

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2001.08.19.b](#)

DATE: Sunday August 19, 2001

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off the 2700 block North Ocean Beach, New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, Florida, USA.
29°N, 81°W

NAME: Becky Chapman

DESCRIPTION: The surfer is a 17-year-old female from Winter Park. She was wearing a light blue two-piece bathing suit. She has been surfing about two years and was brushed by a shark on the July 4th weekend.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, August 18, 2001

SEA CONDITIONS: The recent heavy rains poured silt into the water and underwater visibility was very poor.

DEPTH OF WATER: Chest-deep

TIME: 13h06



NARRATIVE: "I was just sitting on her surfboard talking with one of my friends," Chapman said "I felt it just hit the back of my leg. At first, I didn't know what it was. Then it started shaking around. It was scary." She reached down and touched the shark. When she realized what it was, she began punching it until it let go. A friend helped her to shore.

Chapman smiled as she talked about how she had never even been in a car accident. "And I'm the one that gets bitten by a shark," Chapman said. "It's kind of cool, I guess."

INJURY: There were minor lacerations on her shin and six- to eight-inch lacerations to the left calf. The bite severed her Achilles tendon, nicked an artery and tore muscles.

TREATMENT: She was hospitalized at Bert Fish Medical Center in New Smyrna Beach and underwent surgery late Sunday afternoon where her injury was surgically repaired. She is expected to remain there until at least Wednesday. Her doctor described the wound as significant, but not life-threatening and noted that that most shark bites don't require surgery. "We have treated 25 shark bites in our Emergency Room in the past five years; 28 of them were surfers, said Dr. Arlen Stauffer, medical director of the hospital's ER department, "But only about five of those bite victims had to be taken to the operating room."

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought the incident involved a six to seven foot blacktip shark, *C. limbatus*.

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SOURCES: Interviews with Becky Chapman; Orlando Sentinel, August 20, 2001, page B1; Ludmilla Lelis, Orlando Sentinel, August 22, 2001, page D.1

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