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**Abstract Title:** “A Dangerous and Exhausting Struggle”: Hunting the Devil Fish of Coastal North and South Carolina

**Abstract Description:** Scientists, hunters, and business entrepreneurs in the Carolinas all had mutual interests in Giant Manta Rays (*Mobula birostris*) during the early decades of the 1900s. Eastern seaboard coastal communities called it a Devil Fish attributed to the horn shaped fins on its head. Although the Ocean Leather Company in Morehead City primarily processed shark skin leather, it also experimented with the skins of rays, and other sea animals for producing a great variety of consumer products. Authors wrote articles for scientific journals and contributed ray specimens to National Institutions like the American Museum of Natural History. Local fishermen, along with celebrities like Teddy Roosevelt, harpooned Devil fish in Cape Lookout, while marveling at the grace and strength breaching up to 6 feet above the water surface. Beaufort planter William Elliott presented many accounts of what he called “the mightiest, strangest, most formidable” of all fish with vivid stories of enslaved African harpooners jumping off boats onto the backs Manta Rays. The research combines historic accounts and images, newspaper advertisements, and talks at local explorer clubs to illustrate case studies of the community obsession with collecting, cooking, hunting, and conquering rays as an important component of maritime leisure and environmental history.