

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 730
Asked on Wednesday, 23 May 2007

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

QUESTION:

How will the recently announced Bribie Island Aquaculture Research Station redevelopment aid in developing pest fish control strategies?

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) regards pest fish species such as Carp and Tilapia a serious threat to native fish populations and the viability of the State's important inland fisheries resource.

Work on the control of pest fish species is already in progress at DPI&F's Southern Fisheries Research Centre at Deception Bay. Relocation of this research to Bribie Island will allow expansion of the program, capitalising on the centre's new state of the art facilities and better collaborative opportunities with aquaculture staff at the centre.

When completed the new Bribie Island facility will be used to house ageing validation experiments for carp. This will contribute to a population model that will be used to predict the likely effectiveness of different control measures for carp. Appropriate measures can then be applied to different regions.

The centre will also be used to house carp for 'Judas fish' experiments. These are sexually mature fish that can be radio-tracked in the river to locate spawning aggregations and winter aggregations of carp. Once located, these aggregations can be targeted for removal.

Another type of Judas fish will also be housed at Bribie Island. These will be sexually mature fish that have been treated with hormones to induce spawning condition, then temporarily caged at key locations in the Albert and Logan River catchments. Pheromones released by these fish will attract carp out of complex habitats and lure them into traps for removal. These Judas fish will be kept at Bribie between each removal experiment.

In a cooperative venture with the University of Queensland, it is also planned to use the new Bribie Island facility to evaluate the effectiveness of native predatory fish for controlling carp. Tank-based predation experiments will study the preferences of different native fish to feed on carp.

These native fish will be housed for the short term at Bribie Island, before stocking them into carp infested areas for field evaluation of their effects on carp numbers.

There is already anecdotal evidence that Murray Cod (and possibly Mary River Cod) may be useful in keeping carp numbers down. Another native species to be investigated will be the Australian Bass.