



Media release

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister
for Rural Economic Development
The Honourable Bill Byrne

Improved protection for hammerhead sharks

Fishery management controls around hammerhead sharks have been strengthened to help prevent them being listed as an endangered species.

Fisheries Minister Bill Byrne said the Palaszczuk Government had taken steps to establish a Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) and introduce more stringent reporting requirements to improve monitoring and management of hammerhead sharks.

“The hammerhead shark catch in Australia is between one and three per cent of the global harvest of the stock,” Minister Byrne said.

“The Palaszczuk Government is committed to doing all it can at a local level to ensure the sustainable harvest of the species in Queensland waters despite having very little contribution to the declining abundance of the hammerhead shark.

“The Fisheries Regulation 2008 has been amended to help support a ‘conservation dependent’ listing which would allow continued take of the hammerhead shark.”

The amendments include:

Establishment of a total allowable of commercial catch of 150 tonnes (split across the Gulf of Carpentaria (50 tonnes), Great Barrier Reef (78 tonnes) and Southern East Coast (22 tonnes).

- Trip limits to apply and the hammerhead shark to be kept in a whole form once 75 per cent of the TACC is reached.
- Better reporting will also be required through phone reporting and changes to commercial fishing logbooks (including estimating discards).

Minister Byrne said the Federal Government was considering listing scalloped and great hammerhead shark as endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

“An ‘endangered listing’ would make hammerhead sharks a no-take species in Commonwealth waters and prohibit export,” he said.

“This will inevitably lead to discards of dead hammerhead sharks as they cannot be avoided by net fishers while targeting other species.

“This is a situation that the Queensland Government would like to avoid.”

Mr Byrne said the introduction of a TACC would prevent catches from increasing to unsustainable levels, enable more data to be collected and enable fishers to keep fishing.

“The Federal Government is responsible for making a final decision about whether hammerhead sharks are listed as ‘conservation dependent’ or ‘endangered’,” he said.

"I have written to the Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Energy and called on him to make a timely and responsible decision that will give certainty to industry and reduce unnecessary discards.

"Any decision should recognise the small scale of the catch in Australia and the steps taken to further protect hammerhead sharks by the relevant states."

Nominations for listing will be assessed by an independent committee, the Threatened Species Scientific Committee, which will provide a recommendation to the Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Energy in September.

The new management arrangements will come into effect on 1 January 2018 and Fisheries Queensland is working with industry on its implementation.

For more information visit www.fisheries.qld.gov.au (<http://www.fisheries.qld.gov.au/>) or call 13 25 23.

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