

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 32
Asked on 16 February 2011

MS O'NEILL asked the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (MR MULHERIN)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how closed fishing seasons benefit the amateur fishing population in the Kallangur Electorate?

ANSWER: [Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (MR WALLACE)]

While this question was asked of the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland, due to recent changes in Ministerial responsibility, I am now the Minister responsible for this matter and therefore provide this response.

Closed seasons or seasonal closures are periods of time when certain species of fish can not be retained by anglers. The purpose of closures varies, for example, to protect spawning fish, protect juvenile fish and/or to reduce fishing pressure on the entire stock.

In Queensland, closed seasons for our iconic barramundi, coral reef fin fish and freshwater bass and Murray cod are used to protect spawning fish when they are vulnerable.

A closed season exists for barramundi in Queensland east coast waters from midday 1 November to midday 1 February each year. This closure is designed to protect barramundi at a vulnerable time of their life cycle, that is during their spawning period and to assist in ensuring that barramundi stocks remain sustainable into the future.

Barramundi tend to move downstream and will aggregate at areas along foreshores and at the mouth of rivers and creeks and would otherwise be vulnerable to capture. Any barramundi that are accidentally captured should be released immediately and fishers must not target barramundi during the closure period.

For coral reef fin fish, such as the highly sought after coral trout, a closed season occurs over two five-day periods around the new moon in October and November each year in waters north of a line offshore from Bargara (24°50' South). During this period, many coral reef fin fish aggregate on reefs to spawn. Spawning aggregations make fish particularly susceptible to targeted fishing activities, increasing their vulnerability.

For our freshwater species, closed seasons are in place to protect species such as Australian bass during their spawning season when they are vulnerable. The closure for Australian bass applies in specific waterways from 1 June to 31 August. A closed season also applies to Murray cod in the Barwon, Macintyre or Dumaresq Rivers from 1 September to 30 November.

These closed seasons allow these fish to breed or protect them when they are vulnerable so that when anglers go for a fishing trip up north or in freshwater there will be fish to catch.

Snapper is an iconic species in south-east Queensland. Two-thirds of the estimated annual catch is landed by recreational anglers. A current six-week closure from 15 February to 31 March prohibits the take of snapper, pearl perch and teraglin by recreational and commercial fishers. The closure is in place to contribute to the reduction in fishing pressure needed to allow for the effective management of the species. Recreational anglers will benefit in the long-term from a strong sustainable snapper stock. Many other species can still be landed while this closure is in place so recreational anglers can still enjoy their fishing experience.