

**ACTIVITY:** Wading

**CASE:** **GSAF 2007.05.26**

**DATE:** Saturday May 26, 2007

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean near Pompano Drive at Garden City Beach, Horry County, South Carolina, USA. 33°34.5'N, 78°59.8'W

**NAME:** Susan Dornquast

**DESCRIPTION:** She is a 55-year-old female from Fort Worth, Texas. She is 5'2", weighs 120 to 121 pounds. She was wearing a two-piece swim outfit: solid blue swim shorts and a blue top with one white strip across the middle. She had no injuries prior to the incident and did not have her menstrual period. At the time of the incident, she was visiting a cousin, Barbara Wyman of Darlington.



## **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At 16h55, Myrtle Beach recorded clear skies and visibility of 10 miles [16.1 km]. The air temperature was 60.8°F [16°C], dew point 57.2°F [14°C], humidity 88%, sea level pressure 30.23 in [1023.6 hPa], and there was no wind.

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, May 31, 2007

**ENVIRONMENT:** There was a rock formation less than a mile away and to Susan's right "as she was standing seaward" and a fishing pier to her left "more than a mile away".

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea had a blue-green look to it from the beach, but was actually brownish and murky when in the water. The sea temperature was 75° to 76°F (estimated), the water was calm and no channel was present. Mean low tide at Myrtle Beach took place at 10h25, high tide at 16h42. When Susan was bitten by the shark, there were about 15 to 25 people on the beach. There were approximately eight people in the water, including two kayakers to the left "as she was standing seaward." The kayakers were about 50 feet from her and farther out to sea. There was also a woman and a small child to her left "as she was standing seaward". The woman and child were about 25 to 30 feet from Susan and closer to shore.

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Knee-deep

**TIME:** 17h00

**NARRATIVE:** Susan Dornquast and her husband, Donald Dornquast, just posed for a picture in knee-deep water. Then Donald returned to shore to assist Barbara Wyman with the camera. Susan had been in the water for 35 minutes. She was standing, facing seaward and watching the waves come in, with her legs slightly apart (right leg slightly forward, left leg slightly back). "I just kind of turned around to watch the waves, and that's when the shark hit me," Susan says she felt the shark hit her left leg and then her right leg was bitten. "Then I seen him scurry off, and that's when I knew he got my other leg," Susan said. [Case investigator notes: From the looks of the wound, it appeared that the shark came from Susan's right side or right front side. The laceration to the right leg is on the inner side of the calf and the puncture wounds are on the outer part of the lower right leg.] Susan said that she didn't see the shark approach, "All I seen was the bubbles from the water," she said. "I

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didn't see a fin or nothing on the shark; it went away fast." Susan said she started toward shore before falling into the water. "I was crawling, trying to get away because I was scared the shark would come back. I never let out a big scream or nothing. I just kept yelling, 'Don, Don, Come get me! I was hit by a shark!'"

**INJURY:** Lacerations to lower right leg..

**FIRST AID:** Barbara Wyman said she and Donald could tell Susan was distressed. "You could tell by her face that it was something out of the ordinary," she said. Donald ran to his wife in the water and, with the help of another man, carried her back to shore. "I was just hoping and praying that she would have a leg," said Donald "Getting hit by a shark, you always hear about how they take the whole thing. Once we saw that she could move her feet, her toes and everything, we knew that she was going to have use of her leg," he said.



*Susan Donquist*

While Barbara ran to her car to get her cell phone and dial 911, Susan applied pressure to her right leg, which was wrapped with three towels. "I was thanking my God above me that he had his guardian angels looking down on me and thanking him that I had my feet," she said. She said she wasn't in any pain.

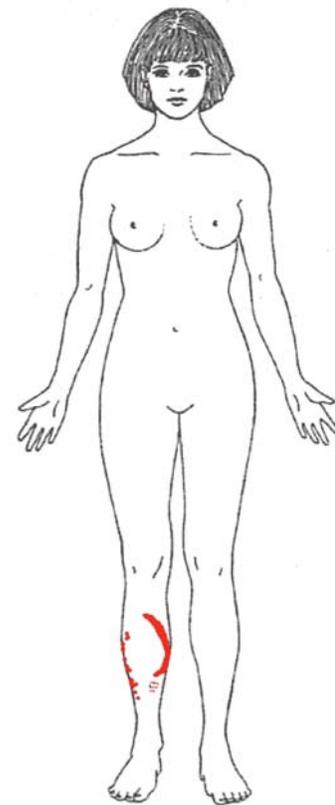
**TREATMENT:** Susan was taken to Waccamaw Community Hospital by ambulance, arriving there 15 minutes after she was bitten. At the hospital, her injuries cleaned were repaired by Dr. Matthew J. Metz in a 90-minute surgical procedure. In all, 40 sutures were required. On Saturday night, she was reported to be in stable condition according to Scott Gosnell of Garden City-Murrels Inlet Fire Department.

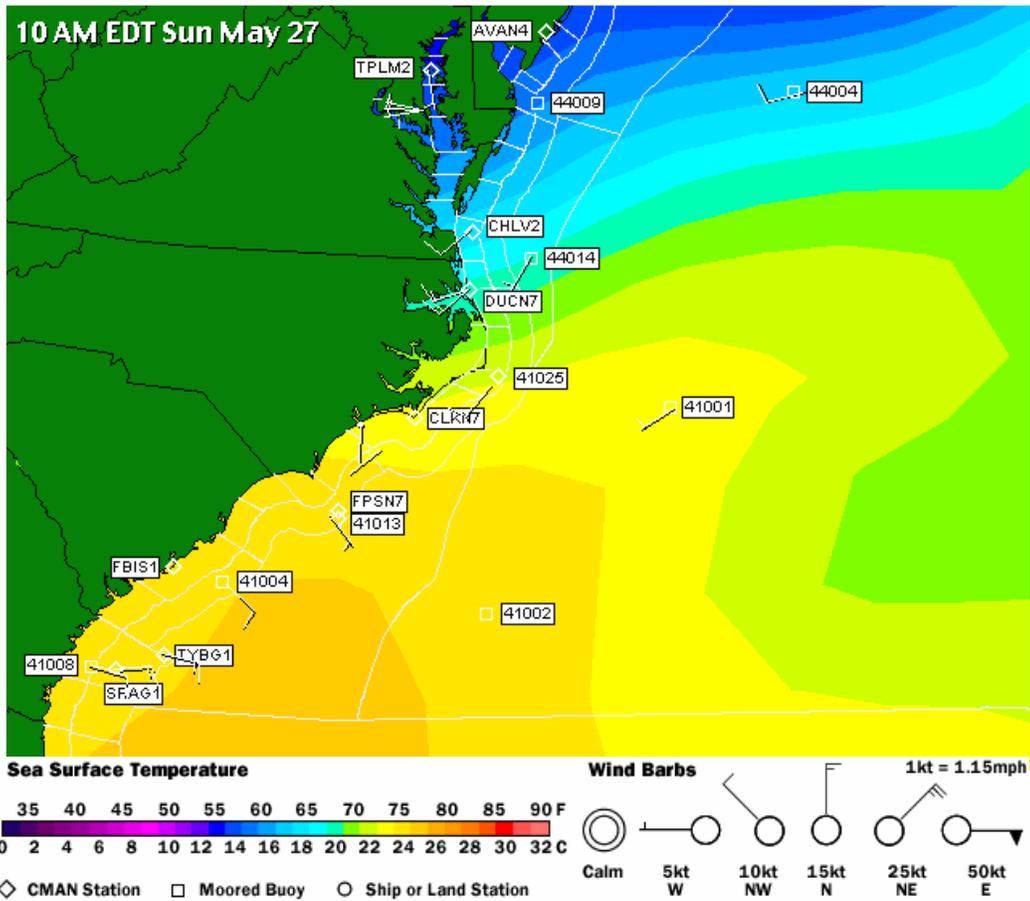
**SPECIES:** The shark had serrated teeth in its upper jaw, grasping teeth in its lower jaw. Susan said the shark was "a grayish color. They say that with a nine-inch bite, it was about a five-foot shark," she said. Immediately after biting Susan, the shark swam seawards. Susan believes the bite was not an "attack", but an accident, "the shark mistook my leg for a fish."

**SOURCES:** Aliana Ramos, (Myrtle Beach) Sun News, May 27, 2007; Monique Newton, Charlotte Observer, June 1, 2007

**NOTE:** The S.C. Department of Natural Resources has not had any other reports of shark bites this year, said Lt. Robert McCullough, a spokesman for the DNR. But, he said, the DNR is not mandated to keep track of annual shark bites.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Clay Creswell, Global Shark Accident File





**Susan was standing in knee-deep water, facing seaward when she was bitten by the shark.**

**Susan thinks the shark may have come from her left side, but it appears the shark may have approached from the right or right front. The slash wound was to her inner calf, and the puncture wounds were to the outer portion of the lower left leg.**

**Rock formation to Susan's right (a mile away), and to her left was more than a mile away. There were two kayakers to her left 50' or more from her and father out. There was also a woman and child to her left about 25' away and closer inshore.**

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