

November 18, 2013

Andrew Zimmern
Tremendous! Entertainment
10100 Viking Drive, Suite 200
Eden Prairie, MN 55344



Wegmans



Dear Mr. Zimmern:

Representing diverse perspectives on seafood, we are writing to express shared concern over a segment of *Bizarre Foods America* -- filmed in Hampton, Virginia and due to air this fall -- that we understand will promote consumption of Atlantic cownose rays (*Rhinoptera bonasus*), also known as the "Chesapeake Ray." In order to ensure the sustainability of cownose ray fishing operations, we request your leadership in publicizing this species' exceptional vulnerability to overfishing and need for catch limits.

Wegmans and J.J. McDonnell have a continuing interest in offering cownose rays as an alternative seafood, and have recently joined Shark Advocates International in calling on state resource managers to make improvements to better understand and manage the associated fishery. Our organizations share your commitment to seafood sustainability, and believe it is best achieved through science-based fisheries management.

Close relatives of sharks, rays are generally low productivity species. Cownose rays usually produce just one pup per year after age seven. Sound stewardship of such species requires prompt attention and a particularly cautious approach, and yet there are currently no limits on cownose ray fishing. Targeted scientific investigations are needed to determine population status as well as safe levels of fishing. In the meantime, for the sake of the population and those invested in its future harvest, precautionary limits are warranted to ensure that fishing effort on this species does not increase.

We are hopeful that – in conjunction with the airing of the associated episode – you will assist us in drawing attention to the urgent need to assess and manage Virginia's cownose ray fishery. Given the substantial viewership of your program, your message on this issue could spell the difference between preventing and hastening the predictable and unnecessary collapse of an important marine resource.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sonja Fordham".

Sonja Fordham
President
Shark Advocates International

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Salamone".

Carl Salamone
Vice President for Seafood
Wegmans Food Markets

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Friesland".

Kurt Friesland
Sales/Product Development
J.J. McDonnell Seafood

cc: Colleen Needles Steward, Executive Producer