

ACTIVITY: Swimming
CASE: [GSAF 2007.12.14](#)
DATE: Friday December 14, 2007
LOCATION: South Bondi Beach, New South Wales, Australia.
33°53'60"S, 151°16'60"E

NAME: Scott Wright
DESCRIPTION: A 34-year-old male from Hobart

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 20h30, Sydney recorded partly cloudy skies and visibility of 6.2 miles [10 km]. The air temperature was 68°F [20°C], dew point 55.4°F [13 °C], humidity 64%, sea level pressure 30.15 in [1021 hPa], and wind direction was South at 16.1 mph [25.9 km/h].

MOON PHASE: New Moon, December 10, 2007

ENVIRONMENT: Bondi lifeguards said they often saw sharks in deeper water, but rarely through the nets and close to the beach.

TIME: 20h30 [8:30 p.m.]

NARRATIVE: Scott Wright was swimming at South Bondi beach, in Sydney's east, last night when he felt a shark "The shark attacked me, grabbed hold of my arm and wouldn't let go, so I ended up punching him in the nose and trying to fight him off," said Wright. "I thought I was a goner, I thought I was gonna die," he added.

Wright managed to make his way ashore where he passed out from pain in a cave that he had temporarily made home with a mattress and his belongings. He lay there until morning when he was found by his girlfriend.

INJURY: Surfer Ben Davies, who was at the beach when Wright's girlfriend found him said the wounds looked like a shark bite. "He had these big gouges out of his arm," he said. "As soon as I saw the gouges I thought 'he's been bitten by a shark'".

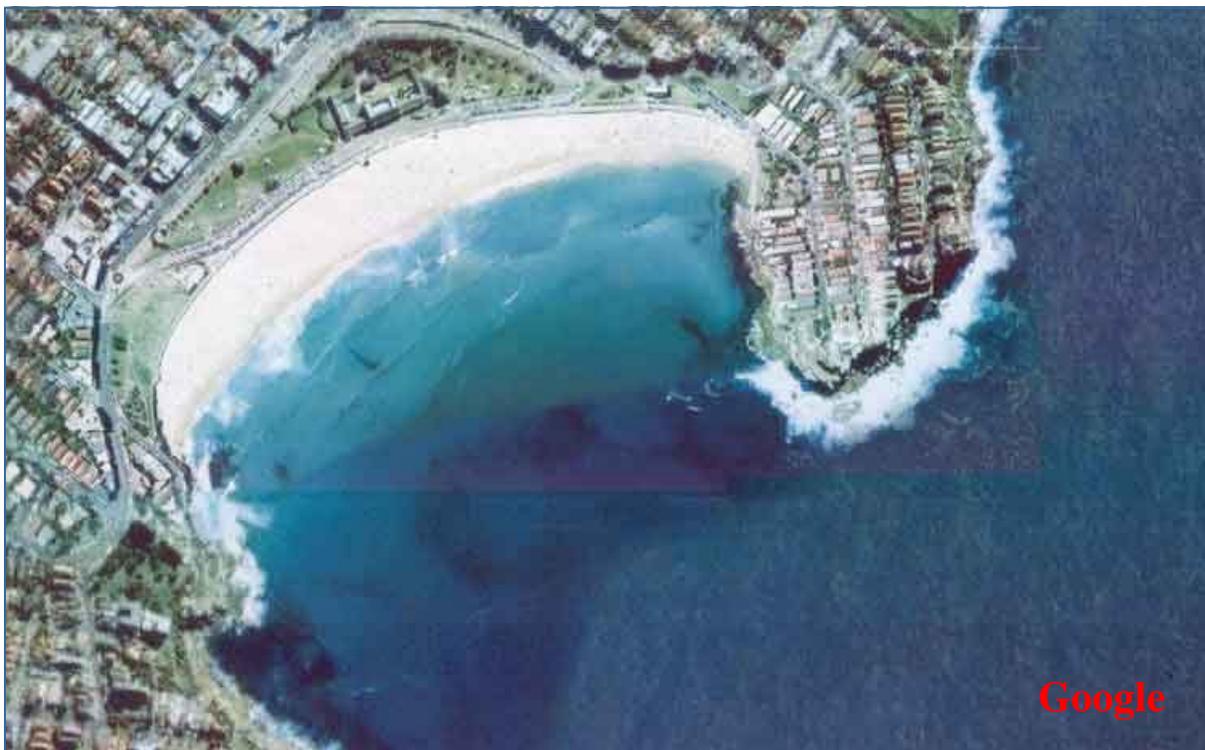


FIRST AID: Lifeguards were notified at 10h40 on Saturday and an ambulance crew called, treating the man for lacerations and shock and taking him to hospital.

TREATMENT: Wright was taken to St Vincent Hospital where his injury was repaired with 42 sutures on Saturday night.

SPECIES: The wounds are widely spaced and appear very shallow; they do not match any shark bite patterns in the GSAF files. Local shark experts, however, disagree with GSAF; they determined that Wright had most likely been bitten by a wobbegong shark. One lifeguard, who didn't give his name, said Wright could have been killed if the shark had been bigger. "That's a shark," the lifeguard said. "Not a big one, because he wouldn't have had his arm left." "He went swimming in the dark, which we strongly discourage" lifeguard Ryan Clark said. "We have no idea what type of shark it was but, judging by some of the lacerations, it was probably under six feet [1.8 metres]."

SOURCES: Sydney Morning Herald, December 16, 2007
Daily Telegraph, December 19, 2007
The Daily Telegraph, December 21, 2007, *et al*



Bondi Beach, Sydney, Australia

Savage Bondi shark was, in fact, a wobbegong

*Article from Daily Telegraph
By Steve Gee
December 19, 2007 04:20pm*

His gripping escape from a shark at Bondi was the first attack at the iconic beach in 78 years.

But three days after worldwide headlines were sparked by the attack that left Tasmanian backpacker Scott Wright with more than 40 stitches in his right arm, experts now believe the "predator" was a docile wobbegong shark.



Wright, 34, was swimming beside the rocks at South Bondi about 8.30pm on Friday when a 2m shark latched onto his right arm. The unemployed itinerant has told how he fought with the shark for a short time before punching it in the nose and escaping.

It was the first shark attack at Bondi since 14-year-old bodysurfer Colin Stewart died after being attacked on January 12, 1929. It came after a spate of shark sightings by offshore swimmers in recent weeks.

But as Wright yesterday recovered from the attack that left three deep gouges in his forearm, shark experts and lifeguards said the predator was most likely a shore-hugging wobbegong. "If it was something else it would have taken his arm off," said Bondi lifeguard Bruce Hopkins, quick to dispel any fears a predator was preying on Bondi bodysurfers.

"It would have to be a wobbegong because there were no puncture marks on the lower arm," added colleague Aaron Graham, who was on duty when Wright wandered over to lifesavers to report the attack on Saturday. "It was probably hiding under the ledge when he jumped in and has grabbed him. They were fair sized bites."

Wright told lifeguards he went for a night swim on Friday, while camping at Bondi. He was attacked shortly after entering the water. "The shark grabbed hold of my arm and wouldn't let go, so I ended up punching him in the nose and trying to fight him off," he told a film crew from the Bondi Rescue television series. "I thought I was a goner. I thought I was going to die."

The 34-year-old managed to scramble back to shore, heavily bleeding after the attack, but collapsed on the rocks, only waking the following morning when he notified lifesavers. He was taken to St Vincents Hospital, where a doctor inserted 42 stitches.

Manly Oceanworld shark diving instructor Richard Ilesley said yesterday wobbegong were common along the east coast, close to shore. Although they have two rows of teeth similar to reef sharks, they are not serrated. "It's sort of like a mouth full of forks," he said. "In some cases where they bite people they can get a lock jaw and there are cases where people who have had to go to the local surf club with a wobbegong hanging off their leg. But they are not a particularly aggressive species. Its like a stingray. If you step on them you know about it."

Lifeguards said yesterday the attack would not change anything at the iconic beach, with no plans to flush out the shark.

Locals suggested Wright was a victim of his own stupidity. "Everyone know you don't swim at night. That's feeding time," Sarah Wilson said.

<http://www.news.com.au:80/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,22948979-5001021,00.html>

Shark tale gets even murkier The window did it

SCOTT WRIGHT'S Bondi Beach shark attack claim gets murkier by the day.

Last weekend the 34-year-old itinerant was thrust into the international spotlight as the first known shark attack victim at the beach since 1929.

By Tuesday night he had found himself locked up in a police cell facing theft-related charges. Then, on Thursday afternoon, the Herald revealed that his fantastic survival story was nothing but a fishy tale.

The deep, bloody gouges on his right arm were not marks left by a hungry, ferocious shark but the result of an encounter with broken glass. It turns out he was injured while smashing the window of a property more than 1000 kilometres away - in Hobart - two days before he informed Bondi lifeguards of the supposed near-death experience.

A spokesman for Tasmania Police, Phil Pyke, said a Hobart officer had verified that the deep cuts on Wright's arms were caused when he damaged a window at a vacant building in an industrial area of Derwent Park.

Mr Pyke said Wright had refused medical treatment when ambulance officers attended the scene. He said police had not received any complaints from the owner of the building, which meant that no charges could be laid.

It is understood Wright, who bandaged up his own arm, travelled by plane the following day to Sydney, where he set up camp in a cave at Bondi Beach.

Wright is in jail after being refused bail on Wednesday at Central Local Court in relation to offences allegedly committed between Monday night and Tuesday morning at Noah's Backpackers in Bondi. Police allege he stole two wallets and keys before driving away in someone else's car. Wright is due to face court again on February 14

SOURCE: Jano Gibson, Sydney Morning Herald, December 19, 2007
<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/dumbdumb-dumbdumb-shark-bite-claim-shattered/2007/12/20/1197740447692.html>

Doubts emerge after Bondi Beach 'shark victim' arrested

A MAN who claimed he was mauled by a 2m shark at Bondi Beach has been arrested over a string of break-ins as doubts emerge about the attack. Hobart itinerant Scott Wright drew international headlines as Bondi's first shark victim in 78 years, after he claimed he had to fight off a 1.8m shark at South Bondi on Friday night.

Although initially dubious, lifeguards who examined three deep gashes on his right arm, said it appeared as though the 34-year-old may have been attacked by a docile wobbegong. However, the story began unravelling after police received a tip-off that Wright had allegedly been involved in break-ins at Bondi.

He faced Central Local Court on Tuesday charged with an aggravated serious indictable offence and car theft. He was remanded in custody until February 14. The arrest came after Wright faced the media on Saturday to tell how he was attacked as he swam in the shallows at South Bondi about 8.30pm on Friday.

The homeless man claimed he passed out and only awoke the next morning when he presented himself to volunteer lifesavers. He had 40 stitches at St Vincent's Hospital.

But sources yesterday claimed Wright, who was camping at Bondi with his girlfriend when the apparent attack occurred, suffered the injury from a broken window. A source told The Daily Telegraph she was convinced Wright concocted the shark attack to garner sympathy.

He had been placed in a Bondi hostel for two nights at the expense of the producers of Channel 10's Bondi Rescue because they felt sorry for him after he spoke of the shark attack.

SOURCE: Steve Gee, The Daily Telegraph, December 21, 2007
<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22958270-661,00.html>