

ACTIVITY: Boogie boarding

CASE: GSAF 1982.07.31

DATE: July 31, 1982

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Amanzimtoti, 26 kilometres southwest of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

3°03'S, 30°53.4'E

NAME: Riaan van Rensburg

DESCRIPTION: A 20-year-old male. He was wearing black closed-heel swim fins with a medium-length blade of soft rubber.



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Shark and sardine shoal

BACKGROUND

SEA CONDITIONS: Underwater visibility was two metres and contained “a touch” of SAICCOR effluent*. The surf was one metre. Riaan noticed a “rich, fishy smell” in the water whilst he was surfing.

ENVIRONMENT: Only one angler was fishing of the rocks at the time of the incident.

TIME: 10h00

NARRATIVE: Riaan was the furthest person out from the shoreline. He had caught a wave from middle break and whilst he was actually surfing the wave in he felt a sharp tug on one of his swim fins. He became alarmed and made straight for the shore.

On the beach, Riaan noticed there was a piece missing from his swim fin and reported it to the lifesaver on duty. The Beach Manager at the time banned bathing immediately and contacted Senior Meshing Officer, B. Gardner, of the Natal Anti-Shark Measures Board, who subsequently interviewed Riaan and the beach staff who had been present at the time of the incident.

INJURY: No injury.

SPECIES: Not identified. Shark involvement was not confirmed.

COMMENT: The great sardine run up the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal occurs annually between June and August. A single shoal consists of millions of sardines, *Sardinops ocellata*, and is accompanied by a host of predators: game fish, dolphins, sea birds and sharks. During spring and summer the sardines live in the cool waters of the southern and western Cape. Then, in early autumn, they mass in huge shoals and migrate into the Mozambique Current searching for the warmer water in which they spawn. Along the Cape coast the shoals remain far from land but off Port St. Johns the counter currents bring them close to shore. Then, for 250 kilometers, successive shoals hug the coast where both currents and marine predators may drive a shoal into the surf zone. Just south of Durban the shoals move offshore again and the Mozambique Current takes them back to the Cape.

*SAICCOR was/is a paper pulp mill located on south bank of Umkomaas River, approximately 24 kilometers southwest of Amanzimtoti. A large amount of SAICCOR's effluent is pumped out to sea.

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