

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 1989.03.09](#)

DATE: Sunday March 9, 1989

LOCATION: The attack took place in Encounter Bay at Waitpinga, about 10 kilometres west of Victor Harbor, South Australia, Australia.

35°37'S, 138°29'E

NAME: Matthew Foale

DESCRIPTION: He was a 27-year-old male from Christies Beach.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, March 8, 1989

SEA CONDITIONS: The waves were two metres in height.

ENVIRONMENT: Waitpinga is a renowned surfing and salmon fishing beach.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 200 metres

TIME: 20h15

NARRATIVE: Excited by the news of big swells that afternoon, Matthew Foale, 24-year-old Trevor Viney and two friends finished work and college, loaded

Matthew's car with their surfboards and drove to Waitpinga Beach, 80 kilometres south of Adelaide. The surfers arrived shortly after 18h00, found the beach empty and surfed for two hours. Their friends were drying themselves on the beach and Matthew and Trevor were still out to sea, resting on their boards and deciding whether to go in.

"There was this splash and Matthew just went under," Trevor said. "He disappeared for about three seconds and then popped up again screaming 'shark, it's a shark'. I was about 50 metres away and paddled my guts out to get to him. I saw glimpses of the shark as it had hold of him. I got right along the shark and started kicking it to get it off his leg." After driving off the shark, Trevor managed to haul Matthew on to his board and paddle to shore.

INJURY: Fatal. The surfer's thigh was severely bitten. Matthew's friends attempted without success to resuscitate him but it was thought he died from loss of blood while he still in the water. At autopsy, the main areas of injury involved the right thigh, which displayed characteristic teeth marks, extensive soft tissue damage, and incision of the femoral artery. There were also incised wounds of the right wrist. Bony injury was minimal, and no shark teeth were recovered.

SPECIES: The attack involved a two-metre white shark.

NOTE: Trevor Viney was awarded the 1989 Clarke Medal for Bravery, the Royal Humane Society's highest award, for his attempt to save Matthew Foale.



SOURCES: The Advertiser, March 10, 1989, page 1 and September 14, 1989, page 3; The Valley Independent, March 11, 1989; Courier-Mail, March 11, 1989; Alan Sharpe, page 127; John West, ASAF

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Phil Kemp, GSAF

Surfer dies from shark attack

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — A surfer was killed after a shark dragged him from his board while bathers watched in horror at a popular South Australia beach, police said.

Police said the Matthew Foale, 27, died as his friend towed him 200 yards to the beach. The attack came while the two men surfed off Waitpinga Beach, 50 miles south of Adelaide.

Police said Foale was dangling his leg in the water when the shark grabbed it and dragged him underwater.

*The Valley Independent
Saturday, March 11, 1989*

The Advertiser

Surfer dies after shark attack near Victor Harbor

A surfer died last night after he was attacked by a shark at Waitpinga, about 10km west of Victor Harbor.

The 27-year-old Christies Beach man was dragged into the water while he and several friends lay on their boards 200m offshore waiting for waves about eight o'clock.

One of the surfers said he was about 20m away when he saw some splashing and his friend vanished off his surfboard.

He had surfaced again and yelled "Shark!"

The surfer said he paddled to the spot and saw a shark biting the victim's upper leg.

He said he kicked the shark, which swam away, then he and other surfers took the injured man to the beach.

He was dead before he left the water — possibly from loss of blood from the major femoral artery in the thigh, although the exact cause of death was not known.

The man was taken to Victor Harbor hospital. It will be transferred to Adelaide today for examination.

The dead man's identity had not been released late last night.

The type and size of shark that attacked him was not known.

Waitpinga is a renowned surfing and salmon fishing beach.

Experts said last night that surfing at dusk was particularly hazardous from late afternoon onwards.

The last fatality attributed to a shark attack in South Australia was on September 18, 1987, when Terry Gibson, 47, of Seaford, disappeared

without trace off Marino Rocks while scuba diving for scallops.

An inquest decided later he was killed by a shark attack.

Two years before, on March 3, Shirley Anne Durdin, 33, of Port Lincoln was torn in halves and eaten by a 6m white pointer as she snorkelled with her husband at Peake Bay, near Tumbay Bay, north of Port Lincoln.

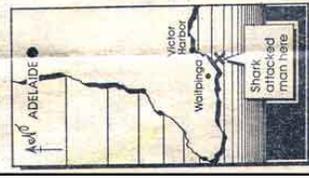
The only trace found was one of her flip-flops.

The most recent attack, on October 6, last year involved Murray Taylor, 15, of Morphett Vale. He survived being dragged by a shark from his surfboard off Moana.

Schoolboy Murray punched the shark and swam to shore. He had to pull the shark's jaws apart to free his leg. He was only 100 metres off the beach when the shark, believed to be a bronze whaler up to 3m long, attacked.



SURVIVOR: Murray Taylor, 15, in hospital after a shark attack in October.



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 Friday, March 10, 1989