

**ACTIVITY:** Diving

**CASE:** GSAF 1966.09.00

**DATE:** September 1966

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Tongue of the Ocean, Bahama Islands. 25°45'N, 79°15'W (approximate location)

**NAME:** Jerry Greenberg

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a highly experienced underwater photographer, and was wearing the upper half of wet suit.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** "Warm"

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The water was warm and clear.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Tongue of the Ocean is bounded on the west by Andros Island, to the south and east by large areas of very shallow banks that are too shallow for boat navigation, and to the north by the Northwest Providence Channel. The basin floor is very smooth and soft with gradual depth changes, an absence of large swells, and sluggish currents.

**NARRATIVE:** Jerry Greenberg was photographing the hull of a large U.S. Naval vessel as it passed above him. A single oceanic whitetip shark watched him at work for some hours, gradually coming closer to him. Eventually the shark made such close passes that he had to fend it off with his camera, feet and hands. For some time he was able to discourage the fish, but "the time came when it refused to move away despite bodily pushes." Jerry then called his partner, Ed Fisher, who had a boat hook, to help him. Ed jabbed the shark hard in the gills and this discouraged it. The shark continued to remain in the vicinity but made no further close approaches.

Meanwhile, the diving boat crew made up a shark line and caught the shark. It was landed and gutted. The stomach was empty, and Jerry does not believe the shark emptied its stomach while on the line. Jerry adds that he has many times been closely approached by this species, but that always before his kicks and pushes were enough to discourage them from close passes. He considers this an exceptional case and attributes the close approaches to hunger.

**INJURY:** No injury

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** The incident involved an oceanic whitetip shark, eight to ten feet in length.

**SOURCES:** Jerry Greenberg and Nathaniel T. Kenney, National Geographic Magazine, Washington, D.C.; SAF #1421

