

FISHERIES — ANIMAL CARCASS

**51. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Fisheries:**

- (1) Will the minister release photographic evidence to prove that the animal under the tarpaulin on the Fisheries vessel off Leighton Beach this morning was not a dolphin?
- (2) What was the species of the animal, its level of maturity and gender, and its physical state when retrieved, including a description of any injuries?
- (3) Why was the animal covered?
- (4) Why did the Fisheries vessel travel so far out to sea before disposing of the carcass?
- (5) What was the minister's reaction following yesterday's broadcast video of a tiger shark released from a Fisheries vessel sinking lifelessly towards the bottom of the seabed near the drum line that hooked it?
- (6) Having seen photographic evidence of sharks severely wounded by a hook and fishers cutting the shark around the mouth to remove the hook, will the minister investigate whether sharks released alive are, indeed, dying soon after release?
- (7) Will the minister instruct, or has he instructed, the fishers checking the drum lines to cover up with a tarpaulin anything captured and speed away from nearby witnesses?

**Hon KEN BASTON replied:**

I thank the honourable member for the question without notice.

- (1) I certainly do not have the photographic evidence on me. It was a deceased 2.3-metre tiger shark at Leighton Beach, not a dolphin.
- (2) If the member wants that information, she will have to put the question on notice. I do not carry that information around in my head. As to the shark's physical state when retrieved, including a description of any injuries, it was deceased.
- (3) All deceased sharks get covered.
- (4) If the sharks are dead and they are let go in the area in which they were caught, obviously sharks eat sharks, so they will attract sharks in an area where these drum lines are put to protect people.
- (5) I checked on that this morning. I am told that the shark was very much alive and kicking and well. It was less than three metres long and was released.
- (6) Obviously, a big hook is used. The best way to get that hook out is to reverse it and take it back through. It is a hook with a very small eyelet on it, so it can be pulled through. A small incision would be made to get that hook out.
- (7) No, I have not instructed the fishers to cover the sharks with a tarpaulin. However, when they put the acoustic tags on, they put a cover over them to keep them as wet as possible and they put a hose down their mouth to keep the seawater going through them. If there is any reason that that shark is deteriorating or going backwards before they put on that tag, they do not put on the tag but let the shark go as soon as they possibly can.

Yes, the boat did speed away because a different boat was being used. The other one is being serviced. This was the *Houtman*, which does 20 knots. It is a very sleek boat; it is normally up around Geraldton. It is a very nice craft. The only reason it sped away is that it is a boat of greater speed and does a greater turn of knots.