

ACTIVITY: Shark diving

CASE: GSAF 2014.07.13

DATE: Sunday July 13, 2014

LOCATION: The incident took place at Tiger Beach, 20 nautical miles northwest of West End, Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas.



NAME: John Petty

DESCRIPTION: He is a 63-year-old male, a chiropractor and rancher from Longview, Texas, known for award-winning photography often done on high-adventure trips around the world.

SUPPORT BOAT: The *Shear Water*, owned by Jim Abernethy.

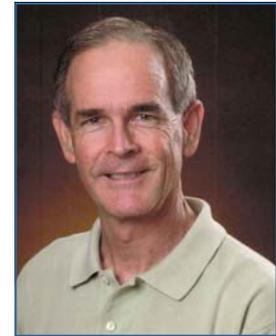
BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, July 13, 2013.

ENVIRONMENT: The description of the dive on Jim Abernethy's Scuba Adventures website states: "To ensure the best results we will be "chumming" the water with fish and fish parts. Consequently, there will be food in the water at the same time as the divers. Please be aware that these are not "cage" dives, they are open water experiences." The seabed consists of white sand.

DEPTH OF WATER: 20 feet or less

TIME: Night



John Petty

NARRATIVE: On Saturday, Petty boarded the boat along with eight other divers and four crew in Palm Beach, Florida, for an eight-night expedition to Tiger Beach to dive with a resident population of tiger sharks that hang out in the area.

The search began when the captain aboard the commercial dive vessel *Shear Water* late Sunday night contacted the Coast Guard to report Petty had gone shark diving with eight others and never resurfaced. He was last seen by one of the divers in the group.

His dive mask and camera were found on the seabed. Multiple air and sea assets, including the Coast Guard Cutter *Dolphin* from Miami, the Coast Guard Air Station Miami Ocean Sentry aircraft and the Coast Guard Air Station Miami Dolphin rescue helicopter, began a search when the call came in, according to the Coast Guard. The extensive air/sea search covered more than 4,600 miles, lasting 64 hours of total search time, and was finally suspended on Wednesday.

SPECIES: Tiger Beach is known for its populations of tiger sharks and lemon sharks, but the sharks are conditioned to swimming with divers and shark involvement in Dr. Petty's disappearance, although suspected, has not been confirmed. The diver may have become disoriented or accidentally swam into a swift current and was swept away before anybody noticed he was gone. A medical problem, such as a heart attack, is also a possibility.