

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 409
Asked on Tuesday, 13 March 2007

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

QUESTION:

With reference to reports in the Daily Telegraph on 5 March 2007 that the NSW Fisheries agency fudged figures in a bid to close recreational fishing spots—

- (1) What is the estimated number of grey nurse sharks in Queensland waters and what studies have been commissioned by his department to evidence these numbers?
- (2) How many grey nurse shark areas are there in Queensland waters and what scientific evidence does his department have which proves that the closing of these areas will assist the numbers of grey nurse sharks?

ANSWER:

- (1) Grey nurse shark populations on Australia's east coast are critically low and have been protected under State and Commonwealth conservation legislation. The Commonwealth Government's *Grey Nurse Shark Recovery Plan 2002* estimates the total number of individuals on the east coast of Australia to be less than 500. Significant migration occurs between known sites in Queensland and New South Wales waters annually, making Queensland-specific population estimates difficult.
- (2) There are four known grey nurse aggregation sites in Queensland waters. These areas are Wolf Rock off Double Island Point, Cherubs Cave and Henderson Rock off Moreton Island and Flat Rock off North Stradbroke Island.

The grey nurse shark is long-lived and slow breeding, producing only two pups every two years. Given the biology of grey nurse sharks it is too early to determine the impact of these restrictions on populations.