

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY — WHALE INTERACTIONS

390. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the proposal by the Western Rock Lobster Council to reduce pot numbers in the water during the whale migration period, from 1 April to 31 October each year, to reduce whale interactions.

- (1) How many whale entanglements from rock lobster pot lines were there in 2019?
- (2) How many whales died as a result of those entanglements?
- (3) What government initiatives are in place to assist the Western Australian crayfish industry to reduce pot numbers in relation to reducing whale interactions?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Fisheries.

- (1) There were six confirmed whale entanglements in commercial western rock lobster fishery gear in 2019.
- (2) Nil.
- (3) The Western Rock Lobster Council, with the overwhelming support of its members, requested the Minister for Fisheries to implement management changes in response to COVID-19. These measures have been announced, and the industry's mature and proactive approach in this regard is recognised. Some of the measures may result in a shift of fishing effort into the peak whale migration periods during 2020 and 2021. The council is seeking to mitigate whale interactions in these periods through management of pot usage. The government will continue to work with the council and industry to ensure that the fishery meets its responsibilities in this regard.