

**Minister for Natural Resources
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Mineral Resources**

MP105/5280

(Stamped 29 Mar 2006)

Mr Phillip Ingram
President
Anglers Action Group (Sydney Northside) Inc
PO Box 630
NARRABEEN NSW 2101

Dear Mr Ingram

Thank you for your letter of 6 November 2005, concerning the genetic diversity of the grey nurse shark population. Please accept my apologies for the delay in my reply.

The NSW Government is currently reviewing the protection of the grey nurse shark and has recently taken a number of steps that will assist with its recovery. These include the establishment of a large sanctuary zone at the Julian Rocks critical habitat site and the announcement of two new marine parks for NSW. The Port Stephens-Great Lakes and Batemans Marine Parks contain a large number of known grey nurse shark aggregation sites in NSW. The marine park zoning processes should ensure that suitable protection for the species is provided within each marine park.

The majority of the genetics work has been carried out using samples collected by Dr Otway, Senior Research Scientist, NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI). Studies have been carried out in collaboration with an Honours student, P Hill a Dostdoctoral fellow, A Stow DPI and other Macquarie University staff, as well as Dr Rob Harcourt from Macquarie University. Genetic samples continue to be obtained for further collaboration work at research institutions.

Obvious deformities that may be genetically linked such as kyphoscoliosis (abnormal side to side and front to back curvature of the spine) are noted during the DPI diver surveys along with numerous other observations with respect to the biology and ecology of grey nurse sharks. The research on kyphoscoliosis is continuing and when results are complete the data will be documented and made available to all interested groups.

There is presently insufficient scientific information to address many questions concerning the grey nurse population such as the effective population size required to counter the effects of inbreeding and genetic drift. More genetic samples are being collected as sharks are tagged and when the occasional dead shark is available to our

scientists. The information obtained from these samples will be used in future to answer such questions.

When considering the proposed IVF program for the grey nurse shark, genetics and genetic diversity were considered and they will be incorporated into the program in various ways. However, there are issues regarding intellectual property and confidentiality that do not allow this information to be released to the public at present. Scientific information will be made available in the milestone reports from the project.

More information on the genetic diversity of the grey nurse shark can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

IAN MACDONALD MLC