

ACTIVITY: Riding a towed floatation device.

CASE: GSAF 1993.08.15.a

DATE: Sunday August 15, 1993

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean near Brant Island Shoal in Pamlico Sound, North Carolina, USA. Brant Island Shoal is about midway in Pamlico Sound between Bay River and Ocracoke Inlet.

NAME: Petra Rijoes

DESCRIPTION: She is a 19-year-old female.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, August 17, 1993.

SEA CONDITIONS: the incident took place in brackish, inland waters where underwater visibility is usually very poor. High tide was at 10h12, low tide was at 16h04.

ENVIRONMENT: Brant Island is a small island in Pamlico Sound west of Ocracoke. Fishermen used to come during the summer to tend pound nets. During World War II, the military turned Brant Island into a bombing range. The hulks of a sunken freighter and two sea-going tugboats on Brant Island Shoals serve as targets.

The same weekend of this incident, a tourist reported seeing a shark swimming in the Currituck Sound near the Wright Memorial Bridge, reported North Carolina Aquarium Director Rhett White. "The report was never confirmed. But it's not all that unusual to hear about sharks in the sounds," White said. "In the past five years, commercial fishermen have caught at least three six-foot bull sharks in the Croatan Sound, each weighing a couple hundred pounds." Just 11 days after this incident Lannie Belangia, a commercial fisherman in Currituck Sound, found a 7.5-foot, 260-lb bull shark dead in his flounder nets 400 feet south of the Wright Memorial Bridge.

The eastern side of Chesapeake Bay, south of Tangier Island, is also a popular nursery for sandbar sharks. In that area, they're most abundant behind the barrier islands, closer to the mouth of the Bay.

From May through early October, tiger sharks are sometimes found in more heavily salinated parts of the Bay.

TIME: 10h00

NARRATIVE: Petra Rijoes was riding a floatation device being pulled by a 35-foot sailboat when she was injured by a shark.

INJURY: She sustained severe lacerations to her lower abdomen and across onto her thigh.



TREATMENT: She was admitted to Carteret General Hospital in Morehead City. Dr. Frank Schwartz interviewed her while she was in Carteret General Hospital and recorded that she had “300+- stitches across her lower abdomen, near her genitals, and across one leg”. She was discharged on Wednesday. Petra recovered from her injuries and returned to school at North Carolina State University.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident was thought to involve a bull shark, seven feet in length. According to Frank Schwartz, 10 species of sharks that migrate along the Virginia and North Carolina coasts also will swim into brackish, inland waters to feed. Bull sharks are the species most frequently sighted in inland waters, according to Schwartz. Bull sharks can live in brackish water and even fresh water for months. “The shark might have been trying to get back out the inlet,” Schwartz said. “The sound water was about 81°F then. When it gets about 85°F degrees, the sharks normally try to get back to cooler ocean temperatures. This shark might have been agitated by the warm waters. It also might have been agitated by the wake of the boat.”

SOURCES: Charlotte Observer, August 19, 1993, page 2C
Virginian Pilot, August 20, 1993, page D1
Frank Schwartz, pers. comm

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Clay Creswell, Global Shark Accident File



Apparent shark attack hospitalizes woman

Associated Press

MOREHEAD CITY — A 19-year-old woman was seriously injured over the weekend in what officials believe may have been a shark attack in the Pamlico Sound.

Petra Rijoos, whose hometown was unknown, was treated at Carteret General Hospi-

tal for severe lacerations to her abdomen and upper legs after the Sunday incident, hospital and Coast Guard officials said.

She was listed in stable condition Tuesday, a nursing supervisor said.

Rijoos was injured around 10 a.m. while riding a flotation device being pulled by a

35-foot sailboat near Brant Island Shoal in the Pamlico Sound, Coast Guard Petty Officer David Hardy said.

Brant Island Shoal is about midway in Pamlico Sound between Bay River and Ocracoke Inlet, Hardy said.

Catch of the day



Staff photo by DREW C. WILSON

Lannie D. Belangia, a commercial fisherman from Point Harbor, N.C., displays the jaws of the 7½-foot, 260-pound bull shark he found dead in his flounder nets in Currituck Sound

just south of the Wright Memorial Bridge. "I was just wondering how to pull him in," Belangia said Thursday. "Of course I was watching for any movement, too." Terri Kirby

of the North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island said an increase in sting rays in the Sound probably has attracted more bull sharks, which feed on the rays.