



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

F:SER

Jessica McCawley, Director
Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Re: Extension of State of Florida cownose ray regulations into Federal waters

Ms. McCawley:

Thank you for your June 29, 2026, letter outlining the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) plan to extend state management of cownose rays into Federal waters off Florida. Because there is no federal fishery management plan for this species, FWC would regulate the harvest of that species in Federal waters by Florida-registered fishing vessels consistent with Section 306(a)(3)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

We acknowledge that the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils have no imminent plans to recommend Federal management for cownose rays. We also do not have any initial concerns on the proposed management measures.

I appreciate FWC's partnership in conserving and managing marine fisheries and look forward to working with you to sustainably manage cownose rays in Federal waters off Florida.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Strelcheck
Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region

