

Chapter 399

(Senate Bill 268)

AN ACT concerning

**Cownose Ray ~~Fishing Tournaments~~ – ~~Prohibition~~ Fishery Management Plan and Moratorium on ~~Tournaments~~ *Contests***

FOR the purpose of ~~prohibiting a person from organizing, sponsoring, promoting, conducting, or participating in a cownose ray fishing tournament in State waters; requiring the Secretary of Natural Resources to adopt certain regulations; defining a certain term; and generally relating to cownose ray fishing tournaments~~ requiring the Department of Natural Resources to prepare a certain fishery management plan for the cownose ray species on or before a certain date; requiring the Department to prepare a certain fishery management plan for the cownose ray species on or before a certain date, subject to available funding; prohibiting a person from organizing, sponsoring, promoting, conducting, or participating in a certain cownose ray fishing tournament contest in State waters until a certain date; establishing certain penalties for certain violations; making this Act an emergency measure; and generally relating to the cownose ray fishery.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article – Natural Resources  
Section 4-215(b)(23) and (24)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2012 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

BY adding to  
Article – Natural Resources  
Section ~~4-748~~ 4-215(b)(25)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2012 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Natural Resources**

~~4-748.~~

~~(A) IN THIS SECTION, “COWNOSE RAY FISHING TOURNAMENT” MEANS ANY TOURNAMENT, CONTEST, COMPETITION, OR DERBY WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF CATCHING OR KILLING COWNOSE RAYS FOR;~~

~~(1) PRIZES OR OTHER INDUCEMENTS; OR~~

~~(2) ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES.~~~~(B) A PERSON MAY NOT ORGANIZE, SPONSOR, PROMOTE, CONDUCT, OR PARTICIPATE IN A COWNOSE RAY FISHING TOURNAMENT IN STATE WATERS.~~~~(C) THE SECRETARY SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.~~4-215.

(b) The Department shall prepare fishery management plans for the following species:

(23) Hard shell clams; [and]

(24) Catfish; AND

(25) COWNOSE RAY.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That on or before December 31, ~~2017,~~ 2018, subject to funding made available to the Department of Natural Resources to implement Section 1 of this Act, the Department of Natural Resources shall prepare the cownose ray fishery management plan required by § 4-215(b)(25) of the Natural Resources Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) In this section, “cownose ray fishing ~~tournament~~ contest” means any competition, tournament ~~contest,~~ competition, or derby with the objective of catching or killing cownose rays for:

(1) prizes or other inducements; or

(2) entertainment purposes.

(b) Until July 1, ~~2018~~ 2019, a person may not ~~organize,~~ sponsor, ~~promote,~~ conduct, or participate in a cownose ray fishing ~~tournament~~ contest in State waters.

(c) A person who violates subsection (b) of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction is subject to the penalties provided in § 4-1201(a) and (b) of the Natural Resources Article.

~~SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2017.~~

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has been passed by a ye and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is enacted.

**Approved by the Governor, May 4, 2017.**