

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2004.03.31.a

DATE: Wednesday March 31, 2004

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Stuart Rocks, Martin County, Florida, USA.



NAME: Chance Dean

DESCRIPTION: The surfer, a 20-year-old male, is 6' tall and weighs 172 lbs. At the time of the incident, he was wearing a blue bathing suit, and a black leash attached to his ankle. He had stubbed his toe prior to the incident.

SURFBOARD: The surfboard, a 6'2" triffin, has a blue upper-surface and the under-surface is white. The three fins are also white.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a sunny day, air temperature was 78°F, and there was a gentle (3 mph) onshore breeze.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, April 5, 2004

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was clear blue with estimated visibility of 20 feet. Sea temperature was about 72°F. Although there was surf, no channel was present in the immediate vicinity. Mean low tide was at 10h51.

ENVIRONMENT: The area consists of worn reef and limestone rock. More than 20 people were on the beach and more than 10 people were in the water, about six of whom were within ten feet of Dean. A large shoal of baitfish was passing through the area.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 yards

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: Four feet

TIME: 09h00

NARRATIVE: Dean had been in the water about three hours, when the shark approached him from below. "I had just got off the wave, pushed off the reef to get back on my board. Just as I pushed off, the shark bit my left foot." The shark made a single bite lasting less than a second. Then, said Dean, "I swam back in."

INJURY: There were two rows of puncture marks on the surfer's left foot. A nerve was severed and a tendon was torn.

DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT: The surfboard was not damaged.

FIRST AID: Rescue workers were originally dispatched to the beach, but the call was canceled when Dean's friends said they were taking him to the hospital themselves.

TREATMENT: Dean was treated at Martin Memorial Medical Center and released. His injury was photographed prior to surgical repair.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Although Dean did not see the shark, he believes that a bull shark, about four feet in length, was involved. It is also possible that a small carcharhinid shark, such as a blacktip shark, *C. limbatus*, was responsible for the injury.

COMMENT: The injury appears to be a territorial response to a perceived intruder. The shark made a single strike and apparently left the scene.

SOURCE: Palm Beach Post, April 1, 2004

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Tom Jerome, Shark Research Institute