

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 75  
**Hearing:** Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Program:** Science Division (SD)  
**Topic:** CSIRO shark study  
**Hansard Page:** 74  
**Question Date:** 22 May 2017  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Whish-Wilson asked:**

CHAIR: To clarify, I understand from the minister's column that CSIRO is currently doing a study into shark populations on the east and the west coasts. Are you able to provide a little more information on that study and how that might feed into this?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: I have asked this question.

Mr Oxley: Mr Richardson indicated earlier that that is something that is being run out of the National Environmental Science Program in outcome 1.2. We can certainly take that on notice.

**Answer:**

CSIRO is conducting a research project '*A national assessment of population status of white sharks*', under the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program (NESP).

This project will provide population estimates for eastern Australia, for both adult and non-adult white sharks; and estimates of adult population size for white sharks west of the Bass Strait. These deliverables are scheduled to be provided at the end of 2017.

This research builds on the population study conducted by CSIRO in 2015 through the predecessor to NESP, the National Environment Research Program. The study reported the first ever empirical estimate of adult white shark abundance, but only for the east – provisionally 750 to 1,200 adult white sharks for the eastern Australia population.

The current project uses genetic samples and population demographic models, which draws on tagged white shark observations and biological parameters (age, number of pups and pupping frequency), to estimate the respective populations.

Further information on this project can be found on the NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub website: <https://www.nespmarine.edu.au/project/project-a3-national-assessment-status-white-sharks>