

ACTIVITY: Swimming
CASE: **GSAF 2003.02.08**
DATE: Saturday February 8, 2003
LOCATION: The attack occurred in Burleigh Lake, Queensland, Australia.



NAME: Bob Purcell
DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, an 84-year-old male, was very fit and routinely swam 50 to 60 metres out into the lake.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, February 9, 2003

ENVIRONMENT: Burleigh Lake is approximately 30 kilometres in length and is part of an inland waterway comprised of 446 km of canals and tidal rivers ranging from one metre to 40 metres deep that extends along Australia's Gold Coast (see next page). It was the second shark fatality in two months on the Gold Coast. On December 23, 2002, Beau Martin, 23, was killed by a shark in nearby (1 km) Miami Lake.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Unknown

DEPTH: Unknown

TIME: The swimmer entered the water at 06h20 and his body was found floating in the water three hours later by kayakers.

NARRATIVE: There were no witnesses to the incident.

INJURY: Fatal. The swimmer's leg had been bitten by a shark. It was thought that death was due to exsanguination.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Later in the day the DPI set six baited drumlines and a 125-metre-long nett in Burleigh Lake and surrounding canals in a bid to catch the shark involved in this attack. Next day three female bull sharks, *Carcharhinus leucas*, 2.2, 2.1 and 1.6 metres in length, were netted. Forensic examination of the sharks indicated that none of the three had been involved in the incident.

SOURCES: Sunday Territorian, February 9, 2003, page 9, et al.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Terry Peake, Australasian Shark Attack File



Burleigh Lakes - Aerial view

<http://www2.dpi.qld.gov.au/fishweb/17955.html>

Sharks caught after swimmer killed in attack

Three large bull sharks have been caught in a Gold Coast lake where an 84-year-old man was killed in a shark attack yesterday.

The sharks, measuring 2.2, 2.1 and 1.6 metres, were found early today in a net set across Burleigh Lake after police asked the Department of Primary Industries to help find the killer shark.

The body of Bob Purcell, a former Commonwealth Games bowler, was discovered by kayakers after he disappeared on his regular morning swim.

Mr Purcell had suffered severe leg wounds.

The acting manager of Queensland's shark control program, Tony Ham, said the attack on Mr Purcell was consistent with a bull shark measuring more than two metres.

The stomach contents of the caught sharks would be examined today to determine whether any of the three was responsible for the attack.

Mr Ham said there were hundreds of bull sharks in Gold Coast canals.

In addition to the 125 metre long net, six baited hooks have also been placed in Burleigh Lake. Gold Coast residents have been urged not to swim in the city's canal, lake and river systems.

Recent shark attacks in Australia

1995

Sept 12, WA - Abalone diver killed by a shark on WA's south coast.

1996

Feb 28, NSW - Man bitten by shark in Sydney's Parramatta River.

March 5, Qld - Woman attacked near Heron Island in Queensland.

1997

Jan 20, Qld - Man mauled by a shark off Whitsunday Island.

Feb 28, Qld - Italian tourist's arm mauled in the Whitsunday Passage.

Oct 28, WA - Two men escape unhurt when a surf-ski is bitten in half at Perth's Cottesloe beach.

1998

Jan 19, SA - Man bitten at an Adelaide beach.

June 28, SA - Man dies after being mauled near South Neptune Island.

Dec 23, SA - Woman suffers deep leg wounds when bitten at Middleton Beach.

1999

Feb 23, NSW - Surfer's hand bitten off at Scotts Head.

May 30, SA - Sailboarder killed in attack at Hardwicke Bay, Yorke Peninsula.

2000

March 15, NSW - Surfer dragged by a shark at McMasters Beach on NSW central coast.

March 30, Qld - Part of man's left leg is ripped away by a shark on the Gold Coast.

Sept 24, SA - New Zealand surfer killed by a white pointer at Cactus Beach, on SA's west coast.

Sept 25, SA - Youth killed when pulled from his surfboard off Blacks Point, on SA's west coast.

Nov 6, WA - Man killed and another injured by a suspected great white shark at Perth's North

Cottesloe beach.

2001

Feb 4, NSW - Surfer escapes shark attack at Brooms Head in northern New South Wales.

Feb 28, WA - A huge white pointer shark attacks a five-metre boat 200 metres from swimmers at a beach off Albany.

April 2, NSW - Shark tears through surfer's leg at Nambucca Heads, on the state's mid north coast.

May 4, NSW - Shark attacks a 33-year-old surfer near Toukley on the NSW Central Coast.

June 9, NSW - Fishermen discovers the remains of a missing man, including a head, inside a three-metre tiger shark caught off Lord Howe Island.

Nov 7, WA - Man reports falling off his surf-ski after possibly hitting a shark off Leighton Beach, just two beaches south of North Cottesloe where a man was killed by a shark in 2000.

Nov 23, NSW - Surfer launched more than two metres into the air when his board was hit by a shark at Flat Rock Beach in Lennox Head.

2002

Jan 30, WA - A 32-year-old man attacked by a shark at Collie River south of Perth.

Feb 7, NSW - A man escapes with minor injuries after a shark attacks his kayak in the Parramatta River.

Feb 16, Qld - Surfer bitten on the foot by a shark off Sunshine Beach, just south of Queensland's popular Noosa resort.

April 30, SA - Twenty-three-year-old scallop diver killed by a shark after being dragged from a mate's arms while trying to get on board a boat in Smoky Bay in the Great Australian Bight.

Dec 16, Qld - A 23-year-old man killed by a shark while swimming in Miami Lake on the Gold Coast.

Dec 29, Qld - A 20-year-old Dutch tourist suffers severe lacerations to her arm after being attacked by a hammerhead shark at Apollo Reef off the far north Queensland coast.

2003.

Feb 8, Qld - An 84-year-old man found dead in Burleigh Lake on the Gold Coast after being attacked by a shark while on an early morning swim.

SOURCE: Sunday Territorian, February 9, 2003, page 9

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/02/09/1044725665481.html>