

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY — INTERIM QUOTA ARRANGEMENT

497. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the government's interim quota arrangement for the western rock lobster industry.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that a number of rock lobster fishers operating in zone B have been unable to catch their quota prior to the closure of this year's zone A Abrolhos Islands season?
- (2) How many zone A fishers were unable to take their zone B quota this year?
- (3) How many zone A kilograms of zone B quota were left uncaught this season by zone A fishers?
- (4) What measures will the minister put in place next rock lobster season to ensure that fishers are not left with large uncaught quotas?

Hon NORMAN MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) All zones of the fishery, including the Abrolhos Islands, will remain open until 31 August 2011. It is therefore too early to ascertain whether any zone B fishers have been unable to take their catch limit.
- (2) I am aware of only one zone A fisher who claims he did not take his zone B catch limit.
- (3) A full analysis of actual catch against catch limits is not yet available. Preliminary analysis suggests that the total quantity of lobster taken in zone B by zone A licensees is likely to be close to the relevant allocation.
- (4) I am currently considering management arrangements for next season, with the ultimate aim of transitioning the fishery to a full quota system. This consideration has included consultation with the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council as the peak industry body. Apart from one zone A fisher, feedback from industry to date suggests that existing arrangements are adequate to ensure the full allowable catch is taken.