

SHARK DRUM LINE PROGRAM

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

- (1) Will the minister table the exemptions under the Fish Resources Management Act 1994 as referred to in his response, reference 47-02950, to my letters of 23 December 2013, 3 January 2014 and 30 January 2014?
- (2) What is the survival rate of sharks that are captured on the large baited hooks on drum lines off WA's popular beaches and then released?
- (3) Can the minister confirm that the survival rate of sharks caught and tagged for scientific purposes is higher when smaller hooks are used and the sharks are tagged alongside the boat rather than hauled aboard?
- (4) As 74 per cent of the sharks hooked on drum lines are smaller sharks, does the minister now accept that the use of bigger hooks is not an effective tool in the toolbox to select big sharks?
- (5) If the majority of these smaller sharks released are dying, does this provide a point of interest to bigger predators?

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! There is only one person in this chamber who has the title of the Minister for Fisheries. I call the Minister for Fisheries.

**Hon KEN BASTON replied:**

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

- (1) Details of exemptions are set out in the register maintained under part 12 of the Fish Resources Management Act 1994. I seek leave to table two extracts from the register.
- (2) Forty-nine sharks less than three metres in length have been caught in the south west and metropolitan area; nine have been dead on the line and 40, or 82 per cent, have been released alive.
- (3) No. However, the reason that the large hooks have been used is to minimise the possibility of bycatch of other marine animals and was, as such, a key consideration for the exemption under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Using a smaller hook would likely catch a greater diversity of marine animals and would therefore be environmentally irresponsible.
- (4) No. "Smaller sharks" is a relative term. Any shark can be dangerous and the government is acting responsibly to target large sharks as far as possible. Interestingly, the strategy now being implemented is contributing significantly to our knowledge and research of sharks in south western WA.
- (5) The catch data released on Tuesday, 18 February, does not support this assertion.

Leave granted. [See paper 1196.]