

**ACTIVITY:** Snorkeling

**CASE:** GSAF 1985.03.03

**DATE:** Sunday March 3, 1985

**LOCATION:** The attack took place at Wiseman's Beach in Peake Bay, north of Port Lincoln, South Australia.

**NAME:** Shirley Ann Durdin

**DESCRIPTION:** She was a 33-year-old female, a housewife from Port Lincoln. She had recently completed a course in farm management at TAFE College in Port Lincoln.



### BACKGROUND

**WEATHER:** It was a fine summer day.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea was clear and calm.

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, March 7, 1985

**ENVIRONMENT:** Port Lincoln fishermen said that a huge white shark had been in the area for a month, attracted by offal thrown into the water at Wiseman's Beach by a local fishing company.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 150 metres

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Two metres

**TIME:** 12h30

**NARRATIVE:** Shirley and her husband Barry and Keith Coventry had been diving for scallops and were on their way back to the beach to rejoin their friends and their four children, ages five to 11, who were playing on the sand. Barry was standing on a submerged rock just 10 metres away when Shirley suddenly cried out. As Coventry turned around, he saw Shirley lifted high above the water as a huge fin broke the surface. He said there was some thrashing and then the water turned dark. Coventry, realizing she was gone and fearing for Barry, struggled to restrain him from swimming to his wife. The shark had removed both her legs with its initial bite. Boats rushed to the scene as the shark removed her head and an arm. The shark ignored the boats, circled, took her remains and disappeared toward the deep water of the bay.



*Shirley Ann Durdin*

**INJURY:** Fatal. According to Sharpe, this was the first case in Australia in which a shark consumed a human being.

**SPECIES RESPONSIBLE:** Kevin Wiseman, a retired fisherman on a cliff overlooking the bay, saw the attack and said the shark was "A lot longer than Kevin Hirschausen's 4.5-metre boat. It was thought the attack involved a white shark about six metres in length.

**SOURCES:** Adelaide Advertiser, March 5, 1985; Hugh Edwards, page 155; Alan Sharpe, pages 126-127; J. West, ASAF