

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 1982.09.30.a](#) / SA-303

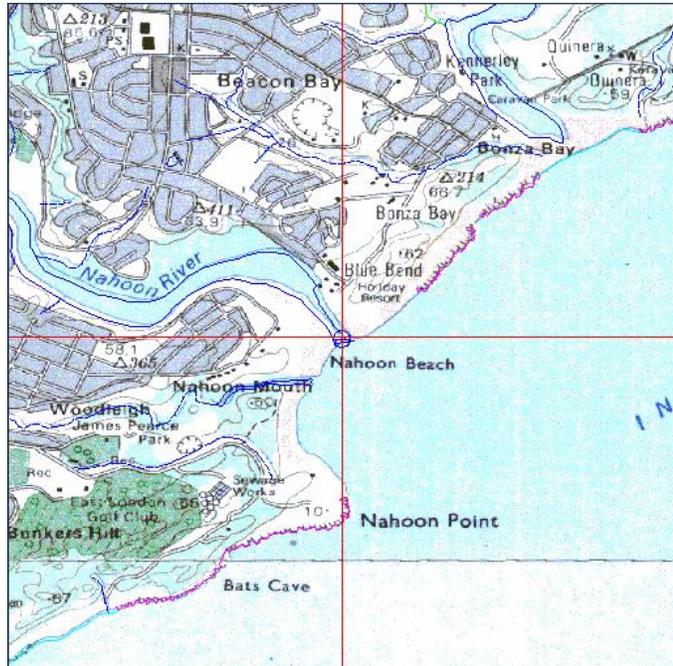
DATE: Thursday September 30, 1982

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Nahoon Reef, about five kilometres northeast of the harbour entrance at East London, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. 32°59,4'S, 27°57,1'E

NAME: Howard Fawkes

DESCRIPTION: He was a 16-year-old male.

SURFBOARD: The surfboard, a 1,8-metre Seafight twinfin, was mauve and white and had two multi-coloured names near the nose. The fins were black with white lines across the sides, and the upper-surface of the board was covered with a pungent strawberry wax.



BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a warm sunny day.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, October 3, 1982

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea temperature in front of the Aquarium was measured at 17°C, but the water was thought to be considerably warmer (estimated 20°C) over Nahoon Reef and underwater visibility was three metres.

ENVIRONMENT: Nahoon lies on the west bank of the Nahoon River, five kilometres north of the entrance to East London Harbour. The most popular beach in East London, Nahoon is renowned throughout the South African surfing community for producing some spectacular waves and is the venue of many national surfing competitions. At 11h00 a surfer gashed his leg on a surfboard skeg, left the water, and went to the hospital to have the wound sutured. It was conjectured that the shark may have been initially attracted to the area because of the blood in the water.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 80 metres

TIME: 14h50

NARRATIVE: Howard Fawkes was surfing with three friends: Michael Baker, Trevor Page and Steven Rohland. He had been in the water for 45 minutes and was lying on his surfboard when the shark came up directly beneath his board. It struck the left of his board and took the skeg into its mouth. Fawkes was catapulted into the water. As he scrambled back onto his board the shark swam past him but he mistook it for a dolphin. He was paddling to shore when friends shouted that a shark was following him. Fawkes caught a wave to the beach, and the shark disappeared after the surfer reached shore.

INJURY: The surfer was not injured.

DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD: There were three longitudinal gashes 2,54 centimetres deep in the bottom of the surfboard and a 7,6 centimetre gash extended through the rail and the base of the left fin.

SPECIES: Although not conclusive, the damage to the surfboard appeared to support the belief that a white shark about 2,8 metres [9'3"] in length was involved in the incident.

A white shark, 2,75-metres in length and weighing 195 kilograms, was caught on Monday, October 4, 1982 at 09h30 by East London Aquarium officials, Municipal and National Sea Rescue Institute personnel, on a baited trap line which had been placed 400 metres off Nahoon Beach at 17h45 on the day of the incident, however there was no proof that the shark caught was the same one involved in the above incident.

SOURCES: Rob Horn, East London Aquarium; Tim Wallett, pages 46-47; Marie Levine GSAF



The white shark caught October 4, 1982