

ACTIVITY: Body boarding

CASE: GSAF 1998.08.13

DATE: Thursday August 13, 1998

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean about a mile south of Ponce Inlet, New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, Florida.
29.1°N, 81.0°W

NAME: Robert Parcus

DESCRIPTION: He is an 11-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 65% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Last Quarter, August 14, 1998.

ENVIRONMENT: The day before the incident sharks were seen in the area and they were feeding. Sandy Parcus, Robert's mother, reports: *"Lifeguards made everyone stay out of the water most of the day. We actually saw one of the sharks ride a wave right on to the beach. He was long and skinny and had a blue tint on his sides. There was a fisherman standing next to me and he stated it was a blue shark. . . I thought someone might try to hurt it, but he rode back out on the next wave."*

DEPTH OF WATER: 2.5 feet (less than a metre).

NARRATIVE: Sandy Parcus continues: *"The next day my sons talked me into going back in the water. (I was still thinking about the sharks.) I told them we could for 10 minutes. We were in the water for five minutes when my son was bit."*

"He was riding his body board on the wave. The shark bit him on the left calf. . . [The shark] let go as fast as it grabbed on. My son saw him as he swam away. My son tells me that after he was bit, the shark stopped and he could see the dorsal fin and when he stood up, the shark took off really fast and his fin caused a whirlpool. This is when he realized what happened and became frightened. He ran out of the water with me and his brother right behind him. It didn't really seem to physically hurt so much as I think it bothered him more emotionally. He looked like he was going to go into shock and that's when I got scared."

INJURY: There were three rows of teeth marks on the boy's left calf. *"The teeth marks on my son's leg looked to be triangular and they looked like little "v" marks . . . very minimal damage,"* reported Sandy Parcus.

TREATMENT: Robert Parcus was treated at Bert Fish Medical Center in New Smyrna Beach.

SPECIES: *"The doctors at the emergency room stated that it was a juvenile shark and they guessed it was about 4 to 4.5 feet long by the bite radius, but weren't sure what kind of shark it was. The photos and measurements were sent to Gainesville, Florida, USA; they*



said they might call me, but they never did. . . I am assuming the shark that bit my son was the same kind that swam up on the beach. Another person suggested it might have been a reef shark. Does the bluish tint sound familiar or do a lot of sharks have that? As you can tell, I don't know much about them, but I respect them and have always been completely in awe of them (as well as afraid!). I've been told that this [Florida County] has become the shark bite capital of the world. Mainly hit and run type attacks. . .if you can really call them attacks, I just call them cases of mistaken identity.”

SOURCE: Personal communication with Sandy Parcus, mother of Robert Parcus.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Alex Buttigieg, Global Shark Accident File

