

ACTIVITY: Fishing for snapper
CASE: GSAF 1936.12.01
DATE: Tuesday December 1, 1936
LOCATION: The incident took place in the bay off Mordialloc, Victoria, Australia

NAME: Charles Swan
DESCRIPTION: He was a 50-year-old male from Parkdale, a returned soldier.
BOAT: An 11-foot dinghy

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, November 29, 1936

NARRATIVE: On Monday, about 15h00, Charles Swan went fishing in a 2.4-metre dinghy. Next day an oar washed up on the beach at Parkdale. In the late afternoon of the following day an RAAF seaplane from Point Cooke spotted an empty, partly submerged dinghy with a 4.8-metre shark cruising nearby. The dinghy was retrieved and towed back to Parkdale. There was a large hole (three feet by two feet) in its side and shark's teeth embedded in the planking. It was thought that the oar would have taken three hours to drift to Parkdale, and whatever befell Swan happened around noon on Tuesday.

INJURY: Presumed fatal

SPECIES INVOLVED: Thought to involve a white shark, 12 feet in length.

SOURCES: The Canberra Times, Wednesday December 2, 1936, page 4; The Age, Friday December 4, 1936; Examiner (Launceston, Tasmania), Friday December 4, 1936, page 9; Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 5.

SHARK TRAGEDY

Fisherman's Boat Attacked

TEETH FOUND IN HOLE

MELBOURNE, Tuesday.

The police have recovered the 11ft. dinghy in which Frederick Swan, 40, a fisherman of Parkdale, went fishing yesterday.

The dinghy had a jagged hole 3ft. by 2ft. torn in its side when found on the Parkdale beach. Imbedded in the planking around the hole were the teeth from the upper and lower jaws of a shark.

When the police were carrying out dragging operations for Swan's body at the spot where the dinghy was found to-day a 20ft brown shark appeared.

A R.A.A.F seaplane discovered the drifting boat while searching for Swan, whom it was thought was landing fish, when the shark followed them, leaped up from the water and crashed into the boat knocking a large piece from the side.

SHARK CAUGHT.

BELIEVED TO HAVE ATTACKED FISHING BOAT.

Teeth Mark Clues.

A white shark over 12 feet long was caught early yesterday morning three miles off Mordialloc pier by Sergeant J. Woolley of the local police and three Italian fishermen. Sergeant Woolley believes it is the same shark which attacked the small boat which Frederick Swan, 50 years, of McBean-street, Parkdale, was fishing from in the Bay off Mordialloc on Monday. The marks made by the shark's teeth on the boat fitted almost exactly with the gaps made by the missing teeth in the mouth of the shark found yesterday. The head of the shark was also scarred possibly when it crashed against the boat.

There is, of course, considerable doubt as to whether the shark swallowed Swan, as no trace of his body was found in the shark's stomach, but the police believe that Swan received a bite and drowned, and they are keeping a lookout in case his body is washed ashore.

The shark was caught in a huge net nearly a quarter of a mile long, and was killed by Italian fishermen. Its stomach contained only small fish. It weighed 1600 lb., was 12 feet 1 inch in length, and 6 feet 8 inches in girth.

*The Argus (Melbourne, Victoria),
Wednesday January 13, 1937, page 6*

LARGE SHARK KILLED

Believed to Have Caused Man's Death

MELBOURNE, Thursday.

After a struggle which lasted nearly an hour to-day three Italian fishermen, Guiseppo Constanzo, Salvatore Constanzo, and Ange'lo Caltabiano, killed a great white shark, more than 12 feet long and with a girth of 6 feet 8 inches, which is believed to have attacked the boat of Mr. Charles Frederick Swann, aged 50 years, of McBean, Parkdale, on Monday and caused his death.

Three teeth, corresponding in position to the teeth marks on the boat, were missing from the lower jaw, and a chip had been broken from one of the teeth in the upper jaw. On the nose were narrow marks similar to those which would be made by impact with the planking of a boat.

Shark Victim's Family

The Mordialloc branch of the Returned Soldiers' League is appealing for assistance for the widow and family of Mr. C. F. Swan, a fisherman, of Parkdale, who received fatal injuries when he was attacked by a shark recently. Contributions to the fund may be sent to the Editor of "The Argus," 365 Elizabeth street, Melbourne, and will be acknowledged in these columns. We have received the following amounts:—

Previously acknowledged . . . £69 14 0
A.A.M., £2; L.A.N., £2; Miss M. M. Cross, 10; M.S.L., 5/; R.C. (Malvern), 2 6.

Total, £74 11/6.