

# Resolution Regarding Atlantic Cownose Rays

American Elasmobranch Society  
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Whereas the fishing industry along the East Coast, particularly in Virginia and Maryland, is aggressively promoting targeted fishing, new markets, and eradication programs for cownose rays (*Rhinoptera bonasus*) through state governments, seafood shows, the media, and their “eat a ray, save the bay” initiative (which suggests cownose ray consumption is good for the environment);

Whereas cownose rays are among the least fecund marine vertebrates, with females maturing around age eight and usually producing just one pup per year after an 11 month gestation period;

Whereas large scale removal of a similar South American species, *Rhinoptera brasiliensis*, led rapidly to population depletion followed by an IUCN categorization as Endangered;

Whereas there have been no assessments of East coast cownose ray population status or sustainable catch levels;

Whereas there are no limits on cownose ray fishing and no concrete plans for managing the fishery;

Therefore be it resolved that the American Elasmobranch Society urges Atlantic states where cownose rays are being landed, particularly Virginia and Maryland, to immediately impose precautionary cownose ray catch limits and initiate development of a population assessment and science-based interstate management plan, as a matter of priority.

