



ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE: [GSAF 2006.05.24](#)

DATE: Wednesday May 24, 2006

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean on a reef off the northeast coast of Lanai, near the Club Lanai facilities, Hawaii, USA.

Latitude: 20.8293'N, Longitude -156.921'W

NAME: Andres Balmacda

DESCRIPTION: He is a 15-year-old male.

SUPPORT BOAT: *Puff Daddy*, a 24-foot Century

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 9% of the Moon was illuminated.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was calm and the water was clear, but a small swell had turned other reef areas murky, and the diving conditions were less than ideal.

DEPTH OF WATER: 10 to 15 feet

TIME: 16h30

NARRATIVE: Andres Balmacda and a Lahainaluna classmate had gone out on a quick dive trip with Dennis Blevins, a Lahaina man who said he regularly takes a group of teens out fishing and diving. Blevins and the teens left from the Mala Wharf launching ramp after school and were in the water for less than an hour. Blevins said he had returned to the boat, while Balmacda and a classmate, 16-year-old Carl Miller, continued diving nearby.

Miller said the dive trip had been intended to bring back fish for eating. Both teens were carrying three-pronged spears, but they hadn't been able to hit anything when they saw the gray reef shark. Miller said the shark appeared to be "swimming funny" and the two young divers continued to observe it.

Balmacda said Miller had poked at the shark first. "We were just swimming around looking at it, then he poked at it and then when I did, it turned and bit me," Balmacda said. "I was kind of shocked at first." The shark fled after biting Balmacda on the knee. "It just did a 180-degree thing and took off real fast," said Miller.

INJURY: The diver sustained a laceration and bites to his left knee covering an "area about the size of a palm." The injury to the knee didn't appear to be too serious, he said. But Blevins said the laceration exposed the kneecap

TREATMENT: Paramedics responding to the call administered a painkiller and Balmacda was transported to Maui Memorial Medical Center where his injuries were sutured Wednesday evening.

SPECIES: A small grey reef shark, about five to eight feet in length. This species, common in the offshore reefs around Hawaii, is rarely aggressive, but when it feels threatened, it displays include an arched back, lowered pectoral fins and exaggerated swimming movements.

NOTE: This is a provoked incident. The shark displayed no aggression toward the diver until it was poked.

SOURCE: Edwin Tanji, Maui News, Thursday, May 25, 2006
<http://www.mauinews.com/story.aspx?id=20065>