

Chapter 398

(House Bill 211)

AN ACT concerning

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

FOR the purpose of ~~prohibiting a person from sponsoring, conducting, or participating in a cownose ray fishing contest in State waters; requiring the Secretary of Natural Resources to adopt certain regulations; defining a certain term; and generally relating to cownose ray fishing contests~~ requiring the Department of Natural Resources to prepare a certain fishery management plan for the cownose ray species; 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 sponsoring, conducting, or participating in a certain cownose ray fishing 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 CONTEST” MEANS ANY COMPETITION, TOURNAMENT, 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 SPONSOR, CONDUCT, OR PARTICIPATE IN A COWNOSE RAY FISHING CONTEST 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, 2018, subject to funding made available to the Department of Natural Resources to implement Section 1 of this Act, the Department 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 contest” means any competition, tournament, 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, 2019, a person may not sponsor, conduct, or participate in a cownose ray fishing 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 yea 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.