

FISHERIES — CRAB POPULATION

185. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Can the minister advise whether research by the Department of Fisheries has recently focused on crab populations along the coastline between Carnarvon and Augusta; and, if so, what was the nature of the research?
- (2) Can the minister advise whether commercial and recreational catches are recorded; and, if so, what tonnages are being harvested?
- (3) Was research recently carried out in Warnbro Sound; and, if yes, what was the purpose of the research; and, if no, will the minister advise why Department of Fisheries officers were aboard a commercial crabbing vessel that was observed setting strings of numerous pots?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

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

- (1) Research surveys and/or commercial monitoring occurs in all commercial and important recreationally fished blue swimmer crab fisheries between Carnarvon and Augusta including Shark Bay, Cockburn Sound, the Swan–Canning River, Warnbro Sound, the Peel–Harvey estuary, Mandurah–Bunbury, Geographe Bay and Leschenault Inlet. This research includes monthly monitoring of on-board commercial vessels to assess commercial catch and fishery-independent research trawling, trapping and seining to provide estimates of recruitment and breeding stock.
- (2) Commercial catch and effort is reported monthly by fishers and a recreational survey reports boat-based recreational catch estimates every two years for each bioregion. I will table the attached document.
- (3) Yes. Research was recently carried out in Warnbro Sound with monthly commercial monitoring occurring on board an operator’s vessel. The purpose of this commercial monitoring research is to provide an understanding of the catch rates, size, structure, sex ratio and berried status of the stock that is being fished.

[See paper 3901.]