

ACTIVITY: Wading

CASE: GSAF 1980.08.10

DATE: Sunday August 10, 1980

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off Ocean Isle, Brunswick County, North Carolina, USA.

NAME: Susan Waters

DESCRIPTION: A 10-year-old female from Greensboro.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, August 10, 1980.

SEA CONDITIONS: High tide was at 08h39, low tide was at 14h34

ENVIRONMENT: There had been reports of hundreds of sharks, ranging up to seven feet in length

and weighing 300 pounds, feeding close to shore, but the sharks began leaving the area on the preceding afternoon and the bathing ban had been lifted.

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: Two feet

NARRATIVE: Susan Waters was playing in the water when the shark came from behind and bit her leg. She was pulled from the water by her brother.

INJURY: She was bitten on her lower calf, and sustained a four-inch bite behind her knee

FIRST AID: A doctor in the area applied a pressure bandage to her leg before driving her to Brunswick County Hospital in his car.

TREATMENT: The girl was examined in the Emergency Room at Brunswick County Hospital, then transferred to New Hanover Memorial Hospital for surgery.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Unknown

SOURCES: The Chronicle Telegram, Monday August 11, 1980; Waterloo Courier, August 11, 1980; The Aiken Standard, August 11, 1980; The Aiken Standard (Aiken, South Carolina, August 11, 1980

CASE INVESTIGATORS: Dr. Frank Schwartz; Clay Creswell, GSAF



Girl, 10, bitten by shark on N. C. shore

OCEAN ISLE BEACH, N.C. (UPI) — A shark attacked a 10-year-old girl wading in the Atlantic Ocean just hours after a swimming ban was lifted on a stretch of the North Carolina coastline where sharks had been sighted.

The victim, Susan Waters of Greensboro, N.C., underwent surgery Sunday at New Hanover Memorial Hospital for two bites to one of her legs and reported in satisfactory condition.

"It struck once in her lower calf and once behind her knee," police officer Donald Gates said. "The bite behind her knee was a 4-inch diameter bite. There may have been some tendon damage."

OCEAN ISLE Beach is near the North Carolina-South Carolina border where two schools of sharks prowled in search of food last

week, prompting a swimming ban on a 26-mile stretch of coastal waters.

Officials lifted the ban at 1 p.m. Sunday because the sharks had moved farther offshore. The incident was the first shark-related injury reported in the area, although a shark bit a surfboard last week between Fort Macon and Emerald Isle, a popular resort area in Carteret County.

Gates said Susan was wading in about 2 feet of water when the shark struck.

A young man helped her from the water and a doctor in the area applied a pressure bandage to her leg before driving her to Brunswick County Hospital in his car. She was examined in the emergency room, Gates said, and transferred to New Hanover Memorial Hospital.

GATES SAID they have no authority to close the beach but they have warned people there's a possibility there are sharks in the surf. Gates said the state Division of Marine Fisheries has been asked to determine "if we have a schooling problem or an isolated incident."

Dr. Frank Schwartz, a shark expert at the University of North Carolina's Institute of Marine Species, said the ban had been lifted because sharks began leaving the area about 2 p.m. Saturday.

There had been reports of hundreds of sharks — ranging up to 7 feet long and weighing 300 pounds — searching for food supplies close to shore.

He said the influx of sharks was unusual, and could not predict whether they would return.

There still are a few sharks left off the coast, Schwartz said, but they are sharpnose sharks, a small variety that isn't vicious. Schwartz said the sharpnose is never found in the same area with the more dangerous types that might attack humans — hammerheads, tiger sharks, blacktips and bull sharks.

Girl bitten by shark

WILMINGTON, N.C. (AP) — A shark alert was in effect along North Carolina's southeast coast Monday after a weekend of cautious

play by swimmers — many of them defying a ban on swimming — ended with a 10-year-old girl being bitten on the leg. The alert covered a 150-mile stretch of the Atlantic shoreline.

A ban on public swimming was imposed at Emerald Isle on Saturday and Sunday morning after 17 sharks were reported along the coast. That ban was lifted Sunday, but swimmers had ignored it throughout the weekend. No such ban was in effect at Ocean Isle, 35 miles south of Wilmington, when Susan Waters of Greensboro was bitten by a shark. The girl was pulled from the water by her brother and was taken to a hospital in Supply. She later was transferred to a Wilmington hospital where she was reported in satisfactory condition.

Swimmers Ignore Ban After Shark Alert

WILMINGTON, N.C. (AP) — A shark alert was in effect along North Carolina's southeast coast today after a weekend of cautious revelry by swimmers — many of them defying a ban on swimming — ended with a 10-year-old girl being bitten on the leg.

The alert covered a 150-mile stretch of the Atlantic shoreline from north of Morehead City to the South Carolina state line, hitting all of the beaches on the state's southern coast.

A ban on public swimming was in effect at Emerald Isle, east of Morehead City Saturday and Sunday morning after 17 sharks were reported along the Carteret County coast Saturday morning. That ban was lifted Sunday, although swimmers had ignored the ban throughout the weekend.

No such ban was in effect at Ocean Isle, a Brunswick County beach about 35 miles south of Wilmington, when swimmer Susan Waters of Greensboro was bitten by a shark that came up behind her as the child played in shallow water.

The girl was pulled from the water by her brother and was taken to a hospital in Supply, but later was transferred to a Wilmington hospital. She was reported in satisfactory condition after undergoing surgery.

Ocean Isle and Brunswick County authorities issued an alert to other swimmers and fishermen along the county's coast late Sunday, warning them of the presence of the shark.

The Aiken Standard (Aiken, South Carolina), August 11, 1980

Swimmers are warned of current

NAGS HEAD, N.C. (UPI) — A dangerous undercurrent threatened North Carolina's resort beaches Monday, but many swimmers ignored warnings to stay out of the pounding surf just as they did earlier this month during a shark scare.

Authorities said three people were known dead and believe two others have drowned from the undercurrent suction.

"The water doesn't look bad at all... but the undercurrent is still there," Dare County Sheriff Frank M. Cahoon said.

IT WAS THE second time in two weeks swimmers had been urged to stay out of North Carolina surf. Beaches in Carteret County, south of the Outer Banks, were closed Aug. 16-17 when hundreds of hungry sharks began prowling close to shore, searching for food supplies that had thinned out during a heat wave.

On the afternoon the shark alert was lifted in Carteret County, a 10-year-old Greensboro girl was bitten while wading in two feet of water at Ocean Isle Beach.

Outer Banks authorities Monday broadcast warnings by airplane loudspeaker advising vacationers to stay out of the water. A local radio station also aired warnings regularly.

Cahoon's chief deputy, Bert Austin, said some people went in anyway.

"**THERE ARE** always those who feel they can do better than others," he said. "Then they go in, and that's the end of it (for them)."

Lt. W.E. Jones of the Nags Head Police Dept. said most swimmers heeded the message.

"I think yesterday made a believer out of them," he said.

Rescuers pulled two to three dozen people out of the surf Sunday, but on Monday no rescues were reported.

Authorities concentrated instead on finding two swimmers reported missing, and feared drowned, Sunday near Duck, N.C. One was identified as Paul Denne Jr., Point View, Pa.; the second person remained unidentified.

The three who drowned and whose bodies were recovered were identified as James Palcic, 36, Raleigh, N.C.; John Moroney, 42, Ellicott City, Md.; and Wilton Bunn, 61, Newport News, Va.

Daily Herald, Tuesday, August 26, 1980