

ACTIVITY: Fishing for bluefish

CASE: GSAF 1936.07.12

DATE: Sunday July 12, 1936

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off Long Branch, Monmouth County, New Jersey, USA

BOAT: A 22-foot fishing boat

OCCUPANT: Saul White, a 60-year-old male, and 52-year-old Charles Dillione

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, July 11, 1936

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Five miles

TIME: 15h00

NARRATIVE: "Saul White, sixty years old, a deep sea fisherman off Long Branch for forty years, got the worst scare and the best story of his lifetime yesterday. An eight-foot blue shark weighing 500 pounds hurled itself into his fishing boat, attacked him and for more than an hour thrashed its heavy tail against the frail craft until Mr. White thought it would fall apart. The boat held and the shark is somewhere in Fulton Fish Market New York tonight.



"The unusual accident unnerved Mr. White somewhat because he had been fishing for bluefish weighing around ten pounds, and not for sharks. The trouble started when he and the shark — unknown to Mr. White — went after the same bluefish, each in his own way, at the same time.

"Mr. White encountered the belligerent shark soon after 3 p.m. yesterday while fishing in his twenty-two-foot boat five miles off shore with Charles Dillione, fifty-two, also of Long Branch. Mr. White was fishing from the stern and his companion from the bow.

"It was a good day for bluefish and the two men had about filled their boat when Mr. White hooked a lively ten-pound blue at the stern. He hauled heavily on his line and was just bringing the fish to the surface when he saw a dorsal fin streaking through the water in pursuit of the same bluefish. The next thing Mr. White knew the shark which seemed even larger than it was, had landed in the stern of his boat, with him, its huge jaws only a few inches away.

"It looked like a torpedo and swished like a whale when it hit the boat," said the fisherman.

"The boat's engine house situated amidships separated Mr. White from the safety of the bow where Mr. Dillione had continued fishing placidly, unaware that there was a live angry shark at the other end of the boat. For several minutes Mr. White jumped wildly to dodge the shark's teeth and tail narrowly escaping injury, but finally the shark made a wild fling and he had a chance to hoist himself atop the engine house.

“Mr. White was joined there by his partner and the two men without weapons to subdue the shark just watched prayerfully as it beat itself about the stern smashing the pumps timbers and threatening to wreck the ship. Finally the shark battered itself into unconsciousness and the fishermen put in for shore. Three other fishermen saw their predicament near the end of the shark’s struggle and offered their help. Mr. White and Mr. Dillione, however, declined aid. They had had the shark all to themselves that far, they decided they might as well keep it.”

INJURY: No injury to occupants

SPECIES INVOLVED: A blue shark, eight feet in length and weighing 500 pounds

SOURCE: New York Times, June 13, 1936