a permanent ban! Please also urge that all intentional catching of rays be banned, which could largely be

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Wildlife killing contests are being challenged and increasingly banned across the country, including in Maryland (e.g., foxes, coyotes and raccoons). These contests targeting rays should be too! In addition to the bowfishing contests being egregiously inhumane, the management plan concurs with the scientific community's consensus that cownose rays are "inherently vulnerable" to overfishing and that "additional protection is advisable due to [their] low population growth rate."

If you live, work and/or visit Maryland, please be sure to mention it. Cownose rays travel the U.S. East Coast, so the plan will affect all the coastal states and beyond. Of course, whatever happens to the rays affects everyone as we are all connected. You can also mention that you enjoy seeing the rays in nature living free from human assault, and that this interest, which many share, should factor into the plan.

Again, comments are due by November 30th. Please submit yours ASAP! You can do so at: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/pages/fmp.aspx>. Background information is available at: <https://savetheraysmd.org>.

Thank you for helping to rescue the rays!



photo: Stu Chaifetz - [SHARK](#)

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