

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**No. 440**  
**Asked on Wednesday, 14 March 2007**

**MS MALE** asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

**QUESTION:**

What projects are being undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries to maximise sustainability in the Queensland sea scallop fishery?

**ANSWER:**

The Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries (DPI&F) manages all of Queensland's fisheries resources under the principles of ecologically sustainable development for the benefit of all Queenslanders. As part of DPI&F's core business, several management strategies have been implemented in order to maximise the sustainability of the Queensland sea scallop fishery:

- a minimum legal size of 90mm which ensures that all scallops are able to spawn and contribute to the following years' stock;
- during winter, the minimum legal size is increased to 95mm to further protect the spawning population; and
- spatial and temporal closures limit fishing effort, ensuring that scallop stocks are not over-fished.

Since 1997, DPI&F has conducted annual fishery-independent surveys in Queensland's scallop fishery as part of its Long Term Monitoring Program. The objective of these surveys is to assess the performance of a rotational harvest strategy where areas are closed for a period of 15 months, then opened to fishing. These surveys indicate that rotational harvest is a suitable method for increasing yield and ensuring the long-term sustainability of scallop stocks.

Researchers at DPI&F's Southern Fisheries Centre have recently finalised a research project that assessed the effects of turtle excluder devices and bycatch reduction devices in Queensland's trawl fishery. During this research project, square mesh codend bycatch reduction devices were trialled in the scallop fishery and were found to reduce bycatch, that part of the catch discarded by fishers, by 78%. Furthermore, square mesh codends reduced the number of scallops under the minimum legal size of 90mm by 60%, reducing any fishing related mortality on these smaller animals. By adopting these devices, fishers operating in the scallop fishery have the potential to enhance the sustainability of scallops, while significantly reducing the impact of trawling on other animals.

Researchers from the Southern Fisheries Centre obtained funding in 2005 for an extension project aimed at providing scallop fishers with square mesh codends to encourage their use. As a result of this project, significantly more square mesh codends are now being used in the scallop fishery.

DPI&F has also committed \$482,000 to a new \$930,000 research project which is studying ways to further improve the management, and ensure the sustainable harvest of scallops in Queensland. The project is part-funded by the Commonwealth Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, and will be undertaken over the

2007 and 2008 calendar years. State-of-the-art computer modelling techniques will be used to assess alternative seasonal and area closure arrangements, with the aim of developing strategies that ensure the continued viability of the industry. This may also ease stresses placed on scallop processors by ensuring a more consistent supply, with consequent benefit to both the industry and to consumers.