

ACTIVITY: Diving

CASE: GSAF 2004.04.26

DATE: Monday April 26, 2004

LOCATION: The incident took place at Latitude Reef, near Forster, New South Wales, Australia.

NAME: Chai Griffin

DESCRIPTION: The diver is a cashier at the Australian Museum.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, April 28, 2004

SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature is usually 18°C to 24°C and visibility can range from 7 to 25 meters.

ENVIRONMENT: The reef is a sloped rock running east-west, on an otherwise sandy bottom. Its southern side is flat sloping rock rising from the sand at a depth of 18 metres to a ridge at 10 metres below the surface. Several gutters cut across the sloped rock face. The flat surfaces on the southern side support kelp beds which in turn attract red morwong and schooling silvers. The northern side drops as a wall from the ridge down to several gutters, overhangs, cracks and sporadic bombora rocks, and is extured with sponges, shellfish and brown algae. The area is a popular for diving and spearfishing.

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: The incident occurred at a depth of 19 metres

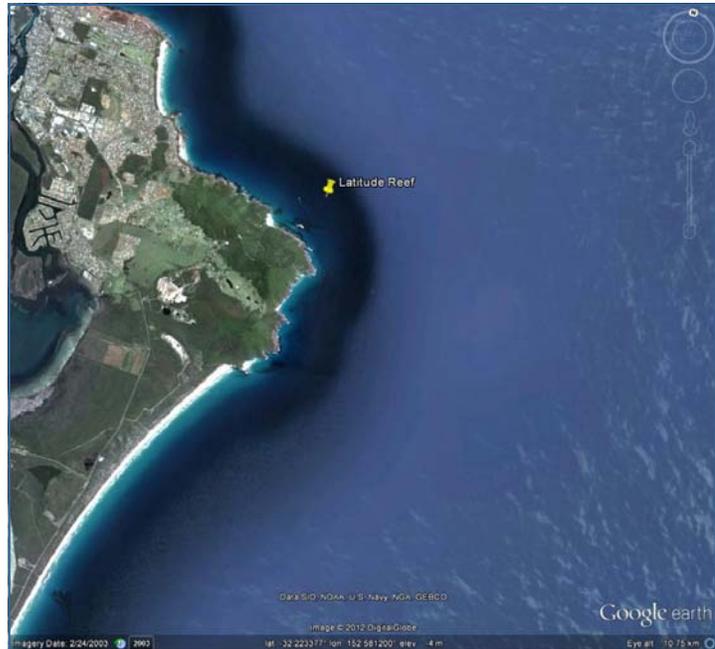
TIME: Morning

NARRATIVE: Chai Griffin was the third diver to look at the shark which was lying under an overhang on the reef. Without apparent provocation, the shark swam at Chai and bit him on the wrist. The shark immediately released the diver and swam off.

INJURY: The wound consisted of three punctures, and two punctures with shallow lacerations to the diver's wrist. A tooth fragment of the shark was embedded in the wound.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a 1.2-metre wobbegong shark. Australian divers commonly see wobbegong sharks lying on the seabed in caves and under ledges. The sharks usually show no aggression, but they do have sharp teeth and may bite if touched or provoked.

CASE INVESTIGATORS: Terry and Valerie Peake, Shark Research Institute



X-ray of Chai Griffin's wrist showing the tooth fragment



Image © C. Bento



Image © M. McGrouther

Bite marks on Chai Griffin's wrist from a small wobbegong shark