

FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES — SPANISH MACKEREL

**150. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Fisheries:**

I refer to the \$1.5 million announced by the McGowan government to expand the recreational fish aggregating device—FAD—program.

- (1) Given that the purpose of the funding is essentially to switch the recreational fishing effort from west coast demersal scalefish to pelagic species, can the minister confirm that there will not be an impact on the sustainability of pelagic species such as Spanish mackerel?
- (2) If yes to (1), on what basis was that assessment made?
- (3) Can the minister advise when the last stock assessment of Spanish mackerel was undertaken?
- (4) When is the next Spanish mackerel stock assessment planned to occur?

**Hon PIERRE YANG replied:**

On behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Fisheries, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Fisheries.

- (1) The expanded statewide fish aggregating device program is designed to provide greater recreational fishing opportunities for offshore pelagic species such as mahi-mahi, tuna and wahoo. These are all fast-growing species that are part of a broader oceanic stock with no known sustainability issues in Western Australian waters. Any increased targeting of these species by recreational fishers as a result of the statewide FAD program presents a low risk to sustainability. Spanish mackerel are not usually associated with the offshore FADs, preferring shallow waters adjacent to coastal reefs.
- (2) The recreational catch of large pelagic species is monitored periodically through the statewide survey of recreational boat fishers and assessed against sustainable catch levels. These assessments are reported in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's annual *State of the fisheries* report. It is also important to note that species such as mahi-mahi, tuna and wahoo are not targeted by WA state licensed commercial fisheries.
- (3) An age-based stock assessment for Spanish mackerel was undertaken in 2002, with updated weight-of-evidence stock assessments based on catch and effort undertaken annually by DPIRD.
- (4) The next age-based stock assessment for the WA Spanish mackerel resource is due for completion in mid-2023.