PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO. 58
Answered on 18 November, 2026
Third Meeting 2026-2027 Session – First Sitting

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
ASKED BY

HON. KENNETH V. BRYAN
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, ELECTED MEMBER FOR THE CONSTITUENCY OF GEORGE TOWN CENTRAL

TO

THE DEPUTY PREMIER, HON. GARY RUTTY
MINISTER OF TOURISM & TRADE DEVELOPMENT

QUESTION:

Can the Honourable Minister state what immediate and long-term measures the Government is taking in conjunction with the Department of Environment to address recent marine life incidents along Seven Mile Beach, and to mitigate any potential negative impact on the Cayman Islands tourism brand?

ANSWER:

Mr. Speaker the answer:

- The Department of Environment (DoE) immediately conducted investigations including drone surveillance, beach patrols and in-water monitoring to understand the cause of the incidents and identify potential contributing factors. The DoE also consulted with a fish-bite specialist at Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida, who confirmed that the injuries were consistent with barracuda bites.
- Public Safety advice was reiterated in a statement issued by the Department of Communications advising all persons entering the water not to wear jewellery, watches or other reflective objects, and to exercise caution around schools of baitfish.

- The statement also reminded the public that fish feeding is prohibited in Cayman waters, except for designated Wildlife Interaction Zones.
- Tourism properties along the Seven Mile Beach corridor were requested to remove flotation devices, such as water beds, inflatable loungers and other similar items from the water.
- The Department of Tourism provided property managers with clear guidance on the immediate steps to be taken, as well as information to be shared with their teams, their guests and who to contact if they see unusual marine activity.

Long-term measures

On 21 October 2026, representatives from the Department of Communications, Ministry and Department of Tourism and the Department of Environment met to discuss additional measures that could be taken to reduce the risk of recurrence. It was agreed that:

- The DoE will engage with tourism properties to explain how flotation devices may attract fish and discuss measures that could help reduce the effects.
- The Ministry and Department of Tourism will also work closely with the DoE and tourism industry partners to strengthen marine education and visitor centric communication. Proposals under consideration include an educational webinar for dive and watersports operators, together with broader industry training covering water safety, marine etiquette and responsible interaction with marine wildlife, as well as targeted 'no fish feeding' signage at key recreational beach locations.
- The DoE will lead the development of technical guidance, while the tourism agencies will support dissemination to accommodation providers, watersports operators and other tourism stakeholders.
- In collaboration with the HSA, the DoE will collect information to develop a database of marine-bite incidents. This will assist in identifying patterns, understanding contributing factors and informing future preventative measures.
- Additionally, a formal incident notification, escalation and communications framework is being developed by the Department of Communications to establish clear responsibilities among the relevant agencies, improve information sharing and ensure a timely, coordinated response to future incidents.

Protecting the Cayman Islands Tourism Brand

The DoE will remain as the lead agency on technical matters relating to marine life, and the Ministry and Department of Tourism will provide support with consistent public messaging and engagement with tourism stakeholders.

The Ministry's objective is not to target marine wildlife in our waters, but to minimise risk through informed behaviour, responsible practices, and appropriate management, to maintain confidence in the Cayman Islands as a safe and welcoming destination.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.