

GEOGRAPHE BAY - PROFESSIONAL FISHING

**1143. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Fisheries:**

With reference to the minister's media statement of 9 November 2007, could the minister please advise -

- (1) What impact will the minister's decision have on professional fishing in Geographe Bay?
- (2) How much fish was supplied to the local south west region from the local professional fishers for each of the years 2004, 2005, and 2006?
- (3) What figures have been used to determine the 30 per cent and 60 per cent reduction adjustments in the shark fishery?

**Hon JON FORD replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I happen to know, as do all members, that this is Thursday and we will be knocking off fairly soon.

**Hon JON FORD:** Thank you, Mr President.

- (1) The impact of the government's decisions on commercial fishing in Geographe Bay will be that from 1 July 2009, commercial salmon fishing and beach seine fishing will be prohibited between Cape Naturaliste and Port Geographe. In the interim, there will also be closures to commercial salmon fishing on public holidays and long weekends and weekends during the April school holidays to minimise conflict during peak tourist periods. All other commercial fishing activities will not be impacted upon by this decision.
- (2) Although the Department of Fisheries maintains catch records on commercial fishing, it does not monitor how commercial fishers subsequently sell or distribute their catch. That said, it is likely the majority of salmon caught would have been either used as rock lobster bait or sent for canning. A component of the whitebait catch may have been supplied to local restaurants and suppliers, while the majority would have been sent to Perth for food or bait supply. The remaining areas still open to fishing will provide an opportunity to meet any demands from local markets. The area left open is where most of the whitebait and bluebait are caught. That has been done specifically to allow the restaurants in those areas to access those fish.
- (3) The reduction adjustments applied to the joint authority southern demersal gillnet and demersal longline managed fishery - sometimes called the shark fishery - were designed to reduce fishing effort back to sustainable levels. The actual reduction varied between zones in the fishery but was based on reducing fishing effort back to 2001-02 levels. The impacts of these sustainability measures were greatest on the few individuals who exerted the highest amount of fishing effort in the fishery, of up to a 60 per cent reduction on individual fishing effort, and had only limited impact on the majority of fishers.