**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 411 {NW1383E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7 of 2019**

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Mr J R B Lorimer (DA) to ask the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries:**
(1) What are the details of the process followed by her Department to assess experimental fisheries;

(2) what has she found to be the reasons why (a) smooth-hound and (b) soupfin sharks are still the main target species for the shark-fishing industry, even though her Department determined that these species' populations were endangered; and

(3) what (a) number of (i) vessels and (II) fishers are working In the shark-fishing Industry, (bXi) number of the specified vessels carried observers with them while fishing shark since 01 January 2016 and (ii) was the number of observers on each vessel on each trip, and (c) are the reasons for permitting any sharkfishing trips without observers being onboard the vessel?

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

1. The Department has a Polley on 'The Establishment and Management of New Fisheries In South Africa' that is implemented by the New Fisheries Scientific Working Group, comprising of relevant experts to guide the establishment of new fisheries in a structured manner. The Policy outlines the operational protocol for the development of new fisheries in South Africa. The Protocol consists of three phases, Phase O: Information gatherlng1 Phase 1:

Implementation of the experimental fishery and Phase 2: Commercial fishery.

Each phase comprises of steps that need to be undertaken before a fishery can be classified fully as commercial and rights are allocated.Smoothhound and soupfin sharks are the main target of the demersal shark longline fishery as they were the most abundant demersal sharks, and markets for these were established.

The preliminary (2017) stock assessments Indicated that the soupfin and smooth-hound sharks are subject to overfishing. The Department is In the process of putting In place slot limits relating to length across a number of fishing sectors. This has been assessed as the most appropriate measure to return catches to sustainable levels.

The Department is In the process of conducting the SEIAS (Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study) In order to tum this proposal into regulation in the commercial linefishery, the sector which is responsible for the majority of catches of these resources. Similar measure will be considered in the demersal shark longline fishery later In 2019.

2. There are:

(a) (I) 6 vessels operating in the sector.

(ii) Approximately 250 employees.

(b) (I) No shark long-line vessels have carried observers since 01 January 2016.

(II) It Is not mandatory for the vessels In the Demersal Shark Long-line Fishery to carry observers on board. However, provision is made In the Permit Conditions for the Department to deploy observers In the event that unusual landings or fishing practices are detected.

Regards

**MS BD CREECY, MP**

**MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES**

**DATE:** 12/08/2019