

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 1992.10.01

DATE: Thursday October 1, 1992

LOCATION: The incident took place at North Point Beach, Moreton Island, Queensland, Australia.

NAME: Michael Docherty

DESCRIPTION: He was a 28-year-old male from Palm Beach on the Gold Coast. His father said he had fallen in love with fishing and surfing when he was only four-years-old. He was very healthy and an experienced surfer. He was wearing a black wetsuit.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, October 4, 1992

ENVIRONMENT: A white shark had been seen in the area for three weeks prior to the incident. Gold Coast surfer said that sharks seemed to be attracted to the area by rubbish dumped from trawlers that lined the beach.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 30 metres

TIME: 14h30

NARRATIVE: Docherty arrived on Moreton Island on Wednesday morning on holiday with his friends. They had been surfing the same spot for more than a decade. Docherty was on his board, paddling, when the shark rammed his board, knocking him into the water. The shark continued to

'play' with the board, towing Docherty underwater, for about 20 minutes until Redcliffe police offer Sergeant Phil Sharpe and a school teacher arrived on the scene in a fishing boat. When the boat caught up with the shark, the surfboard, with leg leash intact, was still being towed upright through the water. The two men shouted and revved the boat's engine to frighten the shark away.

INJURY: Fatal.

DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT: There was a dent in the surfboard from the initially impact of the shark.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a white shark, 4.2 metres in length.

SOURCES: Daily Telegraph (Sydney), October 2, 1992; Alan Sharpe, pages 107 and 108;



NOTE: A number of shark attack files erroneously list the date of this incident as October 2, 1992. The incident took place the previous day.

THE DAILY
Telegraph Mirror
 EPSON RACE GUIDE INSIDER

SYDNEY, Friday, October 2, 1992 WEATHER: Fine, 20 degrees Phone: 288 3000 60 cents*

EXCLUSIVE
 Noeline Doncher tells 'They've made us look like fools'

\$60,000 Bingo TRIPLE PAY TODAY

HOW SYLVANIA WATERS WRECKED A FAMILY — page 11

SHARK KILLS LONE SURFER

Five bank chiefs quit board

By ADRIAN FERGUSON and ANDREW STEVENSON
 WESTPAC chairman Sir Jim Blair and four fellow directors resigned in a boardroom session yesterday as the bank sought to end its most perilous period.

The five — led by Blair — said the directors' resignation was prompted by a message to the stock market just before midday, said Blair. Blair headed the bank's board.

They said they had taken their full rights and responsibilities and were confident the bank had a sound basis from which it could again become a profitable business.

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 Terry McGeehan, P11

Victims entered water
Body recovered
 NORTH POINT BEACH
 50 METERS
First attacked here
Dragged underwater to here

The spot where the lone surfer was taken by a shark yesterday. (INSET) Victim Michael Docherty

A SHARK killed a surfer as he terrified mates watched the savage 20-minute attack from the beach yesterday.

By DENNIS WATY
 The shark, named the lone surfer, returned the lone surfer's head and dragged his body off a point on Sylvania beach, north of Newcastle.

Witnesses on the beach watched helplessly as the shark...

The shark is a hammerhead "playing with a toy".

"Everyone else really believes it could have been any size of shark, even a tiger shark," says a local shark expert.

"The shark did not release its grip until the police officer sergeant Phil Shyne and a local fisherman happened to find it."

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A SHARK killed a surfboard rider as his terrified mates watched the savage 20-minute attack from the beach yesterday.

HUGE SHARK 'GRABBED' SURFER OFF BOARD

BRISBANE: The body of a surfer killed in a frenzied shark attack yesterday was a "real mess" when it was recovered from the surf on Moreton Island, 60 kilometres north-east of Brisbane, a lighthouse keeper said.

Michael William Docherty, 28, of Palm Beach on the Gold Coast, was attacked by what police believe was a large white pointer shark as he was surfing with friends about 100 metres offshore at North Point, near the island's northern tip.

The keeper of the nearby Cape Moreton Lighthouse, Mr Arnold Williams, said he was called to the scene soon after the attack, about 3 pm.

"The body was still in the water," Mr Williams told the Herald. "He was tied to his surfboard and the shark was still hanging around. His mates ... said they saw this big shark come out of the water and grab him while he was sitting on the board.

"He went under the water and then they saw this great pool of blood, and that was it."

Another surfer, Mr Russell Fisher, said that after the man disappeared from view the shark continued its attack. "About half an hour afterwards the shark started moving and was carrying the board through the water - the board was about three-quarters submerged," Mr Fisher told Channel 9 News. "It was sort of torpedoing along the surface. It would stop, and start up again a bit later."

Alerted by an onlooker with a mobile telephone, police officers stationed temporarily on the island for the school holidays retrieved the body in a dinghy. Sergeant Phil Sharp, of the Water Police, said the shark was lurking in the water around the surfboard while the body was being recovered. He estimated its length at four metres.

Mr Williams said Mr Docherty and two friends arrived on the island yesterday for a camping holiday. "They'd gone straight into the water when they got there. They hadn't even put their tent up." Mr Williams said that at this time of the year sharks, attracted by migrating schools of mullet, and tailor were common in waters off the island.

The last fatal shark attack in Australia was in September last year, when a student, Jonathon Lee, 19, was killed by a white pointer as he was scuba-diving off Aldinga Beach, near Adelaide.

SOURCE: Greg Roberts, Sydney Morning Herald, October 1, 1992, page 2

16-FOOT SHARK KILLS SURFER IN AUSTRALIA

A 16-foot shark killed a surfer Thursday, and witnesses said they watched helplessly as it dragged the man's body up and down the coastline for 15 minutes before letting go and swimming away.

The attack took place off Moreton Island, 15 miles east of the Queensland state capital, Brisbane. Police said the shark fit the description of a white pointer, known man-eaters. The surfer's body was later recovered, but his name was not released.

Unlike many beaches in Queensland, this one was not protected by anti-shark nets. It was the 19th fatal shark attack off the Queensland coast since 1948.

SOURCE: Orlando Sentinel, October 2, 1992, page A3

SHARK WAS THE KILLER: FISHERMAN

BRISBANE: A shark fisherman claims to have caught the shark which killed a surfer last week off Moreton Island, 60 kilometres north-east of Brisbane.

Mr Vic Hislop said he was certain that a 4 1/2-metre white pointer caught early yesterday morning was the shark that killed Mr Michael Docherty, 28.

Mr Hislop said the shark was caught in the area where the attack occurred. He said it had disgorged its stomach contents during the two-hour landing so he could not confirm the attack.

Police said that a shark, which they believed was a white pointer, was lurking around Mr Docherty's badly mauled body when they retrieved it from the surf.

SOURCE: Greg Roberts, Sydney Morning Herald, October 10, 1992, page 6