

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2009.11.25](#)

DATE: Wednesday November 25, 2009

LOCATION: The accident took place in the Pacific Ocean at Huntington Beach, Orange County, California, USA.

NAME: Kenneth Hall

DESCRIPTION: He is a 49-year-old Caucasian male, a CPA from Spokane, Washington. He was wearing a black wetsuit.

SURFBOARD: He was using a white and green nine-foot long board.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER CONDITIONS: The air temperature was approximately 78°F. At 15h55, Los Alamitos recorded clear skies and visibility of 10 miles. The air temperature was 77.7°F, dew point 19.6 F, humidity 11%, sea level pressure 29.96 inches, and wind direction was WNW at 9.2 mph.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was approximately 56°F.

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, November 24, 2009

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 yards

DEPTH OF WATER: Four to five feet.

ENVIRONMENT: The accident took place over a sandy bottom. No marine mammals were observed but there were numerous sea birds in the area.

TIME: 15h30

NARRATIVE: Kenny Hall had been surfing for about two hours and was near Huntington Beach Lifeguard Station 5.

“I was actually standing in the surf up to mid-thigh pushing the board out (away) from shore. A 2-foot + roller came in and made the board rise (up to roughly my arm pits, 4.5 to 5 feet) when it felt like someone hit my foot with a hammer. It hurt bad enough to drop me into the wave but since I was wearing contacts, I closed my eyes until I surfaced again. There were no marks on the bottom of my foot, but it never left the sand. I don't remember stepping on anything or seeing anything, but again, I wasn't looking down. I kept surfing for another 1/2 hour or so but the pain kept getting worse so I finally stopped.”

INJURY: The surfer sustained three puncture wounds to the dorsal surface of his right foot. “I truly thought it was a board strike,” says Kenny, “but the ER Doctor and both nurses said it was a bite of some sort. Both said they see lots of board strikes and this isn't one. The [puncture wounds] seeped for three days before they started to heal over.

SPECIES: The punctures could have been caused by upper lateral teeth (L1 - L3) of a small, 4 - 4.5 foot shark. I do not believe these to represent any benthic shark common to our coast. Further, the punctures were not made by a blue, soupfin, or hammerhead shark, in my opinion. Possibly a white or mako, although I think the wounds are more representative of small, serrated teeth.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier