

**ACTIVITY:** Sea disaster  
**CASE:** GSAF 1950.04.09  
**DATE:** April 9, 1950  
**LOCATION:** Coopers Point, Queensland, Australia.

**NAME:** John Ray Much McDonald  
**DESCRIPTION:** He was a 50-year-old male from Innisfail, a member of the crew of the Mavis.

**NARRATIVE:** The fishing launch Mavis was wrecked and sank. His body washed ashore April 16 on King's Beach. Following an Inquest into his death, the Cairns Coroner determined that cause of death was shark bite.

**SOURCE:** Cairns Post (Qld. : 1909 - 1954), Saturday, July 8, 1950, page 5

## SHARKS CAUSED DEATH OF FISHERMAN

### INQUEST IN CAIRNS.

#### CREW MEMBER OF WRECKED LAUNCH

Sharks were responsible for the death of John Ray Much McDonald (50), of Innisfail, a member of the crew of the fishing launch, Mavis, which was wrecked and sank off Cooper's Point on April 9.

An inquest into his death was opened in the Cairns Coroner's Court yesterday before Mr. E. D. Smart, S.M. A post-mortem certificate produced gave the cause of death as haemorrhages following shark bites.

Constable William Donnelly, of the Cairns police, said that on April 16 he found the mutilated body of the dead man half-buried in the sand at high water mark on the northern end of King's Beach, about eight miles from the Yarrabah Mission Station. McDonald's arms and left leg were missing and there were other mutilations to the body, said Constable Donnelly.

He expressed the opinion that the man had been dead for about four days, and had been lying at the high water mark on the beach for about two days. The body was in an advanced state of decomposition.

About 2 p.m. the same day, with the aid of Constables Miller and Holden, he brought the body back to the Yarrabah Mission Station, and from there it was taken to the morgue at the Cairns Base Hospital, where a post-mortem examination was held.

Detective Senior - Constable Mason, in evidence, said that he had been at the hospital when the body was identified by the deceased's brother and also when the autopsy was held.

He tendered a post-mortem certificate to the court which gave the cause of death as haemorrhages which resulted from the ravages of sharks. Detective Senior-Constable Mason added that he did not know of any suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of John McDonald.