

Email sent to Senators  
7 September 2018

Dear Senator

I am the wife of a Queensland commercial fisherman. I have been involved in fisheries issues for the past twenty years and was on the Queensland Shark Working Group in 2017 and am currently on the Queensland Government's East Coast Inshore Finfish Fishery Working Group. Whilst hammerhead shark is supposed to be under threat in some parts of the world, when I was on the Shark Working Group we were told that the entire Australian take of these sharks is approximately 1% of the world's take. They are extremely common in Queensland waters. In recent years our Queensland government has taken steps to reduce and control the commercial take to ensure that it does not increase in order to prevent our Queensland catch (less than 1% of the world's take) impacting the world's stocks.

Our fishery is not a fishery which takes these animals for fins and discards the bodies of the sharks as is reported as being done overseas. We are required by law to have both trunk and fins attached on our boats if we catch them and our markets dictate that we take only smaller shark. There is no benefit to keeping a large hammerhead shark since no market is seeking such shark so if we occasionally catch a bigger hammerhead shark, we let them go alive with no harm done. In addition to meeting our market commitment to only take smaller shark and the legal requirement to having the shark trunk and fins we are also required to call FQ and tell them how many we have and then required to wait for an hour before we can pull our boat out of the water and unload our shark which, when we do, we are required to report where we sold the shark as well. The hour's wait is so that the Boating and Fisheries Patrol has time to come to check that we actually do have what we reported on the AIVR system and when they check our catch, they count every one and check our vessels as well.

As a fishery we have a Total Allowable Catch limit in place which means that as the cumulative catch of all fishers reaches close to that limit, we are all warned and when the catch reaches the limit it is shut down so we are no longer able to catch any more. We personally also already have a Vessel Monitoring System on our vessel and the rest of the fleet is about to be required to do so also so that our every move is monitored.

Considering our fishery is sustainably and carefully managed with strict measures in place already and we take so little of the world's overall take of hammerhead shark what benefit will accrue to the overall hammerhead shark stocks if we disallow Queensland fishermen from catching them when the Qld catch and effort is already closely monitored? I submit that it will make no recognisable difference to the state of hammerhead sharks worldwide but will cause only Queensland fishers to be at distinct market and economic disadvantages and will only result in greater hardship for Queensland fishers, many of whom are already doing it tough because of cyclones and floods in the past few years and now drought, as well as the impacts of habitat degradation and modification along the Queensland coast due to extensive developments, as well as the impacts of other legislative changes such as the imposition of an extensive network of fishery closures due to marine parks and recreational only areas and net free zones.

Senator Whish-Wilson's disallowance motion will punish Queensland fishers and their families for the inadequate regulatory actions of other nations and I submit to you that such a course would not be fair while having little to no benefit to the stocks which raises the question as to why the Senator would push such a motion in the first place. Is he simply seeking to sabotage the Queensland seafood industry and seeking to harm the businesses of everyday hard-working fishing families in their efforts to provide food for the public while earning their incomes

without relying upon handouts? For what benefit? What have we and other fishers done to deserve to be targeted and punished in this way?

I implore you to please vote against the disallowance motion proposed by Senator Whish-Wilson and give us a fair go.

Kind regards

Margaret Stevenson  
Burnett Heads  
Queensland