

Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

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Overabundant New Zealand Fur Seals require immediate management

Liberal Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick has called on the Weatherill Labor Government to immediately prepare and implement an “Overabundant Native Species Management Plan”.

In South Australia, the New Zealand Fur Seals population is over 100,000.

Their rapidly increasing population is having serious effects on South Australian marine life, the environment and the fishing industry.

“They are taking over and these fur seals will have an environmental impact in the future if they get down to the Southern Lagoon and Pelican Island and take out the pelican breeding grounds,” said Mr Pederick.

“The Acting District Ranger for the Coorong has advised that the amount of birds injured or killed by the New Zealand Fur Seals is very high.

“Cultural rangers are having to euthanase pelicans with broken wings or with their legs torn off; injuries inflicted by the New Zealand Fur Seals.

“They’ve already taken out the Little Penguin populations on Granite Island and Kangaroo Island.

“The seals get into tuna pens, damage fish, kill fish, and cost thousands of dollars in lost production of fish and in lost sales due to damage.”

“At the Coorong Fishery, where there are 33 licensed fishery fisherman, their income is being decimated by these New Zealand Fur Seals.

“I’ve had a net delivered to me and it was torn apart. I’ve been shown pictures of fish with their heads and tails torn off.”

A June 2014 SARDI publication states the following:

“There is a growing concern about how the increasing population of Fur Seals will impact the future and sustainability and production of key fisheries and the broader marine ecosystem as a whole. As such, accurate information on the status and trends

in abundance of the species is important for stakeholders, and essential to assist management agencies to make informed management decisions.”

In just one day the New Zealand Fur Seals can consume 400 tonnes of seafood. To put this in perspective, in three days these seals would have consumed the equivalent of a year's catch by commercial fisherman in the Lakes and Coorong Fisheries.

“Their population is growing at 5.5% a year, causing havoc to commercial operators,” said Mr Pederick.

“We don't need to decimate the Fur Seal population, but we do need to put an Active Management Plan in place because the environment and fishing industry are suffering.

“I am starting a petition calling on the State Government to take action, which includes a sustainable harvest of the New Zealand Fur Seals as part of the Management Plan.”