



environment, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 2705 {NW3473E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 47 of 2020

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Ms A M M Weber (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether, given the recent reports in the media about whales and seals having insufficient food and the potential impact thereof on tourism, her department has performed an annual census of whales visiting the Western Cape in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020; if not, why not; if so, what was the result of each specified census;
- (2) whether, in light of the reduced number of whales, her department has reviewed fishing quotas; if not, why not; if so, what was the outcome of the specified review?

2705. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

(1)(a) In 2018 the following whale surveys took place:

- West Coast Humpback survey; the key outcomes of the surveys indicate that: there is a decline in numbers since the 2014 survey. Population estimate is less than 500.
- South Coast Southern Right Whale survey; the key outcome of the survey is an increase in numbers since the 2017 survey. Population estimate is approximately 550.

(1)(b) In 2019 the following whale surveys took place:

- West Coast Humpback survey; the key outcomes of the surveys indicate that: there is a decline in numbers since the 2018 survey. Population estimate is less than 500.

- South Coast Southern Right Whale survey; the key outcome of the survey is a decline in numbers since the 2018 survey. Population estimate is approximately 200. At this stage we are unable to establish reasons for the decline in migration numbers.

(1)(c) No surveys have yet been conducted in 2020. These surveys have been postponed as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. The West Coast Humpback Survey is currently underway and dates of the South Coast Southern Right Whale Survey are to be confirmed.

(2) No review of fishing quotas took place, as a result of the declining whale populations as the whales that have declined in abundance over the past years, are Baleen Whales. These whales primarily feed on plankton (krill) in the Southern Ocean. Revision of fishing quotas would therefore have no effect at all on whale numbers, as these whales do not eat fish.

Regards



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

DATE: 26 November 2020