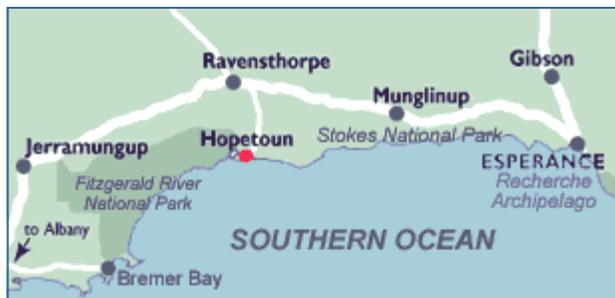


ACTIVITY: Abalone diving on hookah

CASE: [GSAF 1995.09.11](#)

DATE: Monday September 11, 1995

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Southern Ocean at Honeymoon Island, which lies 40 km east of Hopetoun and a kilometre from shore on the south coast of Western Australia.



NAME: David Weir

DESCRIPTION: He was 29-year-old male from Margaret River 200 km south of Perth. He was 1.8 metres tall and was clad in a black thick dive suit and black fins. He also wore a 13.5-kilogram weight belt and hookah rig with a pony bottle, and carried an abalone iron. A friend described him as a “top bloke” and said Weir held a professional diver’s licence for 10 years. Roger Veen, owner of Hopetoun’s general store, described Weir as “a very genuine fellow ... I’ve dealt with him in business and as a friend and he was always marvelous,” he said.

BOAT: Abalone divers on this stretch of coast use trailered boats six to eight metres in length that are launched from the beach. Weir’s support boat was powered by a Mercury outboard, and 21-year-old Dave Lashman was serving as tender/deckhand.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: Storms forced the divers to work sheltered waters close to the coast.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, September 9, 1995

SEA CONDITIONS: The area has some of the roughest tracts of water on earth. The swell was up and the water was thick with kelp and discoloured from recent storms. The diver entered the sea in the turbulent white water preferred by abalone.

ENVIRONMENT: Honeymoon Island is a isolated granite outcrop. Seals and sea lions were on the rocks and a short distance away right whales were calving. Just weeks earlier Weir and another abalone diver were chased out of the water in the same area by a five-metre white shark, and another diver was chased out of the same area by a large white shark just days earlier. Veen said that sort of news gets around very quickly: “The divers are a very close-knit group.”

The Australian Marine Conservation Society’s conservation and development manager, Mr Bill Foster, said the shark almost certainly had mistaken Mr Weir for a seal, dolphin or whale calf – its natural prey. The shark would have been in the area following the migration of the humpback whales, feeding on whale calves and the afterbirth.

DEPTH OF WATER: Eight metres

TIME: 15h00

NARRATIVE: Moments after David Weir jumped into the sea there was an enormous swirl of water and Deckhand David Lashman saw a tail nearly two metres across break the surface. A huge fin knifed the water and a cloud of blood welled up from below. Lashman gunned the boat back into the bloodstained water and grabbed the diver’s airhose. The line was slack and it came to the surface with the harness attached but shredded, and the pony bottle bore gouges and teeth marks. The diver’s body came to the surface briefly and Lashman tried to grab it but he lost his grip and the body sank.

Lashman ran the boat on to the beach at Starvation Bay. Fishermen there drove him to Hopetoun to report the tragedy. Roger Veen drove him a further 50 kilometres to Ravensthorpe Hospital where he was admitted in shock.

INJURY: Fatal. The shark removed the diver's head, shoulder and arm. Weir's body washed ashore at Mungilinup beach on Wednesday September 13. A few days before Christmas 1995, a human arm and portions of a wetsuit also washed ashore at Mungilinup.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The attack involved a white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*.

SOURCES: Hugh Edwards, pages 1-8; The Advertiser, Wednesday September 13 1995, page 2