

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2013.11.23.a](#)

DATE: Saturday November 23, 2013

LOCATION: The attack took place at Lefthanders Beach (or Umbies) off Gracetown, 167 miles (270 km) south of Perth, Western Australia.

NAME: Chris Boyd

DESCRIPTION: He was a 35-year-old male.

SURFBOARD: His yellow and green surfboard was recovered.



Chris Boyd

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: A low pressure system associated with a cold front was lingering over the Southwest. At 09h00, Margaret River recorded a partly cloudy sky. The air temperature was 64.9°F, dew point 62.2°F, humidity 91%, sea level pressure 29.38 inches, and wind direction was WSW at 4 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 74% of the Moon was illuminated. Full Moon, November 19, 2013. Last Quarter, November 26, 2013.

SEA CONDITIONS: "It's such a clear day you can see through the water," said surfer Marc Baldan who stayed in the water for two hours following the attack. For a chart showing sea surface temperatures on the following day see next page.

ENVIRONMENT: This area of the coast has numerous Australian fur seal colonies and is in the migratory path of Humpback whales on trip north to the Exmouth area where they give birth. This was the third fatal shark attack on a surfer in the Gracetown area in a 10-year period: Brad Smith was killed by a white shark on July 10, 2004, and Nicholas Edwards was killed by a shark at nearby South Point on August 17, 2010.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 300 metres or less (the surf break doesn't extend beyond about 250 metres from shore)

TIME: 09h00

NARRATIVE: The shark bounced off the board of another surfer before attacking Chris Boyd. A nearby surfer dragged the injured man onto his board and ferried him to shore where his body was removed by a medvac helicopter. Lefthanders Beach was closed, as were beaches from Umbies to South Point and onto Huzzas, North Point and the main Gracetown beach, for an initial period of 24 hours. The director general of the Department of Fisheries issued an imminent threat order on the shark responsible, believed to be a white shark. Fisheries shark response unit spokesman Tony Cappelluti said the imminent threat order was not a kill order and that a full assessment would be carried out on the shark if it was caught. Moments later, Surf Life Saving WA reported a large shark had been spotted offshore of Ellensbrook homestead near Gracetown. The Fisheries vessel *PV Geographe*, based at Busselton, laced shark lines equipped with floats and baited hooks in the area the same afternoon and was joined by a second Fremantle-based vessel in the evening. A helicopter also attempted to spot the shark from the air.

INJURY: Fatal. His left arm was severed, and tissue was removed from the right leg. "The shark bit him and held him for about a minute. He was dead before the shark let go," said

Ryan Scanlon, a surfer who witnessed the attack.

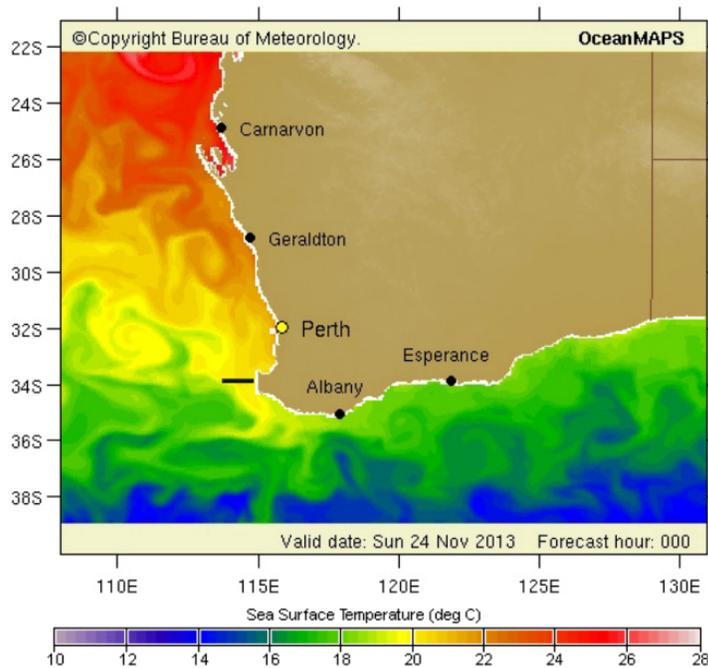
SPECIES: It was thought the incident involved a white shark.

COMMENT: It was reported the shark went after/collided with another surfboard before turning its attention onto Mr. Boyd with increased vigor. The same behavior has been seen in other cases: 1974.02.13.a&b; 1994.03.23.a&b; 1994.07.09.a&b.

SOURCES: News.com.au, November 23, 2013, <http://www.news.com.au/national/shark-kills-male-swimmer-at-gracetown-beach-western-australia/story-fncynjr2-1226766779499>

The Guardian, November 25, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/26/shark-attack-victims-death-was-quick->

CASE INVESTIGATOR: John Bailey



*Chart of current sea surface temperatures provided by the Bureau of Meteorology.
The black line marks the site of the shark attack on Chris Boyd.*



*Chris Boyd, pictured, was a well-loved member of the Sunshine Coast surfing community.
Pic: Supplied Source: Supplied*