

**ACTIVITY:** Fishing

**CASE:** **GSAF 1997.10.11**

**DATE:** Saturday October 11, 1997

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Indian Ocean off Port Alfred, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

**BOAT:** A 4.8-metre semi-rigid inflatable boat

**OCCUPANTS:** Andre Marais and Tony Jensen

**BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter, October 9, 1997

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** One kilometre

**NARRATIVE:** The fishermen foul-hooked the shark and reeled it towards their boat. The shark bit the boat three times, deflating several compartments.

**INJURY:** No injury to occupants

**SPECIES:** The incident involved a soupfin shark.

**NOTE:** This was a provoked incident; the shark bit the boat only after it was hooked.

### **Shark victims promise 'Jaws' a headache**

PORT ALFRED -- It could have been straight out of the shark horror movie series, *Jaws*, as the two tubby fishermen beat off a 1,5 metre shark after it bit two holes into their rubber duck and refused to let go.

Local ski-boat club safety officer Tony Jensen and Pretoria landlubber Andre Marais were fishing just more than a kilometre off-shore and eight kilometres from the safety of Port Alfred's treacherous Kowie River Mouth when they foul-hooked a soupfin shark and reeled it towards their 4,8-m inflatable.

The two men described their terror as the semi-rigid boat began to deflate after the shark took its first bite.

It then returned for seconds and thirds as the men tried to beat it off -- destroying two of the duck's three air compartments -- before they could cut the line.

The men then lashed the pierced nose of the boat, which was taking water, up with rope and gingerly made their way back to the ski-boat club.

Although Mr Marais, a self-confessed landlubber, had only recently bought the rubber duck, he said he would definitely go back out to sea "to look for the shark and give it a headache", despite going out to sea only three times in his life before.

Reliving the terror, burly veteran fisherman Jensen who takes deep-sea charters from the picturesque seaside town, said: "I got a huge fright when I heard hissing and saw bubbles coming up from under the side of the duck after the first bite.

"It all happened so quickly. Next minute, the shark took a second bite out of the front of the duck -- and then took a third bite and refused to let go. I thought we were going down. It was a scary experience."

Mr Jensen, who owns a 6,8 metre glass-fibre catamaran, said it was also only the third time he had been out to sea on a rubber duck when the shark struck.

After limping back to the club, the damage was inspected and one of the shark's teeth was found imbedded in the duck.

Mr Marais, 52, is keeping it as a souvenir.

A former air-force colonel who took early retirement, he said when he bought the semi-rigid duck, the salesman had told him even if all three pontoons were punctured the craft would still float. "I got a fright when it happened, but I trusted the product. When we got the duck to plane there were no problems."

Natal Sharks Board marine biologist Dr Sheldon Dudley said the soupfin shark, also known as the hound shark or "vaalhaai", forms part of South Africa's commercial shark-fishing operations. "They are not regarded as dangerous and the only reason it bit the rubber duck was because it was trying to protect itself." *ECN Weekend Service*

**SOURCE:** Dispatch online, Saturday, October 11, 1997,