

ACTIVITY: Body surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2008.07.13](#)

DATE: Sunday July 13, 2008

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Carolina Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina, USA.

34°N, 77.9°W

NAME: Donald Griffin

DESCRIPTION: He is a 52-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: Southport recorded no wind and clear skies until 17h00 when fog rolled in. The air temperature throughout the day was 68°F and humidity was 88%.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, July 18, 2008

ENVIRONMENT: Cpl. Simon Sanders, director of Carolina Beach Ocean Rescue, said dolphins were seen in the area where Griffin was swimming shortly before and after his rescue. Dolphins aren't usually a threat, he said. "But we have noticed this season of couple of dolphins with calves," Sanders said. "When they have young ones they can be more aggressive. But have we had a dolphin attack? No."

Sanders said the ocean floor was not ruled out as a contributor to Griffin's injuries, "We've got lifeguards down here who get cut on their faces from hitting the sandbar. I'm looking at one right now," Sanders said, yelling toward one of the participants in a national lifeguard competition being held at Carolina Beach this week.

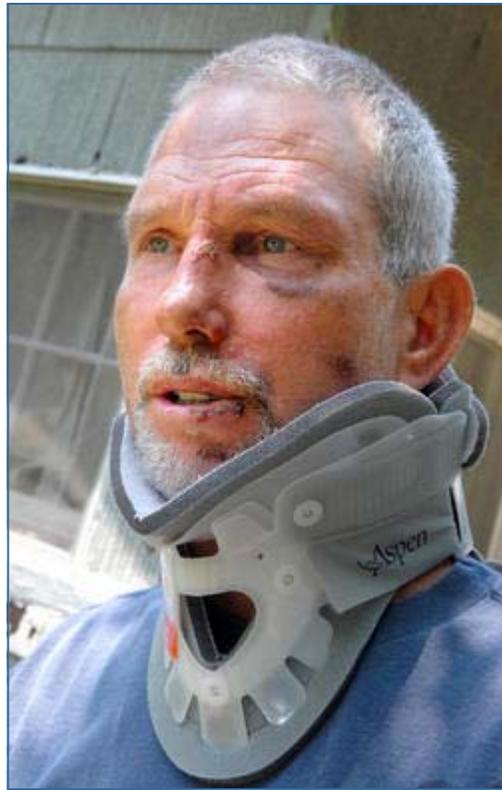
Although the occasional shark has been spotted off Carolina Beach this summer, according to Sanders, "we don't have any reason to believe that that's what this was," Sanders said. It has been three years since the last shark attack at Carolina Beach, Sanders said, adding that incident involved a swimmer who recovered after being bitten on the arm.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 50 or 60 feet

NARRATIVE: Griffin was swimming with his seven-year-old granddaughters, who had headed up onto the sand. He was about to join them when he spotted a wave too tempting to pass up. Then, he said, came the dark shadow shooting up through the water, followed by the impact and sharp pain. Stunned, Griffin sank below the surface, then was washed toward the beach where people rushed to his aid.

INJURY: Griffin sustained bruises, abrasions and some spinal and nerve damage.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Rescue workers carried Griffin off the beach but it is not known what further medical treatment was needed or provided.



Staff photo by Raul R. Rubiera
Donald Griffin, who was swimming with his 7-year-old at Carolina Beach on Sunday, says he was attacked by a shark.

SPECIES: Rescue workers told Griffin that he had been struck by a dolphin. “I told them don’t insult my intelligence,” Griffin said. “That was a shark.” Griffin, who has been going to Carolina Beach for about 30 years, said he may not have had more than a split-second look at what came up through the water — but he felt it. “I’ve taken some hits in my life, but nothing ever like this,” Griffin said. “I know what hit me, and it was a shark. A big shark.”

SOURCE: The Fayetteville Observer, Thursday, July 17, 2008,
<http://www.fayobserver.com/article?id=299408>

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Clay Creswell, Global Shark Accident File