

ACTIVITY: Fishing

CASE: GSAF 2002.04.21

DATES & LOCATIONS: On April 2, 2002, the fisherman was washed off rocks at the popular fishing spot "Hill 60" near Honeycomb Rocks at Port Kembla, about 90 miles south of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. His remains were found in a shark that was caught April 21, 2002, some 26 nautical miles out to sea off Lake Macquarie and 60 miles north of Sydney.



NAME: Kang Suk Lee

DESCRIPTION: He was a 51-year-old Korean male from Seven Hills in Sydney, and worked as a welder at the town's BHP steelworks.

NARRATIVE: Det Sen Sgt Murray Lundberg, of Lake Macquarie detectives, said in a tendered statement that witnesses had recalled seeing Mr Lee fishing "in a dangerous position" where "every time a wave would break on the rocks the fisherman would run away from the oncoming waves and return to fishing at the change of the wave sets". Mr Lee was caught by a wave and onlookers watched as he was carried into the surf. A life-ring, which had been kept at Hill 60 to use as a buoyancy float in emergencies, was missing from its post just metres from where Mr Lee was swept away. A large air and sea search failed to find any trace of the fisherman.

Nineteen days later, Belmont angler Robert Brown was fishing with three mates on board the Lake Macquarie boat *Grumpy I* about 48 kilometres off Lake Macquarie when he snared the tiger shark. When the shark's stomach was slit open later that night it was found to contain partial human remains including a human skull, shoulder and arm. Shreds of clothing in the shark matched clothing Lee was wearing when he perished. Dental records were used to identify the remains as those of Mr Lee.

An autopsy was conducted on April 23, 2002. At a coronial inquest on October 2, 2002, Newcastle coroner Allan Railton handed down an open finding into the fisherman's death. Evidence tendered to court said an autopsy on the remains had failed to determine an exact cause of death. "When recovered from within the shark, the remains did not permit any definitive conclusion to be reached as to whether he had drowned or whether he may have been killed when he was smashed against the rocks by wave action," police prosecutor Sen Sgt Phil Lloyd said in assisting the coroner. "I tender the brief which includes material suggestive of the not unreasonable conclusion that Kang Suk Lee's body decomposed in the water for 10 days before it was consumed by the tiger shark," Sen Sgt Lloyd said.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a 3.3-metre [10-foot], 369.5-kilogram [815-pound] tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier*.

SOURCE: Dan Proudman, Newcastle Herald, October 3, 2002, page 5

© Global Shark Accident File, 2002. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.