

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 220

Hearing: Budget Estimates

Outcome: Agency

Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Topic: Shark drum lines

Hansard Page:

Question Date:

Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

1. I understand the Queensland Fisheries are currently using drumlines in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park – 184 in total, but they've only got a permit for 148. Can you give us an update on whether you're taking any compliance action on that?
2. Have you examined the evidence about the efficacy of drumlines versus other more shark protection measures like barriers, sonar technology or shark spotting programs?
3. Have you done your own assessment, or relied on assessments done by others?
4. Please detail those assessments.
5. Do you have an estimate for the number of sharks from protected species have been caught on drumlines in the GBR Region?
6. Do you have any plans to review the use of drum lines impacting on sharks in the GBR or elsewhere?
7. Have you detected any illegal shark finning in the GBR in the last few years?

Answer:

1. The Queensland Shark Control Program operates at locations inside and outside the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park permit only includes operations within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is aware of alleged discrepancies between the numbers of permitted shark control equipment and the installed number. The agency is looking into these allegations.
2. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is currently undertaking an assessment of the proposal in discussion with the applicant. As the application is under assessment it is not appropriate to discuss details of those discussions. If the applicant is considering alternative technologies as part of their application, the agency will assess those activities as part of the application process.
3. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is undertaking an assessment of the application.
4. As the application is under assessment it is not appropriate to discuss details of the assessment.

5. Shark catch numbers are publicly available on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website. The permittee is required to report all specimens caught under the program to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority annually as a condition of their permit.
6. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority does not operate the Queensland Shark Control Program. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is currently undertaking an assessment of the proposal in discussion with the applicant.
7. While there is very little substantiated evidence of illegal shark finning occurring in Great Barrier Reef waters over the past few years, there was one conviction in 2012.