

ACTIVITY: Windsurfing
CASE: GSAF 1999.05.29
DATE: Saturday May 29, 1999
LOCATION: The incident took place in Hardwicke Bay, Spencer Gulf, on the west side of the Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, Australia.

NAME: Tony Donoghue
DESCRIPTION: He was a 22-year-old male, a TV sound recordist from North Adelaide.

BACKGROUND
MOON PHASE: Full Moon, May 30, 1999
SEA CONDITIONS: The seas were “quite rough,” according to his friends.
TIME: He was last seen at 14h30 [2:30 pm] and was reported missing at 17h00 [5 pm] after he failed to return.

NARRATIVE: Donoghue was on holiday with friends. He left to go windsurfing at about 12h15. One of his friends, John Laurie, saw him windsurfing at about 14h30. He said that he was “only a speck and far out.” When Donoghue had not returned by 17h00, and his friends could not see him on the bay, they conducted a search along the shoreline and then reported his disappearance to the police. A search was then organized by Constable Philip Copley from Minlaton Police Station.

INJURY: Fatal. The Inquest determined: “Tony Donogue died on 29 May 1999 of multiple injuries as a result of a shark attack while windsuring at Hardwicke Bay.” His body was never recovered.

DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT: At 19h45, Donoghue’s damaged sailboard was found 3.5 kilometres south of Hardwicke Bay, about three kilometres from where he was last seen, according Senior Constable Gary Houghagen, officer in charge of Yorketown police. Its position suggested that it had washed ashore by tidal movement rather than having been dragged ashore. It was undamaged.

An even more extensive search was then mounted. It was coordinated by Sergeant R. Badenoch, a qualified Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator (SARMC). Police STAR Division and Water Response Unit participated, along with the helicopter Polair 2 equipped



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with heat-seeking instruments. Some 25 local volunteers in boat and on foot continued the search utilizing their knowledge to calculate wind and tidal movements.

At 20h00, some three kilometres further south, searchers found his harness with rips and tears in it consistent with a shark attack.

At midnight, a further 1.5 kilometres along the beach, search crews found part of his wetsuit which bore damage consistent with a shark attack. This was later confirmed by Dr. K. Brown, Forensic Odontologist. Dr. Brown found that there were "numerous incisions and multiple branching tears distributed randomly penetrating through the 4.0 millimeter thickness of the neoprene back and front panels. He concluded:

"The damage to the fragment of surfing wetsuit, harness and yoke, said to have been identified as belonging to Tony Donogue, is consistent with damage produced by the triangular serrated teeth of a Great White Shark".

The search was suspended at 02h00 and resumed with the morning light at 06h00, but was called off at 11h30. "We have searched every possible area — there is nothing more we can do," Constable Houghagen said.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a white shark, a species seen regularly in Hardwicke Bay.

SOURCES: Daily Telegraph, Monday May 31, 1999, page 2; Inquest taken on behalf of our Sovereign Lady the Queen at Adelaide in the State of South Australia, on the 27th day of January and the 1st day of February, 2000, before Wayne Cromwell Chivell, a Coroner for the said State, concerning the disappearance of Tony Donoghue, aged 22 years, late of 226 Jeffcott Street, North Adelaide.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Philip Kemp, Global Shark Accident File