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Subject: Public Hearing Comments

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From: DoNotReply@delaware.gov

To: HearingComments, DNREC (MailBox Resources), [REDACTED]

Comments on Docket #2025-R-P-0017 - State Parks Regulations

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Organization:

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern, I am writing to respectfully provide comments regarding proposed changes to shark fishing regulations in Delaware State Parks. I believe that shark fishing can be conducted safely and responsibly if anglers are properly educated and if clear rules are in place. Instead of only restricting shark fishing, Delaware could consider creating a shark fishing education and permit/license program, similar to the approach used in Florida. Anglers who want to target sharks from shore could be required to complete a short online education course or exam before receiving a shark fishing endorsement on their Delaware fishing license. The goal of this program would be to make sure shark fishermen understand proper gear, safe handling, quick release practices, protected species identification, and how to minimize stress and injury to sharks. Any fees collected from a shark fishing endorsement could be used for public education, printed brochures, signs, online resources, and enforcement support. I also believe that shark fishing information should be made more available to the public. Brochures or information sheets could be provided at fishing stores, bait shops, state park offices, surf-fishing permit locations, and online. These materials could explain legal shark species, prohibited species, required gear, safe release techniques, and best practices for fishing around other beach users. For shark fishing, appropriate gear should be required. For example, anglers targeting sharks from shore should use equipment strong enough to land and release the fish quickly, such as spinning reels in the 8000 size or larger, or conventional reels in approximately 30 size or larger. Using gear that is too light can unnecessarily prolong the fight and increase stress on the shark. I also support requiring proper terminal tackle and release tools, including: Inline, non-offset circle hooks; Non-stainless, corrodible hooks only; A dehooking tool; Bolt cutters or another proper cutting tool in case the hook cannot be safely removed; Strong enough line and leader material to land the shark quickly; Immediate release of prohibited or protected species. Park rangers could periodically check whether anglers targeting sharks have the proper shark fishing endorsement, if implemented, and whether they are using appropriate gear and release tools. This would help protect both sharks and the public while allowing responsible anglers to continue fishing. I also respectfully request that Delaware State Parks consider allowing the limited use of small remote-controlled electric bait deployment boats for shore-based shark fishing. In my opinion, this could actually improve safety if regulated properly. Without this option, some anglers may try to paddle baits out by kayak or other means, which can be more dangerous, especially in surf conditions. A reasonable compromise could be to allow RC bait deployment boats only under limited conditions, such as: Only between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., when beach traffic is minimal; Only in areas where surf-

fishing vehicles are already allowed on the beach; Not near swimmers, surfers, lifeguarded beaches, or crowded areas; Only for carrying and releasing bait, not for any other purpose; Only when the angler remains on shore and maintains control of the fishing rod; Subject to distance limits or other safety rules set by Delaware State Parks. This would allow responsible anglers to deploy bait safely while reducing conflicts with other beach users. It would also allow Delaware State Parks to regulate the activity clearly instead of leaving anglers uncertain about what is allowed. Overall, I respectfully ask Delaware State Parks to consider a balanced approach that focuses on education, proper gear, quick release practices, enforcement, and reasonable access. Responsible shark fishing can be compatible with conservation and public safety if anglers are properly trained and clear rules are established. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely, Andrey J [REDACTED]