

**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2012.07.14](#)

**DATE:** Saturday July 14, 2012

**LOCATION:** The attack took place four kilometers south of Wedge Island, in a bay known locally Dolphins. Wedge Island, which refers both to the mainland settlement and the 400m island, is located north of the coastal fishing village of Lancelin. It is located 160 km (100 miles) north of Perth in Western Australia.

**NAME:** Benjamin Charles Linden

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a 24-year-old male from Osborne Park, a suburb of Perth.



*Ben Linden*

### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Crescent, 22% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, July 19, 2012. A powerful solar storm hit the earth on July 14, 2012, following a massive solar flare emitted from the sun on July 12, 2012. It was expected that Earth's magnetic field would be impacted.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Lancelin resident Michael Balcombe, who has been fishing in the area for about 45 years, said he often saw big sharks in the area including tiger sharks and bronze whalers. "You always see sharks if you're fishing around here," he said.

Fisheries Minister Norman Moore said the shark could have been hanging around the waters off Wedge Island since Tuesday. "The indications are that it has been around for four days and nobody had reported it being sighted," he said. It has also been reported that surfers had nicknamed the four- to five-metre long white shark 'Brutus.'

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 80 to 100 metres

**TIME:** Shortly after 09h00

**NARRATIVE:** Ben Linden was on holiday with friends. Witnesses said Ben and Ryan Soulis had walked several kilometres to reach the remote surf spot. The two men had been surfing for close to an hour and were sitting on their surfboards when Mr Soulis noticed what appeared to be a white shark on the floor of the ocean so they began paddling for shore. The shark surfaced to the right of Mr Solis, and then headed towards Mr Linden, who knelt on his board and raised his leg to kick at it. But the shark attacked, taking him in its mouth. In the meantime, Mr. Soulis had been pushed towards shore by a small wave.

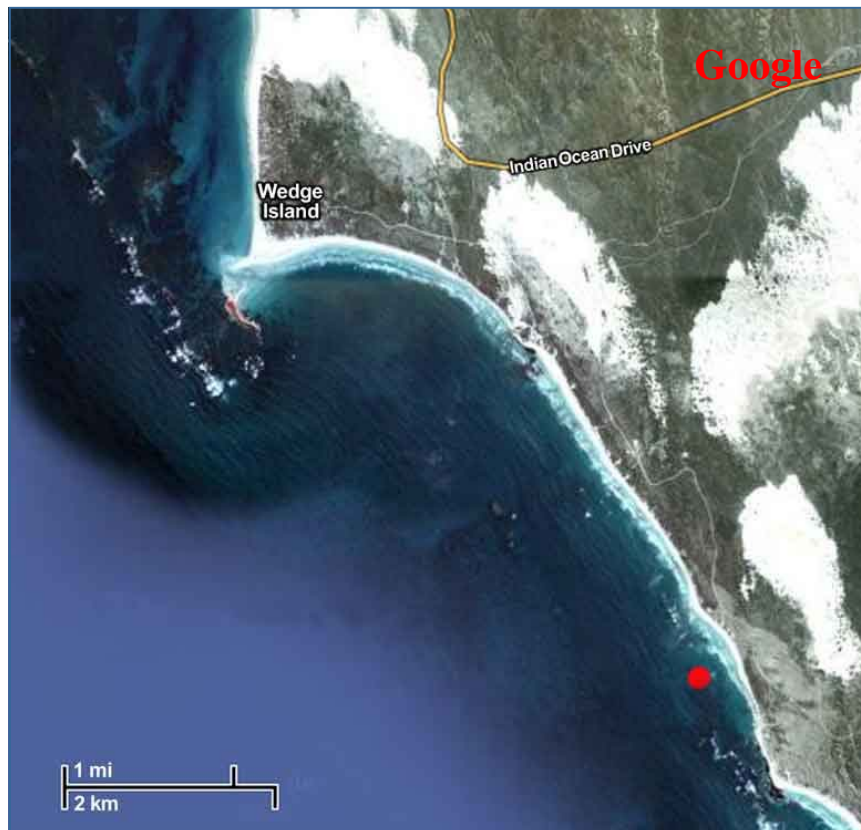
Further north, two men who were using a jet ski to tow each other out from shore on their surfboards, witnessed the attack. "I was towing my mate on the back of the jet ski and just in front of us saw a guy get attacked by a shark," said 22-year-old Matt Holmes. "I just took my mate to the shore and went straight out and there was just blood everywhere and a massive, massive white shark circling the body."

Mr Holmes said when he attempted to get close, the shark attacked his jet ski before taking the surfer's body. "I reached to grab the body and the shark came at me on the jet-ski and tried to knock me off. I did another loop and when I came back to the body, the shark took it," he said. Both Mr Holmes and Mr Soulis then searched on the jet ski for Mr Linden but could find no sign of him.

Police, rangers, fisheries department officials and medical evacuation teams rushed to the scene, some having to be air-lifted in, as the nearest settlement to the remote beach is a shanty town of some 350 shacks at Wedge Island. Wedge Island, located on the mainland between Lancelin and Cervantes is so remote there is no electricity, running water, or shops. Police in Lancelin and Jurien Bay were the first to respond and they quickly brought in the Water Police unit and the Lancelin Sea Search and Rescue Group. News of the attack quickly spread among the small community.

**INJURY:** Fatal. Following an inquest, a West Australian coroner ruled Mr Linden "died of misadventure after a great white shark attack".

**SPECIES:** According to Mr Holmes, the witness on the jet ski, the attack involved a white shark five metres (16 feet) in length. Permission was given to capture and destroy a shark if it was believed to have been the one responsible, said Tony Cappelluti of the Fisheries Department. "If something is in the 4-5m vicinity and it's a white shark - which is the description we've got from witnesses - you make the assumption that it could be the same shark. However, he admitted the likelihood of capturing the shark, which was last seen swimming out into deeper water, was slim. Baited hooks were removed from the area on Saturday night and the Fisheries Department considered calling off the water search at midday Sunday (WST) as weather conditions deteriorated. Local police and volunteers continued to search beaches with quad bikes and four-wheel drives for the surfer's remains, but the body was never found.



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### **Shark attack: Coroner rules surfer Ben Linden died of misadventure after great white shark attack**

A West Australian coroner has found a 24-year-old surfer who was taken by a shark in July last year died by way of misadventure.

Benjamin Linden was attacked by a great white shark while surfing near Wedge Island, 135 kilometres north of Perth. Mr Linden and his friend Ryan Soulis drove up to Wedge to go surfing at a bay known locally as Dolphins.

Coroner Barry King heard evidence from other surfers who saw the attack.

The court heard the two, who had been surfing for close to an hour, were sitting on their surfboards when Ryan Soulis noticed what appeared to be a great white on the floor of the ocean so they began paddling for shore.

Mr Soulis told the court the shark surfaced to his right and then headed towards Mr Linden, who knelt on his board and raised his leg to kick at it. But the shark attacked, taking him in its mouth.

In the meantime, Mr Soulis had been pushed towards shore by a small wave. Surfer on jet ski attempted to help.

Further north, two men who were using a jet ski to tow each other out from shore on their surfboards, saw the attack. The court was told Matthew Holmes used his jet ski in an attempt to help Ben Linden. "I was towing my mate on the back of the jet ski and just in front of us saw a guy get attacked by a shark. I just took my mate to the shore and went straight out and there was just blood everywhere and a massive, massive white shark circling the body." Mr Holmes said when he attempted to get close, the shark attacked his jet ski before taking the surfer's body. "I reached to grab the body and the shark came at me on the jet-ski and tried to knock me off and I did another loop and when I came back to the body the shark took it," he said. Both Mr Holmes and Mr Soulis then searched on the jet ski for Mr Linden but could find no sign of him.

His body has never been found.

Mr King commended Mr Holmes for what he said were his brave and selfless actions in trying to save Mr Linden.

The coroner said the bite mark on the deceased's surfboard was examined by a senior research scientist who believes it was made by a great white shark.

**SOURCE:** ABC News, November 25, 2013, <http://au.news.yahoo.com/a/20008873/shark-attack-coroner-rules-surfer-ben-linden-died-of-misadventure-after-great-white-shark-attack/>