

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 2004.08.21

DATE: Saturday August 21, 2004

LOCATION: The incident took place in the South Atlantic Ocean opposite the Acaiaca Building near Posto 10 (i.e. lifeguard watch tower 10) at Boa Viagem Beach, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil.

NAME: Wagner da Silva

DESCRIPTION: He is a 24-year-old male, a tourist from São Paulo.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a sunny and warm day with no sign of rain.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 31% of the Moon was illuminated.

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was still muddy due to the typical strong winds of August.

ENVIRONMENT: The incident took place in what is considered one of the 'safer' areas of Boa Viagem Beach.

NARRATIVE: Wagner da Silva, disregarding two shark signs warning that the area was considered dangerous for bathers, went beyond the reefs to an area that was totally forbidden to bathers, and he was bitten by a shark. This is the first shark attack on a tourist.

INJURY: The bather's calf was bitten and he sustained injuries to both hands.

TREATMENT: The bather will not lose his leg, but will require plastic surgery after the healing process.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

SOURCES: Local press; Steve Kingstone, BBC

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Paulo Mariano Lopes, Global Shark Accident File

NOTE: Before the 1990s, there were virtually no attacks at Recife. But since 1992, there have been many incidents along a 20-km (12.5-mile) stretch of coast. While there are more shark incidents in Australia, a statistically higher proportion of incidents in Pernambuco are fatal because they involve bull sharks, an aggressive species that inhabits shallow coastal waters in the area.

To understand the rise in shark incidents, the state of Pernambuco funded an investigation that has focused on the long-term ecological effects of a new port, to the south of Recife.

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Wagner da Silva

Chico Porto/JC Image

Porto Suape opened for business in 1984, and today handles more than four million tonnes of cargo per year. To facilitate its initial construction, two freshwater estuaries - which had discharged into the Atlantic Ocean - were sealed off.

"Female bull sharks used to enter those estuaries to give birth," says Fabio Hazin, a marine biologist and head of the state-funded monitoring committee. "From when the port was built, we believe a number of females moved north to the next estuary - which discharges on to the stretch of beach where the attacks happened." Based on that finding, local human rights lawyers are considering a symbolic legal challenge to the state of Pernambuco, with the aim of securing compensation for the victims of attacks.

The government is under pressure to act over the attacks. "Until now, not one victim has received compensation," says Sergio Murilo, a lawyer and the head of the Safe Beach Project - a local campaign group. "These people have lost limbs because of attacks, and they're getting no assistance. "They need medical care and help getting a job. Compensation is about guaranteeing their right to a normal life."

The Safe Beach Project has also proposed a solution to Recife's shark problem. It wants the local authorities to partition off a short section of beach using heavy-duty nets out to sea. Electromagnetic buoys would also deter - but not kill - the sharks.

Similar schemes have been tried in South Africa and Australia, but the idea has met with opposition in Recife. "The problem with nets is that they wouldn't only stop sharks," says marine biologist Fabio Hazin. "Other creatures like dolphins and turtles would also get tangled up."

Tourist is attacked by Shark in Boa Viagem

Turista é atacado por tubarão em Boa Viagem

O comerciante Wagner da Silva, 25 anos, que mora em São Paulo, tomava banho de mar na frente do Edifício Portugal. Ele sofreu ferimentos nas mãos e na perna direita, foi levado para o HR e não corre risco de morrer

Mais um ataque de tubarão – o sexto deste ano – ocorreu ontem à tarde na Praia de Boa Viagem, na Zona Sul do Recife. A vítima foi o comerciante Wagner da Silva, 25 anos, o primeiro turista entre os 45 casos contabilizadas desde 1992. O peixe mordeu as mãos e a perna direita de Wagner, morador de São Paulo, que se submeteu a uma cirurgia reparadora no Hospital da Restauração (HR) e não corre risco de morrer.

O incidente ocorreu por volta das 13h, em frente ao Edifício Portugal, na Avenida Boa Viagem, nº 3.500. O comerciante se encontrava além dos arrecifes, com dois parentes, quando o tubarão surgiu. “Foi tudo de repente. Wagner estava sozinho, um pouco mais no fundo, quando começou a gritar. Puxamos ele até a praia e só então vimos os ferimentos”, contou Demócrito Veras da Silva, 35, tio do rapaz. A vítima estava com água na cintura, a uma profundidade de cerca de um metro.

O tubarão, segundo pesquisadores da Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco (UFRPE), era provavelmente um tigre com cerca de 1,5 metro. “As marcas da mordida do tigre são triangulares, enquanto as do cabeça-chata, a outra espécie de tubarão responsável pelos ataques, são pontiagudas”, explica o engenheiro de pesca Fábio Hazin, professor da UFRPE e coordenador do Comitê Estadual de Monitoramento de Incidente com Tubarões (Cemit).

Wagner, que nasceu em São Paulo, é filho de pernambucanos e costuma passar férias todos os anos no Estado, em casa de parentes em Tabira, no Sertão, e em Candeias, no Grande Recife. Ele mora em Diadema, na Grande São Paulo, onde atua no setor de armazéns. A tia do rapaz, Maria Leônia Veras, 49, reclamou que não havia advertência sobre o risco de ataques no local do incidente. “Não tinha nenhuma placa. Acho que os próprios barraqueiros podiam orientar sobre esse risco”, sugere.

A placa educativa mais próxima fica a cerca de 300 metros, em frente ao Edifício Acaiaca. Ela conta que o grupo pretendia tomar banho nas imediações da Igrejinha de Piedade, mas acabaram indo para Boa Viagem. Um salva-vida, segundo o Corpo de Bombeiros, estaria se dirigindo aos banhistas para pedir a eles que saíssem da área, quando o incidente ocorreu.

Embora esteja no período de maior incidência de ataques, que se estende de julho a setembro, o incidente de ontem fugiu ao padrão. De acordo com as pesquisas da UFRPE, a maioria dos casos ocorreu na maré-alta, na Luas Cheias ou Nova, quando chove e no início ou fim da tarde. O de ontem foi às 13h, a maré estava baixa e a Lua, entrando na fase Quarto Crescente. August 22, 2004

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Tourist is attacked by Shark in Boa Viagem (Google translation)

The trader Wagner Da Silva, 25 years, that deferred payment in São Paulo, took bath of sea in the front of the Portugal Building. He suffered wounds in the hands and in the right leg, he was led for the HR and he does not run risk to die

Plus an attack of Tubarão (shark) - sixth of this year - occurred yesterday to the afternoon in the

beach of Boa Viagem, in the South Zone of Recife. The victim was the trader Wagner Da Silva, 25 years, the first tourist enters the 45 cases entered since 1992. The fish bit the hands and the right leg of Wagner, inhabitant of São Paulo, that if submitted to a surgery repairman in the Hospital of Restauração (HR) and risk does not run to die.

The incident occurred for return of 13h, in front of the Portugal Building, in the Good Avenue Trip, nº 3.500. The trader if found beyond the reefs, with two relatives, when the shark appeared. "He was everything suddenly. Wagner was alone, a little more in the deep one, when she started to cry out. We pull it until the beach and alone then we saw the wounds", counted to Democritus Veras Da Silva, 35, uncle of the youngster. The victim was with water in the waist, to a depth of about a meter.

The shark, according to researchers of the Agricultural Federal University of Pernambuco (UFRPE), was probably a tiger with about 1,5 meter. "The marks of the bite of the tiger are triangular, while of the head-boat, to another species of responsible shark for the attacks, they are pontiagudas", the engineer explains of fishes Fábio Hazin, professor of the UFRPE and coordinator of the State Committee of Monitoramento de Incidente with Tubarões (Cemit).

Wagner, who was born in São Paulo, is son of pernambucanos and costuma to pass vacation in the State every year, in house of relatives in Tabira, the Hinterland, and Candeias, Great Recife. It deferred payment in Diadema, in the Great São Paulo, where it acts in the sector of warehouses. The aunt of the youngster, Maria Leônia Veras, 49, complained that she did not have warning on the risk of attacks in the place of the incident. "She did not have no plate. I find that the proper barraqueiros could guide on this risk", suggests.

The next warning placard is about 300 meters, in front of the Acaiaca Building. It counts that the group intended to take bath in the immediacy of the Igreja de Piedade, but had finished going for Boa Viagem. A save-life, according to Body of Firemen, would be if directing the swimmers to ask for they who left the area, when the incident occurred.

Although it is in the period of bigger incidence of attacks, that if extends of July the September, the incident of yesterday ran away to the standard. In accordance with the research of the UFRPE, the majority of the cases occurred in the tide-high one, in Full Moons or New, when it rains and at the beginning or end of the afternoon. Of yesterday it was to 13h, the tide was low and the Moon, entering in the phase Increasing Room.

SOURCE: JC Online, August 22, 2004