

COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENCES — SHARK MANAGEMENT

111. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to reports from both recreational and commercial wet line fishers that shark numbers are increasing, and sharks are commonly predated on their catch before it is landed.

- (1) Can the minister advise whether consideration is being given to issuing additional commercial fishing licences for shark fishing and/or increasing catch quotas?
- (2) If yes to (1), in which zones?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(2) I have asked the Department of Fisheries to work closely with the WA Fishing Industry Council and Recfishwest in relation to shark fishing and depredation, otherwise known as shark bite-offs. A project is underway, with the full support of WAFIC and Recfishwest, to validate rates of shark bite-offs. The bite-offs appear to be focused in certain areas and at certain times. There is currently no evidence as to which shark species are involved. This is crucial, as some species are protected under national and international agreements. The Department of Fisheries is also preparing a discussion paper on the future management of the northern shark fisheries. This paper will be released for public comment in due course.