

**ACTIVITY:** Swimming

**CASE:** **GSAF 1959.08.11**

**DATE:** Tuesday August 11, 1959

**LOCATION:** The incident took place off Isonoura Swimming Beach, Wakayama City (south of Osaka), Japan.

*34°12'N, 135°10'E*

**NAME:** Akira Tsuchiya

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a 13-year-old male, a school boy (junior high school) from Wakayama City

### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** It was a bright, sunny day and the air temperature was 30°C.

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter, August 12, 1959 at 02h10

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea was clear.

**ENVIRONMENT:** A strong typhoon passed through Wakayama Prefecture; wind and waves kept people out of the water until August 10.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 500 metres

**DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE:** Eight metres

**TIME:** 14h30



**NARRATIVE:** Since 12h00, Akira and six other boys (ages 11 to 18) were sailing on a yacht. They sailed to Saika-zaki Cape of Wakayama City, then returned to Isonoura Swimming Beach, stopping 500 metres from the shore. Three boys, including Akira swam near the yacht. Akira was the farthest one offshore when he shouted, “Save me!”, and a large splash was observed by Okamoto, one of the boys on the yacht. The boys rowed to the place where the splash was seen, but the sea was red and Akira had disappeared.

The boys hurried back to shore and reported the accident. Some 500 people tried to capture the shark and recover Akira’s body using a beach seine. Around 17h30 the same day a three-metre shark was seen in the net, but it broke the net and escaped. Then the people seined once more and just after 19h00 Akira’s body was recovered.

**INJURY:** Fatal. Akira’s left leg had been severed at mid-thigh “(between the knee and hip joint”).

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** The incident was thought to involve a blue shark, about three metres in length.

**SOURCES:** Haruhiro KARIYA, Division of Fisheries, Wakayama Prefecture; Tokiharu ABE, Wakayama Police; T. Abe, Zoological Institute, Faculty of Science, University of Tokyo.