

ACTIVITY: Standing

CASE: GSAF 2011.06.26

DATE: Sunday June 26, 2011

LOCATION: The accident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at North Topsail Beach, Onslow County, North Carolina, USA.
34.5°N, 77.4°W

NAME: Cassidy Cartwright

DESCRIPTION: She is a 10-year-old female from Erie, Pennsylvania. She is pale-skinned, 4'7" tall, and weighs +100 pounds. She was wearing a pink and white striped tankini and a purple and white beaded necklace. She had a small scratch on her leg but it was not bleeding.



Cassidy Cartwright

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was sunny. At 14h20, New River MCAS reported smoke conditions with six-mile visibility. The air temperature was 89.6°F, dew point 69.8°F, humidity 52%, sea level pressure 29.97 inches and wind direction was SSE at 11.5 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 22% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, July 1, 2011.

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was murky; underwater visibility was minimal.

ENVIRONMENT: Dolphins had been seen earlier and cranes were repeatedly flying along the beach. "Fishermen were at the shore, there were some dead jellyfish on the beach, and bait fish and 'baby fish' were along the shoreline" said Cassidy's mother, Carolyn Cartwright.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Less than 50 feet

DEPTH OF WATER: 3.5 feet

TIME: Afternoon

NARRATIVE: Hundreds of people were on the beach and more than 50 people were in the sea. Cassidy had been in the water for much of the morning. She was holding her body board and standing in the surf with her mother as they watched 10-year-old Katelyn Riker playing with a body board less than 10 feet from them. Cassidy had been standing in the same spot in the water for about 15 minutes and was facing seaward when she suddenly felt something tugging on her leg. "It didn't hurt at first. It pulled me down, and then it hurt. I thought it was somebody messing around and then I found out that it wasn't," she said. The shark bit her once then let go, then bit her a



Cassidy shows the tooth fragment recovered from her ankle.

second time. Cassidy was pulled down into the water twice, but was not submerged. Her mother saw her stumble and helped her back up. Then Cassidy cried, "Ouch, ouch, my leg!" Her mother saw blood pooling in the water and her daughter's injury. She quickly pulled Cassidy from the water with the help of a friend, David Peterson.

INJURY: Cassidy was bitten on her right ankle. The bite severed her Achilles tendon, peroneus brevis and peroneus longus, and she sustained traumatic arthrotomy to her right ankle.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Her mother brought her to shore and wrapped the injury with beach towels to slow the loss of blood. "The people next to us on the beach came running over and asked if we needed help," said her mother. "I told them to call 911 immediately. We were connected and the dispatcher told me to elevate the leg and we put it up on a beach chair. My daughter wasn't freaking out, but I knew she was hurt bad. The emergency personnel came to the beach, got her into an ambulance and took her to a field to meet the airlift team." Cassidy was taken to New Hanover Regional Medical Center and then transported by ambulance to UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill where orthopedic surgeon, Christopher W. Olcott, M.D., repaired her injuries.

SPECIES: Regarding the total length of the shark, upon comparing the size of the tooth fragment with teeth from bull sharks of known size, I would estimate that the shark was around 6 feet long (total length), reported Dr. Gordon Hubbell.

SOURCES: Carolyn Cartwright; WECT and MyFox8, June 30, 2011, Mail Online, July 1, 2011, GoErie.com, July 4, 2011, et. Al

CASE INVESTIGATORS: Clay Creswell, GSAF; Dr. Gordon Hubbell



I am surprised that the tooth crown was broken like it was. It tells me that the shark bit with a lot of force. It was not just a test bite to determine the identity of the object in the water."
Dr. Gordon Hubbell

