

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2005.11.21](#)

DATE: Monday, November 21, 2005

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at an unguarded beach about 150 yards north of Jensen Beach, Martin County, Florida, USA.

27.3°N, 80.2°W

NAME: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: He is a male in his 30s from Miami, Florida.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 14h49, the sky was mostly cloudy and visibility was 10 miles. The air temperature was 82°F, dew point 70°F, humidity 74%, sea level pressure 29.74 inches, and wind direction was WSW at eight mph.

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbeous. Last Quarter, November 23, 2005

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was murky.

ENVIRONMENT: In the spring of 2005, when the waves began reclaiming the sediments that were used to fill Treasure Coast beaches, the normally aquamarine and clear nearshore waters turned gray with silt and calcium carbonate. Subsequently, freshwater discharges from Taylor Creek and the St. Lucie River rendered nearshore waters almost brackish, and added a deep tannin stain to the already perturbed coastal waters. As result, in October 2005, the local chapter of Surfrider Foundation wrote to state and federal agencies expressing concerns about the chronic turbidity resulting from the FEMA/St. Lucie County use of poor-quality sediment for a 3.7 mile emergency beach restoration project (currently under investigation by FL Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)).

According to Bruce Shaw, Martin County marine safety captain, there was no sign of “excessive bait fish swimming in the ocean.” Flags flying at county beaches also warned beachgoers of rip currents and men-of-war.

TIME: 14h30

NARRATIVE: No details. The beach remained open after the incident.

INJURY: The surfer was bitten on the left foot, sustaining puncture wounds. “It was a good bite, but pretty minor for a shark bite,” life guard Mike Mammen said. The bite did not appear to be serious according to a press report.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: The surfer was taken to Martin Memorial Medical Center where the wound required several stitches to close.

SPECIES: Not identified. Said to involve a two- to three-foot shark that “spent several hours swimming just offshore Monday afternoon before biting the surfer”. Steve Ensor and his family were sitting on the beach watching about a dozen surfers while the shark swam



closer to the shore for several hours before biting the man. Ensor and his family said the shark appeared to be body surfing. It was so close to the shore at one point that most of the animal's body was exposed, they said. "I've been sitting here for 25 years and I've never seen a shark body-surf like that before," Ensor said. "They all knew about it," Ensor said of the surfers. "We watched it for a few hours." After the man was bitten by the shark nine surfers stayed in the water and continued to surf.

"I've been watching and I haven't seen anything," said Thomas Danti, 19, while taking a break on the beach. Mike Gagnon, 32, of West Palm Beach left the beach after the bite. He said another surfer cut his back earlier in the day. "There was blood all over the place," Gagnon said.

SOURCES: Stuart News, November 22, 2005

Palm Beach Post, November 22, 2005

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/treasurecoast/content/local_news/epaper/2005/11/21/shark.html