



**ACTIVITY:** Scuba diving

**CASE:** GSAF 1993.06.09

**DATE:** Wednesday June 9, 1993

**LOCATION:** Off Julian Rocks in Byron Bay, New South Wales, Australia.

**NAME:** John Ford

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a 31-year-old male from Harbord. He and his wife, Deborah were on their honeymoon. The couple was married for 15 days. He was wearing a wetsuit.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, June 4, 1993

**ENVIRONMENT:** Julian rocks is situated within the Cape Byron Marine park in northern NSW. It is where warm and cool waters meet, hence an enormous biodiversity.

**TIME:** 09h30

**NARRATIVE:** Deborah and John Ford were part of a group diving on Julian Rocks. When he saw the shark charging at his bride, John pushed her out of its and it grabbed him instead.

**INJURY:** Fatal.

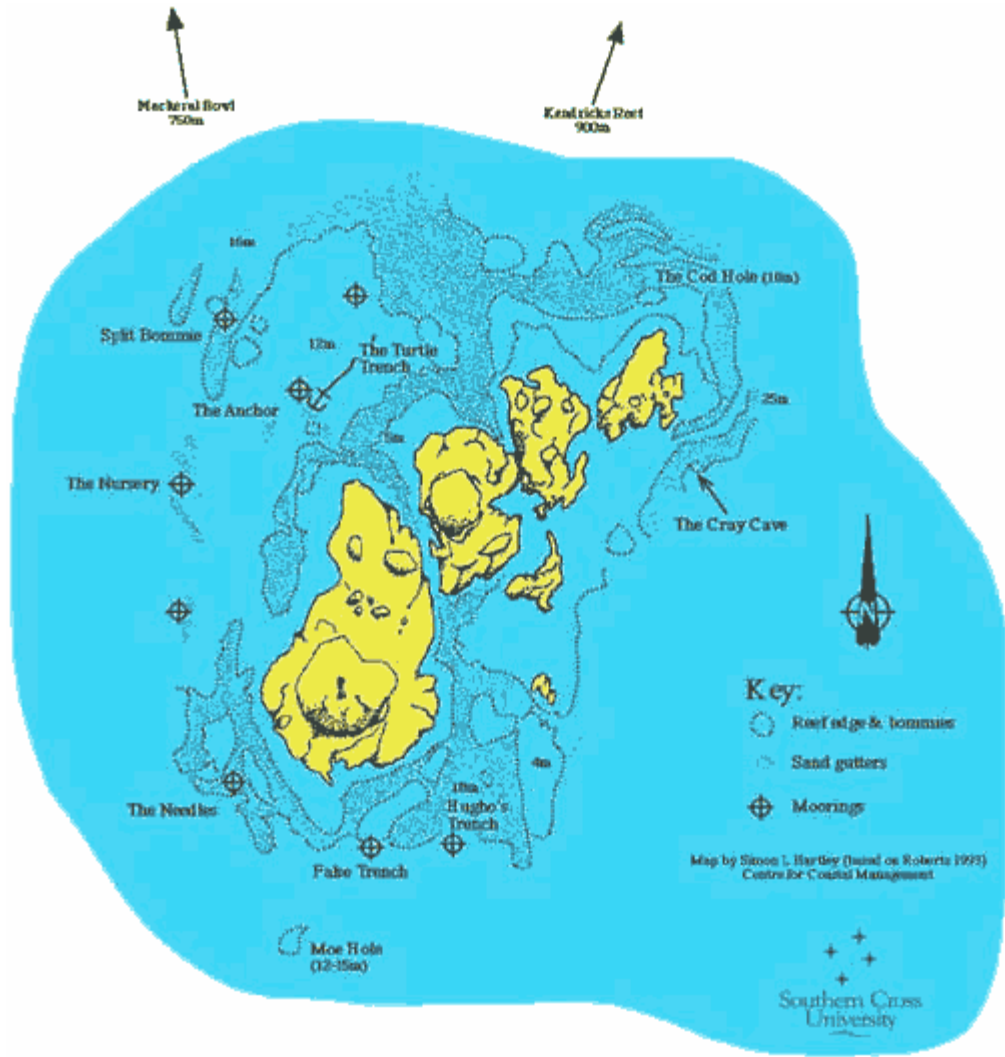
**SPECIES:** The diver's remains were recovered from a 5.5-metre [18-foot] white shark.

**SOURCES:** The News, Thursday, June 10, 1993; Sydney Morning Herald, June 15, 1993, page 7; Hugh Edwards, pages 11 and 159; *et al*

### **Shark kills honeymooner**

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) – A great white shark devoured a man scuba diving on his honeymoon Wednesday then escaped from fishermen after ramming their boat and spitting out part of its victim. Police have called in professional shark hunters to pursue the shark. The attack, off the resort town of Byron Bay, 400 miles north of Sydney, was Australia's second fatal shark attack in five days.

John Ford, 31, had been diving with his bride, Deborah, when the shark lunged at them. Mrs. Ford, 29, told rescue workers her husband pushed her from the path of the shark. His flippers, torn pieces of wet suit and a weight belt were later found in the water. Mrs. Ford was not hurt but was suffering from shock. "They've only been married 15 days. It's really quite tragic," Mrs. Ford's father, Kevin Holn, told Channel Seven television.



*Map of Julian Rocks in Byron Bay*



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The front page of The Northern Star after the 1993 shark attack at Byron Bay.

Jeffery Brackenrig, was holding a dive course at Julian Rocks when a Great White Shark attacked and killed Sydney diver John James Ford, who was on honeymoon with his new bride Deborah. When the shark was spotted in the water, students frantically clambered into the boat, as Mr Ford put himself between his wife and the shark to save her.

"Jeff was the type of bloke who worked on spontaneity more than anything else, so I think he was in there saving the woman before he thought about his own personal safety," one of Mr Brackenrig's best mates, Steve "Scotty" Scott said. "Everyone on the course was in the boat when Jeff jumped in to find the bloke, but unfortunately there was only pieces of him left."

In September 1995, Mr Brackenrig was awarded Australia's second highest bravery award, the Star of Courage, for his heroic act.



Gold Coast Bulletin, September 18, 1993

No formal inquest was held into the death of John Ford.

Coroner and clerk of the Byron Bay Local Court, Graham Flemming, closed the file on the horrific incident and said the town had experienced enough of the matter. "There is little to be gained by holding a formal inquest," he said. "The last thing this town needs is another shark attack or the kind of attention a formal inquest into this death would cause."

Diving is a multi-million dollar business in Byron Bay, with more than 50,000 dives made annually at Julian Rocks alone.