

FISHERIES — AUSTRALIAN HUMPBACK DOLPHIN

2545. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the Australian humpback dolphin, *sousa sahuensis*, recently described as a new species and thought to be threatened and endangered, which shares its habitat with the Kimberley gillnet fishery and the Kimberley prawn trawling industry, and I ask:

- (a) what is the total reported mortality of Australian humpback dolphins in the gillnet fisheries of the Kimberley, from Eighty-Mile Beach to the Northern Territory border, and when did these occur;
- (b) what is the total reported mortality of Australian humpback dolphins in the prawn trawling fisheries of the Kimberley, from Eighty-Mile Beach to the Northern Territory border, and when did these occur;
- (c) what is the current population estimate, by location, for Australian humpback dolphins in various parts of the Kimberley;
- (d) how has the population altered during the past five years;
- (e) what measures are taken to assess the impact of the gillnet fishery on Australian humpback dolphins and when were these established;
- (f) will the Minister provide an estimate of the acceptable annual mortality of Australian humpback dolphins as a result of the gillnet fishing practices in the Kimberley that will nonetheless ensure sustainability of the population; and
- (g) if no to (f), why not?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a) There have been no reported interactions with Australian humpback dolphins in the Kimberley gillnet fisheries.
- (b) There have been no reported interactions with Australian humpback dolphins in the Kimberley prawn trawl fisheries managed by Western Australia.

Questions on any humpback dolphin interactions in the Commonwealth's Northern Prawn Fishery (in Western Australian waters from 126 degrees 58 minutes east [near Cape Londonderry] to the Northern Territory border) should be directed to the Australian Fisheries Management Authority.
- (c) There are currently no population estimates, by location or by region, for Australian humpback dolphins in the Kimberley.
- (d) There is insufficient data to determine whether the population has changed over the last five years.
- (e) No specific measures are in place.
- (f) Not known
- (g) This cannot be determined in the absence of a population estimate for humpback dolphins or an understanding of their natural mortality rate.