



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2015.06.01](#)

DATE: Monday June 1, 2015

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Folette, which is located just outside the lagoon behind the SRPP (Société Réunionnaise des Produits Pétroliers / Reunion Society of Petroleum Products) at Le Port on the western shore of Reunion Island.

NAME: Eddy Chaussalet

DESCRIPTION: A 47-year-old male

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 15h00, Le Port recorded mostly cloudy skies. It had rained earlier in the day and the sky was still grey and visibility was only 6.2 miles. The air temperature was 75.2°F, dew point 68°F, humidity 78%, sea level pressure 30.06 inches, and wind direction was ESE at 23 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 98% of the Moon was illuminated. Full Moon, June 2, 2015.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was very dirty and muddy from recent rains, and there was a north swell.

ENVIRONMENT: Water sports were prohibited in the area: it is at the entrance of the harbor, near the channel. Although there are no lifeguards the area is popular among surfers and divers. One of the divers said, "We often see him come here to surf. Others come too, but now it's dangerous, it's not like before, there sharks everywhere," said the diver.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: A few dozen metres



Eddy Chaussalet

TIME: 15h00

NARRATIVE: Eddy Chausalet was in the water with one or two other people when the shark bit him and his surfboard at least twice. Several fishermen and divers witnessed the incident. One of the fishermen helped him out of the water and while others alerted rescue personnel.

INJURY: Severe bite to the left forearm. Despite some media reports, surgeons report to GSAF that amputation of the arm will not be necessary and the patient is expected to make a full recovery.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: SDIS (Services Départementaux d'Incendie et de Secours / *Department of Fire and Rescue*) and SMUR (Services Mobiles d'Urgence et de Réanimation / *Emergency and Intensive Care ambulance*) provided first aid to the injured surfer and he was transported to Félix Guyon Hospital in Saint-Denis for further treatment.

SPECIES: It is thought the incident involved a 2.5-metre bull shark. Ninety minutes after the incident witnesses reported seeing the fin of a shark less than 10 metres from the shore. Later in the afternoon longlines were set in an attempt to capture the shark. On Tuesday evening a 2.5-metre female bull shark was caught on a drumline in the bay of St. Paul, and shortly afterwards a 3.5-metre female tiger shark was caught on a drumline near the area of the incident. Of the bull shark, Nicolas Le Bianic, who is responsible for management of the shark risk in the prefecture, noted that although the size of the shark was similar to that described by witnesses, he had yet to compare the teeth of its jaws to the bite marks in the surfer's board.

COMMENT: For many years, Reunion was considered one of the world's top destinations for surfers, but in the past four years Reunion Island has seen 17 shark attacks, seven of which were fatal. The attacks have taken a heavy economic toll on Reunion, which depends on tourism to survive. Prior to 2011, there were 1,600 licensed surfers in Reunion, but that number has fallen to just 400, and 13 surf schools on the island have closed.

The Mascarene Plateau lies east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. Rising from the plateau are three large mountain peaks which protrude above the surface of the ocean: Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion. With no other land mass nearby, Reunion Island offers a habitat for many marine species including passing open ocean species. To protect its marine life, in 1997/1998 Reunion created a marine protected area (MPA). A volcanic island, Reunion's beaches and nearshore environment consist of black sand which provides camouflage for counter-shaded fish with dark backs and pale undersides such as bull sharks and tiger sharks. As bull and tiger shark populations have found refuge in Reunion's waters, they have multiplied while the populations of the fish they prey upon have been diminishing, and the sharks are becoming ever more aggressive in seeking food.

SOURCES: Clicanoo, June 1, 2015

<http://www.clicanoo.re/477013-attaque-de-requin-au-port-la-vie-du-surfeur-n-est-pas-en-danger.html>

Tribune de Genève, June 1, 2015

<http://www.tdg.ch/monde/arracher-bras-requin/story/24046795>

Imazpress, June 1, 2015,

<http://www.ipreunion.com/requins/reportage/2015/06/02/un-surfeur-de-47-ans-a-ete-grievement-mordu-au-bras-ce-lundi-un-bouledogue-de-2-50-metres-serait-responsable-de-l-attaque-du-port,30997.html>

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