

**ACTIVITY:** Spearfishing

**CASE:** [GSAF 1982.06.26.a](#)

**DATE:** Saturday June 26, 1982

**LOCATION:** The incident took place at North Rat Cay Reef, Bahamas.

**NAME:** Philip Sweeting

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 19-year-old male from Mastic Point, Andros Island, Bahamas.

**BACKGROUND** Rat cay is so named because it resembles the body of rat. The Cay is unique because it contains a salt water blue hole on its east side.

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter, June 28, 1982

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** A half mile

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Eight feet

**TIME:** 14h00

**NARRATIVE:** Philip had a hogfish on his spear and one on the sea-floor when he noticed a shark in the area, not unusual in those waters. The shark made a pass at the diver, scraping some skin off his side and knocking the spear with the bleeding fish out of his hand. The shark returned with some speed, seized his left arm between the wrist and the elbow and severed it completely.

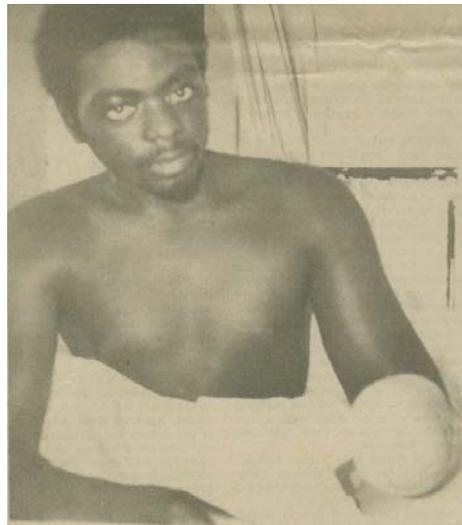
**FIRST AID:** The details were relayed to Nassau by Russ Madill, managing director of A.I.D, who was in San Andros at the time. Mr. Madill, the owner-pilot of a light twin-engine Aztec aircraft, was about to leave for Nassau when someone approached him about transportation for a young man who had been attacked by a shark.

The San Andros police radioed ahead for an ambulance, and when Philip, Mr. Madill and Cecil Gaitor, the Bahamasair representative in San Andros, landed in Nassau, the ambulance was waiting. Philip walked unaided to the vehicle.

**TREATMENT:** He is now resting comfortably in the male surgical ward of the Princess Margaret Hospital and, as Mr. Madill put it, "showing remarkable strength and courage" despite the fact that he is now missing an arm. In a brief interview with the Guardian at the hospital, Philip said, "I can't let this affect my life. Only a part of me is gone."

A welder by trade, the young Androsian recently applied for a job as a livestock hand back home. Realizing that he may not be hired as a result of his accident, however, does not discourage him. He does not intend to lie idle, and hopes to find work on his recovery. If all goes well and no infection sets in, Philip will be able to leave the hospital soon. His doctors say he may be discharged on Friday.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** According to the diver, the incident involved a as a "sun shark", the local name for the lemon shark, *Negaprion brevirostris*.



*LIVING FULL LIFE — Shown in his bed at the Princess Margaret Hospital, Philip Sweeting stated Tuesday that he will continue to live his life to the fullest, despite the shark attack that resulted in the loss of his left arm.*

— (Staff photo by Derek Smith)

**SOURCES:** Nassau Guardian, June 30, 1982  
Rod Attrill, [www.bahamaswildlife.fsnet.co.uk/shark.htm](http://www.bahamaswildlife.fsnet.co.uk/shark.htm)

**CASE INVESTIGATORS:** Rod Attrill; Richard D. Weeks, Global Shark Accident File