

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 244
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Program: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
Topic: Sharks – Drum Lines
Hansard Page: 38
Question Date: 23 May 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Last question then, just to Mr Elliot: there was no statistical or scientific study that you used as an evidentiary basis for those permits?

Mr Elliot: We referred to the scientific literature that does exist, and we certainly had the statistical analysis of the catch rates of the program, the historical shark statistics that predated the program. It is also worth noting that this program is limited to those beaches where there is significant human use, and it ends up being about 70.5 kilometres of beach across the entire 2,300 kilometres of the Great Barrier Reef coastline. I would have to take that question on notice—

Senator WHISH-WILSON: On notice, yes. Could you also confirm that in 2016 alone, 531 sharks, including endangered species such as the great white and the grey nurse, were killed, according to the data from the Queensland government; and, since the program began, over 50,000 dolphins, dugongs, marine turtles, rays and whales have also been killed by these lethal technologies.

Mr Elliot: There is one thing I would point out. First of all, that assessment report is on our website. So the assessment report that underpinned our initial decision is available on the website, with all the references to the scientific studies that we used et cetera. To answer your question, the statistics you are quoting are, I believe, for the entire program across all of Queensland. There have been no great white sharks caught in the marine park, and I believe the last time a grey nurse shark was caught was over a decade ago—the same for mortality. One of figures I do have to mind is that, over a 10-year period in which there were, from memory, 25 turtles caught on drum lines, 24 were released successfully, alive.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay—

CHAIR: You did say this was on notice.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: If you could take it on notice, Mr Elliot. You have not caught the target species; you have just said that. The great whites—

Mr Elliot: You mentioned them specifically just then.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Yes, and grey nurses. But, also, how many bull sharks and tiger sharks have you caught, and have there been any recorded fatalities of either of those two species? That would be useful to know.

Mr Elliot: That, I would have to take on notice. They will be in the assessment report, too.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay. Thank you.

Answer:

1. The permit assessment report, available on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's website, undertook analysis of catch statistics from publicly available information from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The analysis was confined to the

data and impacts within the Marine Park as that is the jurisdiction where the application as assessment was relevant.

2. The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries makes all of their Shark Control Program catch information available on the website www.daf.qld.gov.au. The following information from that website was downloaded on 5 June 2017 and is for the Marine Park in 2016.

Species caught	Number caught
Australian blacktip	1
Blacktip reef whaler	16
Bull whaler	60
Catfish	3
Common blacktip whaler	38
Creek whaler	1
Fantail ray	1
Giant trevally	1
Graceful whaler	1
Great hammerhead	6
Hardnose whaler	6
Long nose whaler	5
Milk shark	3
Pigeye whaler	7
Reticulate whiplay	1
Sandbar whaler	1
Scalloped hammerhead	5
Sharptooth shark	1
Shovel nosed ray	3 (2 released alive)
Slit eye shark	1
Spot-tail whaler	19
Tawny shark	16 (all released alive)
Tiger shark	101

3. Attachment 4 of the publicly available permit assessment report identifies known shark attacks in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park by year and location. This summary was provided by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The information is not species-specific although does note whether the attack was fatal. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority does not hold any further information in relation to these fatalities.