

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 2009.01.24.a

DATE: Saturday January 24, 2009

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at Second Beach, Port St. Johns, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

31°37,2'S, 29°33'E

NAME: Sikhanyiso Bangilizwe

DESCRIPTION: He was a 25-year-old male, a member of the Wild Coast Guards.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, January 26, 2009.

ENVIRONMENT: The attack took place on the Wild Coast, a region of deep gorges, impenetrable forests and mangrove swamps. Port St Johns is in a dramatic setting. The Umzimvubu River cuts a huge gorge right to the sea. It squeezes into a gorge between the red stone cliffs of twin mountains, the Thesiger and Sullivan, bastions on either side of the river mouth. Port St. Johns has three beaches. The Second Beach, five kilometres east of the village centre, is rimmed by evergreen rainforest and wild banana trees.

Long-time resident and local historian John Costello (incorrectly) said Port St Johns had never had sharks until two years ago. Costello said one possible reason for the sudden arrival of sharks was the problem of sewage flowing into the ocean and the lack of toilet facilities around the beach.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, January 26, 2009

TIME: 14h00

NARRATIVE: "He was catching waves in the water further from where I was and when we passed the waves, I heard his cries," said fellow lifeguard, Tshintshekile Nduve. "I saw he was in trouble and the shark on him. I saw blood and I went out of the water to get help." When lifeguards got a boat into the sea, it was too late, Nduve said.

Vuyo Maza, one of the lifeguards who sped to the scene by boat, said he was at the tower when the attack took place. "When we went out to the water Bangilizwe was dead, his body was badly injured, we could see his insides. It was the scariest thing I have ever seen," Maza said.

A fellow lifeguard, 32-year-old Gerald Mtakati, also witnessed the attack. "I just saw blood in the water and quickly grabbed a rubber duck. When I got to him, the shark had already bitten off his hand and his lower back, it was coming in for the third bite. By the time I got to him, he was not moving and the shark was on the other side heading towards him. He was in the centre, between me and the shark. The noise of the rubber duck scared off the shark but Bangilizwe was already dead."



Second Beach, Port St. Johns

Wild Coast Guards managing director Khaya Mjo reported that the beach was closed for swimming after the attack.

INJURY: Fatal. The shark severed the man's right arm, shoulder, and part of his back and buttock.

SPECIES: The incident was believed to involve a tiger shark, but Jeremy Cliff of the Natal Sharks Board thought the incident may have involved a Zambesi shark. However, photographs of the injuries sustained confirm that a tiger shark was responsible.