

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## Question on notice

Tuesday, 17 February 2015

2547. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Fisheries.

I refer to the practice of gillnet fishing in the Kimberley region, and I ask:

- (a) what is the total reported mortality of snubfin dolphins in the gillnet fisheries of the Kimberley, from Roebuck Bay to the Northern Territory border, and when did these occur;
- (b) when and where was the last observer study undertaken that aimed to investigate the bycatch occurring in the gillnet fisheries of the Kimberley:
  - (i) how many hours were spent undertaking these studies; and
  - (ii) what percentage of the gillnet fisheries in the Kimberley have been studied, by year;
- (c) will the Minister provide a population estimate, by location, for snubfin dolphins in the Kimberley:
  - (i) if no to (c), why not; and
- (d) will the Minister provide an estimate of the acceptable annual mortality of snubfin dolphins, as a result of the Kimberley gillnet fishery, that will ensure sustainability of the population:
  - (i) if no to (d), why not?

**Answer**

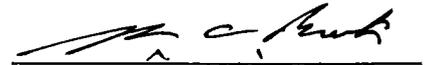
- (a) There have been no reported interactions with snubfin dolphins in the Kimberley gillnet fisheries in recent years (i.e. between 2008 and 2014).
- (b) Research was conducted in the Kimberley Gillnet and Barramundi Managed Fishery (KGBF) (and with gillnet operators on Eighty Mile Beach) between 2003 and 2004<sup>1</sup> as part of a research program on sandbar and dusky sharks, which collected verified information about catches of all species from these fishing activities.
  - (i) Approximately 1280 hours were spent over 160 days of fishing.
  - (ii) In total, 160 days of gillnet fishing were observed in 2003 and 2004 in the study referred to in (b), which equates to between 6 and 32% of fishing effort levels in the KGBF between 2008 and 2014<sup>2</sup>.
- (c) The only information currently available on population estimates for snubfin dolphins in the Kimberley is for Roebuck Bay, where the population is estimated to be 143 snubfin dolphins, excluding calves.

<sup>1</sup> McAuley, R.; Lenanton, R.; Chidlow, J.; Allison, R.; Heist, E. (2005). Biology and stock assessment of the thickskin (sandbar) shark, *Carcharhinus plumbeus*, in Western Australia and further refinement of the dusky shark, *Carcharhinus obscurus*, stock assessment. Final FRDC report, project no. 2000/134; Fisheries Research Report No. 151, Department of Fisheries, WA. 132 pp. [http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/Documents/research\\_reports/fr151.pdf](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/Documents/research_reports/fr151.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Newman, S.J., Mitsopoulos, G., Skepper, C., Thomson, A., Marriott, R. and Wallis, D. 2014. North Coast Nearshore and Estuarine Fishery Status Report pp. 185-191In: Status Reports of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Western Australia 2013/14: The State of the Fisheries eds. W.J. Fletcher and K. Santoro, Department of Fisheries, Western Australia, pp. 185-191

(d) No.

(i) There is insufficient information on which to base such an estimate both in terms of population abundance and in life history parameters for this species.

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**MINISTER FOR FISHERIES**