

ACTIVITY: Kayak fishing

CASE: GSAF 2011.12.21.a

DATE: Wednesday December 21, 2011

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off Noordhoek, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

NAME: Werner Coetzee

DESCRIPTION: He is a 35-year-old male, a seasoned kayak fisherman.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 05h00, Port Elizabeth recorded overcast skies and 6.2-mile visibility. The air temperature was 66.2°F, dew point 62.6°F, humidity 88%, sea level pressure 29.80 inches and wind direction was WSW at 4.6 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 15% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, December 24, 2011.

ENVIRONMENT: Noordhoek is located on the west coast of the Cape Peninsula, approximately 35 km south of Cape Town.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Two kilometres

TIME: Shortly after dawn.

NARRATIVE: Coetzee and three friends launched their kayaks at 04h40 and paddled out in search of geelbek, *Atractoscion aequidens*. They fanned out about 300 metres from each other. Coetzee was in the process of getting out his anchor from the hatch in front of him when the shark approached from below, knocking the front of the fibreglass kayak about 2.5 metres out of the water. "My kayak and all my tackle weigh 38kg and I weigh 102kg – so you can imagine. There was a deep-sea ski-boat about 200 metres away from me and afterwards they told me they heard the sound when the shark hit and it was like a gunshot, but more bulky. . . . I landed in the water and the kayak landed next to me, upside down. That was when I saw it was a shark. He was just a few feet away from me, biting into the front of the kayak. We eyeballed each other and I saw him change his attention from the kayak to me. Then I started pulling myself onto the hull. I lay there for about a minute, although it seemed like much longer, waiting for the next hit. But it never came."

By this time, Coetzee's friends had realized what was going on and had paddled up to him. The ski-boat skipper had also motored up alongside. They loaded the damaged kayak onto the bigger boat and then moved in convoy back to the shore, with the other kayakers paddling alongside for safety.

INJURY: No injury, but the bow of the kayak was dented.



Picture: Eugene Coetzee

Werner Coetzee examines the damage to his kayak



Geelbek

SPECIES: Coetzee saw the shark. He said it was about four metres in length and thought it was a white shark.

SOURCE: The Herald Online, December 22, 2011,
<http://www.peherald.com/news/article/4170>



Noordhoek

