

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1937
Asked on Thursday, 15 November 2007

MR BOMBOLAS asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

With the holiday season approaching, would the Minister outline the dangers sharks pose, particularly near river mouths, in canals and artificial lakes and waterways?

ANSWER:

Swimming in Queensland is one of our iconic pastimes and people have become accustomed to having safe swimming conditions throughout the State.

However, as we approach the peak swimming season we need to be reminded of some of the risks associated with swimming especially near river mouths, creeks, in canals, artificial lakes and waterways

These areas are the natural habitat of bull sharks, which are very active this time of the year because summer is their breeding season. The bull shark has a worldwide reputation as being responsible for most attacks on humans. In recent years there have been a number of attacks, some fatal, particularly in the canals at the Gold Coast, which have been attributed to this species.

Shark control equipment is strategically placed off 85 beaches along the Queensland coast. Most of these beaches also have the added protection of having lifesavers or lifeguards on duty and I urge people to swim at these protected beaches.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has a list of safe swimming tips that assist people to make informed decisions about where and when to swim. These tips include:

- Swimming or surfing only at patrolled beaches and between the flags;
- Obey the lifesavers' and lifeguards' advice, and heed all signs and safety warnings;
- Leave the water immediately if a shark is sighted;
- Do not swim or surf after dusk, at night or before dawn when sharks are most active;
- Do not swim or surf in murky waters;
- Do not swim in or near estuary mouths, artificial canals and lakes;
- Never swim alone;
- New swim when bleeding;
- Do not swim near schools of fish or where fish are being cleaned;
- Do not swim near or interfere with Shark Control Program equipments; and
- Do not swim with animals.