

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2012.12.30

DATE: Sunday December 30, 2012

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Tasman Sea between Dee Why and Long Reef beaches (northern suburbs of Sydney), New South Wales, Australia.

NAME: Danny Sheather

DESCRIPTION: He is a 23-year-old male, a Warringah Council lifeguard who was off-duty at the time of the incident.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 13h00, Sydney recorded scattered clouds and 6.1 mile visibility. The air temperature was 73.4°F, dew point 59°F, humidity 61%, sea level pressure 30.12 inches, and wind direction was SE at 15 mph.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, 98% of the Moon was illuminated.

TIME: 12h45

NARRATIVE: "I got a wave, paddled in and got up and I was going along and felt this almighty hit from the bottom," said Sheather. The surfer was knocked off his board, but did not see what he had hit (or what had hit his board).

INJURY: No injury

DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD: When the surfer reached the beach, he noticed that a 30-centimetre chunk was missing out of the bottom of his surfboard.

SPECIES: Shark involvement was not confirmed, but the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter spotted a 2.5-metre white shark at the south end of Dee Why. Despite lifesavers' efforts the shark remained in the area, so Dee Why and nearby Long Reef beach were closed the entire afternoon.



Danny Sheather with his damaged surfboard

The Sunday Telegraph

Beaches closed as shark refuses to be herded off

SEARCH and rescue teams will scour the northern beaches again after a 2.5-metre shark closed two popular swimming spots.

In the second brush with a shark on a NSW beach in the past three days, an off-duty Warringah Council lifeguard, Danny Sheather, was knocked off his board while surfing at Dee Why about 12.45pm on Sunday.

Mr Sheather did not see what hit him but noticed a 30-centimetre chunk out of the bottom of his board when he returned to shore.

"It looked like something had come up and rammed him from underneath," Steve Downman, a Warringah Council lifeguard supervisor, said. Dee Why and Long Reef beaches were immediately closed.

The Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter soon spotted a 2.5-metre white shark at the south end of Dee Why. Despite lifesavers' efforts it could not be moved on, so both beaches remained closed all afternoon. "The boat attempted to shepherd the shark away from shallow water," Stephen Leahy, the chief executive of the helicopter service, said. "It wasn't deterred whatsoever, which is unusual."

The helicopter was to search again on Monday morning.

Mr Sheather said he would keep surfing. "I'll maybe have to have a couple of beers to calm the nerves," he told Channel Seven.

Luke Allan, 29, lost a finger to a shark near Port Macquarie on Friday but also plans to surf again. "Absolutely, the first chance I get ... I don't know of anyone that's been attacked twice."

SOURCE: Josephine Tovey, The Sydney Morning Herald, December 31, 2012, <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/water-issues/beaches-closed-as-shark-refuses-to-be-herded-off-20121230-2c17n.html>

Is lifeguard's 'bump' a great white lovebite

AN off-duty council lifeguard was hit by a shark, believed to be a great white, while riding his surfboard on a Sydney beach yesterday.

Danny Sheather, 23, was riding a wave near The Pole, the stretch of sand between Long Reef and Dee Why on the northern beaches, when he "hit something or something hit me" about midday.

"I was riding the wave when it happened," Mr Sheather, a Warringah Council professional lifeguard, said. "I got bumped down on to my knees but managed to get to my feet and keep riding. "I didn't see anything, but when I got to the sand I had a look at my board and there's a gash on the bottom."

The gash on Mr Sheather's board was slightly curved and about 15cm long, but did not show any obvious signs of teeth marks.

However, a few minutes after Mr Sheather's encounter happened, a shark was possibly sighted further down the beach by lifesavers.

Dee Why and Long Reef beaches were immediately closed and "shark sighted" signs erected. Lifesavers took to the water in rubber duckies to patrol the beach.

The incident occurred despite shark nets being up at Dee Why beach.

The Westpac rescue helicopter was called about 1pm and arrived within 15 minutes to scan the beach, spotting what is believed to be a 2.5m great white or bull shark swimming behind the surf break at Dee Why.

Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter CEO Stephen Leahy said the helicopter was in the air for more than an hour and directed jet skis and rescue boats in an attempt to herd the shark out to sea. But it was "unable to be moved".

"The shark would keep swimming in to shore and then back out," Mr Leahy said. "The shark wasn't going anywhere."

Because of the water temperature, lifeguards believe it was probably a great white.

A duty lifesaver at Dee Why said the possible shark encounter was being taken seriously. "After the attack at Diamond Head you can't rule out a shark was involved."

SOURCE: Malcolm Holland, The Daily Telegraph, December 31, 2012,
<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/national/is-lifeguards-bump-a-great-white-lovebite/story-fndo317g-1226545442657>



© Global Shark Accident File, 2012. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced in any form without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.