ACTIVITY: Swimming  
CASE: GSAF 1964.01.23 / SA-0177  
DATE: Thursday January 23, 1964  
LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Nahoon Beach, five kilometres north of the entrance to East London Harbour, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.  
32°59.4’S, 27°57.1’E  

NAME: John Carlson  
DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 39-year-old male, was 2.02 metres tall, weighed 75 kilograms, and was clad in red and maroon swim trunks. He was tanned, wore no jewelry, and had no injuries before the incident.  

BACKGROUND  
WEATHER: The sky was clear and there was a light 6-knot easterly breeze. It was a hot day; at the time of the incident the temperature was 30.7ºC.  
MOON PHASE: First Quarter, January 22, 1964  
SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was choppy and cold; the water temperature was 17º to 18ºC and sand in the turbulence created large patches of murky water. No holes, gullies or channels were evident. Low tide was at 17h05, and the incident took place a day after neap tide.  
ENVIRONMENT: No one was fishing when the incident occurred but the next day a 2.4-metre pilot whale or pygmy whale washed ashore three kilometres from Nahoon Beach.  
DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 60 metres  
DEPTH: 1.8 metres  
TIME: 16h00  

NARRATIVE: Despite the coldness of the sea there were many people in the water. John Carlson had been swimming for ten minutes and was getting ready to ride a wave inshore. He was facing seaward when the shark came from behind. Carlson says, “it jabbed at my instep and I felt a grating crunch”. He hit the shark on the nose and it let go. Carlson left the water unaided.  

INJURY: The swimmer had several small lacerations on the bottom of his right heel and back of his ankle. There were abrasions on his hand and lacerations on two fingers.  

FIRST AID: Lifesavers put mercurochrome on his wounds.
TREATMENT: He received further treatment at Frere Hospital.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

COMMENT: After this incident a ski-boat patrolled the sea off Nahoon Beach and the tower was manned.

SOURCES: East London Daily Dispatch, January 24, 1964; Case files of Dr. David Davies.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Marie Levine