



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (For written reply)

**QUESTION NO. 323 {NW477E}
INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7 of 2020**

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Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries :

- (1) When last did the scientific observer programme in the (a) line, (b) demersal longline and (c) demersal trawl fisheries take place;
- (2) how are exports of shark products controlled and tested for heavy metals;
- (3) does her department conduct any population assessments on Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora listed shark species such as white sharks;
- (4) what plan does she have in place to address the entanglement of whales in crayfish and other fish industry traps given the latest spate of whale entanglements?

323. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES REPLIES:

- (1)(a) 'Linefishery' is a term conventionally used for commercial, recreational and subsistence/small-scale fisheries using baited hooks and line to catch fishes from shore and from small boats. The commercial and recreational boat based fishery last had a shore-based scientific observer programme from 2009 to 2011. During the programme, catches at all major access points were identified and length frequencies of the catches were sampled.

(1)(b) A pilot observer programme was initiated for the demersal longline fishery in December 2008 and ran until April 2009. Since then the scientific observer programme has not been re-established in this fishery due to budgetary constraints.

After completion of the transfer to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the Fisheries Branch intends to request a re-prioritization of funds to make funds available for the re-establishment of a scientific observer programme for all sectors of the fishing industry.

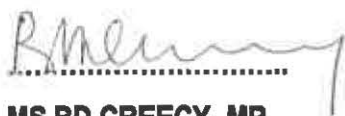
(1)(c) An industry funded, voluntary observer programme has run continuously and collected data on by-catch since 2008 in response to the requirements related to continued certification by the Marine Stewardship Council. Approximately 5% of annual trawls were observed in the last 5 years.

(2) This question should be referred to the National Regulator for Compusory Standards, as this fall within their mandate.

(3) In 2019 population assessments in the form of IUCN red list assessments were conducted by an international expert group for 14 shark species (12 listed on CITES Appendix II, including white sharks). DEFF scientists developed the model and provided South African data and expertise.

(4) The Fisheries Branch is embarking on the testing of gear that could potentially be deployed in the rock lobster fishery which would assist to mitigate against whale entanglements. This testing is being undertaken in conjunction with the University of Cape Town, and is taking advantage of the Department's regular surveys for West Coast rock lobster. It is expected that this testing will lead to the introduction of measures that will substantially reduce the entanglement of whales in rock lobster fishing operations.

Regards



MS BD CREECY, MP

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

DATE: 20/3/2020