

## Question on Notice

No. 1388

Asked on 26 October 2023

**MR N DAMETTO** asked the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (HON M FURNER)—

### QUESTION:

With reference to commercial and recreational fishers reporting a massive increase in catch losses due to bull sharks—

Will the Minister commit to an independent study of bull shark numbers along the Queensland east coast that is not limited to only areas with existing nets and drum lines?

### ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to best practice management and science in how we manage our marine resources, now and into the future.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries continues to deliver milestones under the *Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027* to ensure we have world class fisheries for future generations. The Palaszczuk Government is also funding or supporting several research projects focussing on shark populations and shark depredation.

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) recently published a research project in December 2022, which sought to investigate shark depredation in Australian fisheries. This project determined that there are many issues involved in understanding the relationship between sharks and catch losses. These include a lack of data for many Australian fisheries in quantifying shark depredation, likely environmental and ecological factors influencing the potential increase in depredation, the importance of correctly identifying shark species responsible in different areas/seasons, the potential change in abundance, behaviour and habituation of shark species to commercial and recreational fishers.

The Department is conducting research into quantifying cryptic mortality from shark depredation and the post release survival of Spanish mackerel which is a key project aim in the ‘addressing uncertainties in the assessment and management of Queensland east coast Spanish Mackerel research project.’

In addition, the Department’s fishery monitoring boat-ramp survey program is collecting depredation rate information from recreational fishers at over 50 boat ramps around the state of Queensland to better understand the scale of this issue.

The *Queensland shark management plan 2021-2025* sets out how the Queensland Government will continue work to reduce the risk of shark bites through the traditional program, while researching and trialling new shark mitigation technologies and boosting community education on SharkSmart behaviours. Estimating the population size and distribution of key shark species (including bull whalers) through reviewing catch data, tagging and tracking information, genetics and other available science is a key research priority under the plan.

Further information can be found on the Department's website around the available research into both shark and human behaviour which may affect the likelihood of interactions. Please visit <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/shark-control-program> for more information.