

ACTIVITY: Boogie boarding

CASE: [GSAF 2006.07.08.b](#)

DATE: Saturday July 8, 2006

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off the north end of DeBordieu near Pawleys Island, Georgetown County, South Carolina, USA. Located midway between Myrtle Beach and historic Georgetown, DeBordieu is a 2,700-acre, private, oceanfront, country-club community with a golf course and private nature preserve.

Longitude: -79.1485221

Latitude: 33.3750841

NAME: Caelin Lacy

DESCRIPTION: She is a 14-year-old female from West Palm Beach, Florida, on summer vacation with her family. An avid surfer, soccer player, volleyball team member and tennis player, Caelin looks forward to trying out for several teams when she returns to her home in West Palm Beach, and starts 9th grade this fall. Her family owns a beach house at DeBordieu Colony and the family spends the summer months here.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 10h55, Georgetown recorded partly cloudy skies and visibility of 10 miles [16.1 km]. The air temperature was 78.8°F [26°C], dew point 57.2°F, humidity 47%; sea level pressure 30.20 inches [1022.6 hPa], and wind direction was NNE at 11.5 mph [18.5 km/h] with gusts to 19.6 mph [31.5 km/h].

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 91% of the Moon is Illuminated.

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was “choppy” according to Caelin.

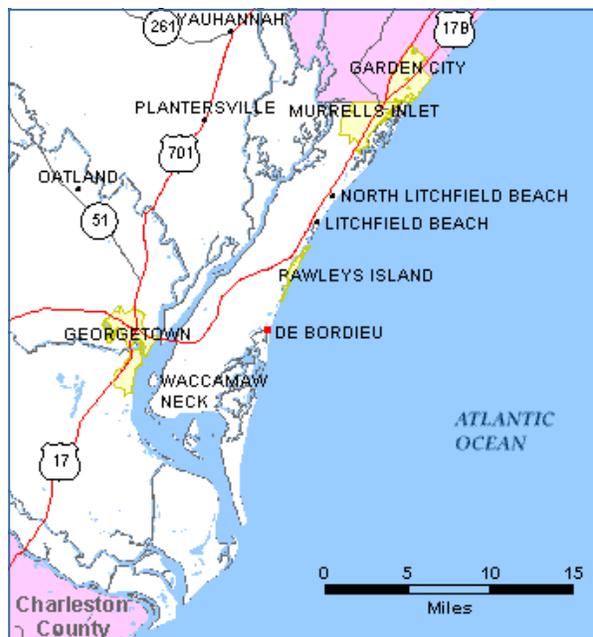
ENVIRONMENT: “A group of bait fish had swum in around me, and I hadn't seen them, and a bunch of sharks did too, a pack,” said Caelin. “They were feeding.”

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 25 feet

DEPTH OF WATER: Chest-deep

TIME: After 11h00

NARRATIVE: Caelin had just caught a great wave and was looking for another when she saw “bubbles” in the ocean and the thought crossed her mind that it was a shark, but she figured she was just being paranoid and laughed it off. “Another good wave was coming and I started kicking,” she said. “All the sudden, I turned around and something had grabbed



Caelin Lacy holds a redfish she caught while fishing her father two days before her accident.

hold of my [left] foot. And it tore up my foot but it didn't thrash or anything. I kicked it with my right foot, and it let go immediately." Scared but thinking quickly, she pulled as much of her body up onto the boogie board as possible and started screaming for help. "[The shark] came up to me in clear view, on top of the water," Caelin said. "I managed to get my arms and legs tucked under my stomach, so there was no part of me dangling off the edge." When I first got bit, it didn't hurt because it hadn't really clicked yet, didn't seem real. Then when I looked back at my foot, all the blood in the water, I started screaming and I freaked out. I screamed once - well I screamed a bunch," she said. "I blacked out after I screamed so I don't remember anything, and the next thing I remember was being on the sand."

Her mother, Janice, was on the beach with her three younger sisters, Emma, Glenna and Hannah, when she heard Caelin's screams. She jumped out of her chair and started yelling for someone to call 911. Janice sprinted to the water's edge and splashed into the water and reached Caelin. "I grabbed her by her wrists and yanked her really hard," Janice said. Caelin's mother and an unidentified man pulled Caelin out of the water, onto the beach and placed her on her boogie board.

INJURY: Lacerations to left foot. Two tendons were severed and one was partly torn.

FIRST AID: "After I got to the beach, the pain was like, it was so bad, unbearable, but, um, I saw huge gashes in my foot, and it wasn't what I was expecting. In the water, it felt like chicken scratches. And I didn't expect it to be this bad." One thing that really struck Janice Lacy was how so many people on the beach at the time lent a helping hand in their time of need. She says there happened to be four doctors there, including a surgeon and a pediatrician. Many beachgoers - including the vacationing doctors - rushed to help. The doctors stopped Caelin's bleeding, someone held up a beach umbrella to keep her in the shade, and someone else chatted with the girl to keep her mind off her foot while awaiting the ambulance.

TREATMENT: Caelin was transported by ambulance to Georgetown Memorial Hospital (606 Black River Road Georgetown, South Carolina 29440, Tel: 843-527-7000) where she received 70 stitches in her leg and ankle, and three tendons torn or severed by the bite were surgically repaired during two procedures. No major tendons or ligaments were completely torn. She was released from the hospital on Thursday morning.

SPECIES: At the time of the incident, Caelin identified the shark as a five- to six-foot spinner shark. In a later interview she said it may have been a bull shark. Species found in the area include the bull shark, spinner shark, blacktip shark, blacknose shark, Atlantic sharpnose shark, finetooth shark, sandbar shark, lemon shark, tiger shark (periodically), nurse shark and hammerhead sharks, including the bonnethead shark.

"Most like a small blacktip or spinner shark. The arch of the initial strike on the upper portion of her left foot indicates an animal maybe no more than five feet in length. The second strike below (raking and tearing) also are indicative of a small shark. Not having any jaws of those species available to me, I cannot be more definitive than that. " ... *Ralph Collier*

“I guesstimated Caelin's shoe size to be an 8 — give or take half a shoe size. If correct, then the points of insertion of the shark's teeth were nine to ten millimeters apart, top and bottom. The measurement would pretty much exclude a bull shark, dusky shark and sandbar shark which normally have greater distances between crowns in the upper teeth than in the lower, and tends to implicate a blacktip shark, spinner shark or silky shark. Since the upper jaw imprint looks more cut than torn I assume it was a blacktip and not a spinner because the upper teeth of the latter are even less likely to cut. Based on comparison... the animal was no more than six feet in length, possibly smaller.”

...Erich Ritter, Ph.D, *Global Shark Attack File*

NOTE: Not letting this experience keep her out of the water, Caelin also looks forward to returning to the sea. She hopes her experience will not deter others from enjoying the beach and the ocean. “I don't think people should be afraid,” she said. “Don't let it control you. Go out and have fun, but be careful. You're more likely to be struck by lightning than you are to be attacked by sharks,” she said.

SOURCES: [:http://www.wltx.com/news/story.aspx?storyid=39682](http://www.wltx.com/news/story.aspx?storyid=39682); Charlotte Observer, July 10, 2006, Palm Beach Post, July 11, 2006, <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/content/nation/epaper/2006/07/11/0711shark.html>; Herald Today, July 13, 2006

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