

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2003.05.07

DATE: Wednesday May 7, 2003

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean a quarter mile south of the inlet at New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, Florida, USA.

29°N, 81°W

NAME: Gerald Gaskins

DESCRIPTION: The surfer, a 34-year-old male, is a surf shop owner from Lake County, Florida. He was wearing dark blue baggies.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 30% of the moon's visible disk illuminated. First Quarter, May 9, 2003.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was murky. According to beach authorities, shortly after the incident a small shark nearly beached itself "after becoming disoriented in the murky water".

ENVIRONMENT: Ponce de Leon Inlet is the site of numerous, relatively minor, shark bites. Sharks migrating northwards are attracted to the huge shoals of fish at the inlet, as are fishermen, and the area is popular with surfers. Every year shark and surfers collide near the inlet. There was fishing activity at the inlet rocks.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 200 yards south of Ponce de Leon Inlet.

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: Waist-deep

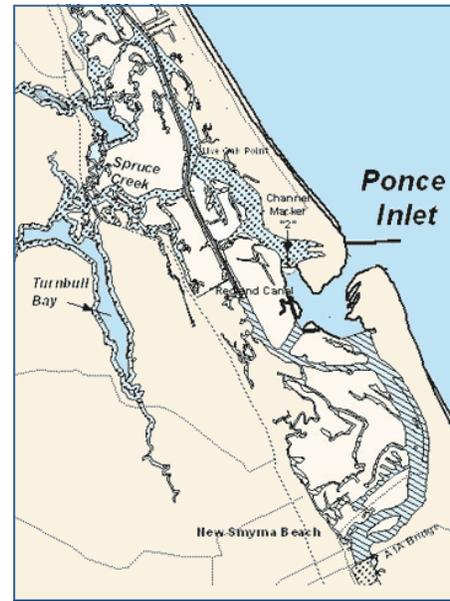
TIME: 11h40

NARRATIVE: Gaskins jumped off his board and landed on the shark. "When I hit him, I could feel him turn around real quick coming to bite whatever hit him," said Gaskins. "I never saw the shark, but I could feel it spin around and tag me. The shark came down on my left foot three or four times in about a half second."

INJURY: The surfer's left foot was badly bitten and tendons were severed near the ankle.

TREATMENT: Gaskins was transported to Bert Fish Medical Center where he underwent surgery to repair severed tendons and a cut joint on his big toe. It was thought that one of the shark's teeth might be in the wound.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The shark was about four to five feet in length. No species identification was made.



NOTE: This is considered a provoked incident.

SOURCES: www.local6.com and Mark I. Johnson, Daytona Beach News Journal, May 8, 2003, page 1C; Tampa Tribune, May 8, 2003

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Captain Scott Petersohn, GSAF