

FISHERIES — GILLNET AND TRAWL FISHING — KIMBERLEY

2542. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the gillnet fisheries and prawn trawl fisheries operating in the Kimberley region of Western Australia between Eighty-Mile Beach and the Northern Territory border, and I ask:

- (a) which protected and endangered species are caught, or at risk of being caught, in the gillnet fisheries of the Kimberley;
- (b) will the Minister please provide by-catch records, including the numbers and species caught, for each year from 2008 to 2014;
- (c) if no to (b), why not;
- (d) which protected and endangered species are caught, or at risk of being caught, in the prawn trawl fisheries of the Kimberley;
- (e) will the Minister please provide by-catch records, including the numbers and species caught, for each year from 2008 to 2014;
- (f) if no to (e), why not;
- (g) what monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place regarding lost gillnets and prawn trawl nets (ghost nets) in the Kimberley;
- (h) what cleanup and retrieval process does the Department of Fisheries have in place, and what is the annual budget for the operations;
- (i) can the nets be traced to their owners and are they required to bear the cost for net retrieval;
- (j) if no to (i), why not;
- (k) how many gillnets, or parts of gillnets, were lost each year from the Kimberley gillnet industry between 2008 and 2014; and
- (l) what monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place regarding cultural fishing practices that include the use of nets?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a) Species within the concept of “protected and endangered” (noting the listings and categorisations in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* and the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*) that are caught, or notionally at risk of being caught, by gillnetting activities in the Kimberley region include:

River sharks: speartooth shark, *Glyphis glyphis*, and northern river shark, *G. garricki*;

Sawfish: freshwater sawfish *Pristis microdon*, dwarf sawfish *P. clavata*, green sawfish *P. zijsron* and narrow sawfish *Anoxypristis cuspidata*;

Crocodiles: freshwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus johnsoni*) and saltwater crocodiles (*C. porosus*)

Dolphins: Australian snubfin dolphin (*Orcaella heinsohni*), Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*), common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin (*T. aduncus*) and spinner dolphins (*Stenella* spp.);

Marine turtles: loggerhead *Caretta caretta*, flatback *Chelonia depressa*, green *Chelonia mydas*, hawksbill *Eretmochelys imbricata* and olive ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea*; and

Dugongs.

All four species of sawfish and the northern river shark have been observed in Kimberley Gillnet and Barramundi Managed Fishery (KGBF) catches as part of research programs^[1]^[2]^[3]. Green and narrow sawfish (and unspecified sawfish) have been reported in the KGBF logbooks.

Other protected species interactions that have been reported in KGBF logbooks are limited to saltwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*) and unspecified crocodiles (probably *C. porosus*).

- (b)–(f) [See tabled paper no 2647.]
- (g) There are no monitoring and reporting requirements in place by the Department of Fisheries regarding lost nets in the KGBF or Western Australian managed KPF and BPF.
- (h) There are no formal clean-up or retrieval processes in place for these fisheries.

- (i) Prawn trawl nets are not readily lost as they are attached to the boat by wire warps.
The surface floats of nets used in the KGBF are required to be marked with the associated Licenced Fishing Boat number, and therefore the licence holder can be identified.
 - (j) Not applicable
 - (k) Unreported and not known.
 - (l) There are no monitoring and reporting arrangements in place for cultural (customary) fishing.
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- [1] McAuley, R., Lenanton, R., Chidlow, J., Allison, R., and 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 Report to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation for FRDC project no. 2000/134.
- [2] Department of the Environment (2013). Draft Issues Paper for: Freshwater Sawfish (*Pristis microdon*), Green Sawfish (*Pristis zijsron*), Dwarf Sawfish (*Pristis clavata*), Speartooth Shark (*Glyphis glyphis*), Northern River Shark (*Glyphis garricki*). Commonwealth of Australia. 2013. <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/39d19c4b-90db-438b-b1e9-6b6195988d69/files/draft-issues-paper-sawfish-and-river-sharks.pdf>
- [3] Thorburn, D.C & Morgan D.L (2004). The northern river shark *Glyphis* sp. C (Carcharhinidae) discovered in Western Australia. *Zootaxa* 685: 1-8. www.mapress.com/zootaxa/2004f/zt00685.pdf