

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 61
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division
Topic: QLD SHARK NETS - WHALE ENTANGLEMENTS
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

This year's humpback whale migration season on the east coast has seen an increase in the number of entanglements in shark nets, including the rescue of a baby humpback off the Cooloola Coast in Queensland. Whales aren't the only non-target species entangled. Has the department had any discussions with the Queensland government about the possibility of removing nets, at the very least, during the whale migration season as happens in NSW?

Answer:

The Department has not had discussions with the Queensland Government about the possibility of removing shark nets.

Under section 43B of the EPBC Act, a person may take an action without approval if the action is a lawful continuation of a use of land, sea or seabed that was occurring immediately before the commencement of the EPBC Act in 2000. The Queensland shark control programme was in place prior to 2000 and has not required assessment or approval under the EPBC Act.

The Department is implementing the Whale and Dolphin Protection Plan election commitment in consultation with states and Northern Territory. A component of this plan is the National Whale Stranding Action Plan which provides funding for equipment and training to assist the states in responding to cetacean incidents, such as stranding and entanglement events.