

Question on Notice

No. 1234

Asked on Wednesday, 19 September 2018

MR S KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to estuarine crocodiles in Northern Australia which are listed as lower risk/least concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and were taken off the vulnerable list 20 years ago in 1998—

Will the Minister advise why the State Government has ignored highly respected international advice and still lists estuarine crocodiles as ‘vulnerable species’?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Estuarine crocodiles were harvested extensively for their prized skins throughout northern Australia during the 1940s, 50s and 60s. A drastic decline in the population over this period led to conservation measures being put in place by all states in which crocodiles are present and the Commonwealth. As these animals were hunted to the brink of extinction in Queensland until 1974, they are currently listed as a ‘vulnerable’ species under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

The conservation status of wildlife under the Act is determined by an independent expert panel of scientists known as the Species Technical Committee. The process for determining the appropriate classification of a species is based on the Committee’s assessment of nominations and evidence from interested persons, including members of the public, scientists, wildlife experts and government officers.

In 2017, the Department of Environment and Science commenced a three-year state-wide crocodile monitoring program, the most comprehensive survey of crocodile populations in over a decade. Information from this survey will provide up to date population estimates for estuarine crocodiles in Queensland and may be used as evidence-based data to support future decisions with regard to their management and listing under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.