

Estimates Committee 2016
Questions Taken On Notice

(14/06/2016 to 23/06/2016)

Date: 16/06/2016 Output: Resource and Product Integrity
Sub Output: Fisheries
Subject: Removal of soft coral and sponge

From: Mr Ken Vowles to Hon Gary Higgins
Primary Industry & Fisheries

Question: **5-4**
Has the minister received any reports of large amounts of soft coral and sponge being removed as a result of bottom trawling?

Answer:
Answered On: 07/07/2016

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Question Taken on Notice

Date: 16 June 2016 **Output:** 2.2

Subject: Soft Corals and Sponges

From: Mr Ken Vowles MLA, Shadow Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

To: The Hon Gary Higgins MLA, Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

Agency: Primary Industry and Fisheries

Number: 5.4

Question: Has the Minister received any reports of large amounts of soft coral and sponge being removed, or serious damage to the reef occurring as a result of bottom trawling?

Answer: During the trial there has been no report of large scale interaction with coral habitat. Discussions with the observer from one of the initial trips indicated that the trawl net was fishing on the bottom but that this habitat was primarily sandy substrate. There have been subsequent improvements to the gear including the installation of additional flotation so that contact on the bottom is now very minimal. The trial has measures in place to minimise the interaction with coral habitat including: spatial closures over important coral habitat and move on provisions if the gear interacts with hard bottom.