



**forestry, fisheries  
& the environment**

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref: O2/1/5/2

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 2589 {NW2972E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 27 of 2023**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 1 September 2023**

**Ms T Breedt (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

(1) (a) On what date was the last abalone population density estimates and projections done and (b) what are the details of the specified process;

(2) what was the (a) result of the last counting and projection and (b) effect of the findings on the issuance of permits and quotas in the various industry sectors and the recreational sector?

**2589. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

1(a)(b) and 2(a)(b)The last full stock assessment and resource projections for abalone were conducted in 2016.

Between the last full stock assessment in 2016 and the present, the resource has continued to be monitored by inspecting the annually updated commercial catch data to discern whether there are any changes in the trend of this index of abundance that would indicate that the 2016 assessment was no longer valid. No such changes were discerned between 2016 and 2022. However, the updated data in

2023 have shown a down-swing in the index of abundance, indicating that the resource may be declining further. Hence the trigger to conduct a full stock assessment again in 2024. The index of poaching (based on international trade anomalies and provided by the NGO TRAFFIC) has also been monitored annually to discern if there have been any significant increases or decreases in poaching which may alter the outlook for the resource. No significant changes in the poaching index were discerned between 2016 and 2022. The updated 2023 index is still awaited from TRAFFIC.

The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) or Total Allowable (applied) Effort (TAE) or a combination thereof is determined seasonally in terms of the provisions of section 14 of the MLRA. The commercial portion of the global Abalone TAC decreased from 150 tonnes on re-opening of abalone in 2009/2010 fishing season to 50.5 tonnes in 2022/2023 fishing season based on the seasonal scientific recommendations. The recreational fishing has been suspended more than 15 years ago so any abalone stock assessment or precautionary approach in management of the abalone fishery has no impact on the suspended abalone recreational fishery. The number of abalone commercial right or exemption holders decreased due to various reasons such as rights or exemptions being revoked, cancelled, suspended or returned by the right holder and not due to a decrease in TAC. There were 303 right holders on opening of the abalone fishing season and there are now around 297 exemption holders.



**MS B D CREECY, MP**  
**MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: 8/9/2023