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From: scott@grumpystackle.com <scott@grumpystackle.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 26, 2024 7:09 AM

To: Tom Fote <tomfote1@gmail.com>; aj@apexanglers.com; DEP Marine Fisheries Council [DEP] <marinefisheriescouncil@dep.nj.gov>; jhutchinson@thefisherman.com

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Land Based Shark Fishing

Members of the Marine Fisheries Council,

My name is Scott Thomas and I'm an avid angler from the surf, kayak, and boat. I'm also the manager of a tackle shop in Seaside Park called Grumpys Tackle. I'm sure it comes as no surprise that interest in land based shark fishing (LBSF) is on the rise the past couple of years. We have dozens of people asking about it every week. As much as we try to educate our customers on the legalities of it, many people are willfully ignorant on not only the laws, but what to do if they do hook a shark in order to ensure its survival. I don't think there is anything we can do to stop people doing it, and I think educating anglers is the path we need to take in order to ensure the survival of sharks.

I'm not sure if you're familiar with the way the state of Florida handles LBSF, but they make all anglers take an online class that educates them on proper practices to ensure the species has the best chance at survival. Obviously setting up such a program does not come free, but Grumpys tackle would gladly absorb any costs in order to make this a reality. AJ from Apex Anglers has also agreed to be part of the training process, and I believe he is probably the resident NJ expert on safe LBSF. I've spoken with several other shops and the consensus is that people are going to do it no matter what we tell them, so lets give them a way to do it legally and in the best interests of the fish.

Lastly, I'm not sure if this is the proper channel to go through to get a discussion started on this, so if there is a different way, please let know what I need to do. You can reach me via this email, or if anyone needs to call me you can call my cell phone at (808) 469-5895.

Thank you,

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Scott Thomas

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