

ACTIVITY: Snorkeling

CASE: GSAF 2009.01.12

DATE: Monday January 12, 2009

LOCATION: The incident took place under Windang Bridge at the mouth of the Illawarra river, New South Wales, Australia.

NAME: Steven Fogarty

DESCRIPTION: He is a 23-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, January 11, 2009

ENVIRONMENT: Lake Illawarra is a large coastal lagoon near the city of Wollongong, about 100 kilometres south of Sydney. The lake has a narrow tidal entrance to the sea at Windang.

DEPTH OF WATER: Two metres

TIME: 10h45

NARRATIVE: Steven Fogarty was snorkeling alone when he felt a nudge to his right calf. "Something just grabbed me from behind," he said. "I thought someone was playing a joke." Within seconds he realised it was something more serious. "All I could see was a white cloud with bubbles around it," he recalled. "I started screaming, got on my back and started back-peddalling. Something just grabbed me from behind. I saw the blood all over both feet and had a quick look to make sure both legs were there, and they were there," he said, adding that he "started swinging" punches at it. "I think I got one of them in. That's probably what got rid of him."

INJURY: 40 puncture wounds to his right calf, and abrasions to his fist (defense wounds).

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Mr Fogarty's cries for help were ignored by a number of people passing by on boats and over the bridge. He made his way to mud flats and was eventually rescued by Koonawarra fisherman Pete Holm, who hauled him into his boat. Mr Holm brought Mr Fogarty to safety on the northern bank of Lake Illawarra, east of Windang Bridge. There, waiting ambulance paramedics treated Mr Fogarty's injuries. He was taken to Shellharbour Hospital in a stable condition, his wounds were sutured and he was released.

SPECIES: Dr Peddemors, head of the shark research section of New South Wales' Department of Primary Industries, determined that the incident involved a dusky shark based on the size and shape of the tooth marks. He said that the shark had at least three goes at Steven's leg and its upper jaw left crescent-shaped wounds. "The distance between the teeth and the width of the jaw indicated it was 2m to 2.2m long. We know from our



Steven Fogarty

research at the DPI that dusky whalers do go into large estuaries and would be quite comfortable swimming around here," he said, adding that the shark was most likely competing for access to a school of fish.

SOURCES: Courier Mail, January 12, 2009, <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,24901100-29277,00.html>

Illawarra Mercury, January 17, 2009, <http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/news/local/news/general/dusky-whaler-behind-attack-expert/1409365.aspx>
et al



Photo by Andy Zakeli

Steven Fogarty and Dr Vic Peddemors

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Terry Peake, Global Shark Accident File



Steven Fogarty, after bandages were removed
Photo by Greg Totman



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