

**ACTIVITY:** Fishing

**CASE:** [GSAF 1983.00.00.b](#)

**DATE:** 1983

**LOCATION:** North & South Carolina, USA

**NAMES:** Unknown

**DESCRIPTION:** Commercial fishermen

**INJURIES:** Bitten on their feet and boots by hooked sharks / lacerations only

**SPECIES:** The incident involved blue sharks

**SOURCE:** Dr. Frank Schwartz (see next page)

**NOTE:** These were provoked incidents.

## SHARK ATTACKS

Nine shark attacks are known for North Carolina while 37 have been recorded in South Carolina. The earliest recorded shark attack in North Carolina occurred prior to 1905 near Ocracoke. A fisherman, fishing for red drum, was killed near Ocracoke Inlet, the exact date is unknown except that it was between 1900 and 1905. The earliest well documented shark attack occurred 21 September 1935 and involved Jere Fountain, who died following the attack, while swimming in New River, Onslow County. Navy seaman J. Kuenzler lost a leg and died following an attack while swimming about 50 m off Ocracoke 6 August 1945. Rupert Wade was attacked while swimming well offshore of Atlantic Beach, Carteret County, 16 July 1957. He too succumbed from his leg wounds. Seventeen year old J. Horner, surfing off Emerald Isle, Carteret County, was attacked on the left foot 25 September 1971 and survived. Twenty-three year old R. Hall was attacked 26 August 1976, after he fell off his surfboard into waist deep water, while surfing near Emerald Isle Pier. He recovered from a right leg laceration. Ten year old Susan Waters, wading in knee deep waters off Ocean Isle, Brunswick County, 11 August 1980, was bitten behind the knee; she survived. Sixteen year old J. McCorley was bitten on the hand, as it dangled from his surfboard, while surfing 30 m off Masonboro Inlet near the rock jetty, New Hanover County, 19 August 1986.

Several subsequent reports of brushes and abrasions, some extensive, have resulted from shark encounters at Ocracoke, Holden Beach, and Emerald Isle, but they did not lead to a bite or death. Several commercial fishermen were bitten in 1983 on their feet and through their boots following landing of blue sharks; all were lacerations only. Surprisingly, no other authenticated attacks, other than those attributable to bluefish or barracudas, have occurred in North Carolina despite the increased public use of seaside waters, especially between March and November when usage is highest.

Nearby, a Virginia victim of a shark attack was a teenager who was crabbing in 1.2 m water near Virginia Beach 16 August 1973. No other attacks have occurred in Virginia in subsequent years.

Thirty-seven attacks have occurred in South Carolina in the past 50–60 years. One of the most recent attacks occurred at Isle of Palms in 1982, where a man was bitten on the arm in waist deep water. A 12 year old girl, Julie Steed, walking in 1.2 m water at Folly Beach, survived a bite on her left leg 19 July 1985. A 67 year old man was bitten on the leg 22 August 1985 at Hilton Head the same year. In general, two attacks occurred in South Carolina in 1984, six in 1985, one in 1986, and two in 1988. Most attacks occurred at Myrtle Beach (6), Folly Beach (3) or Hilton Head (1).

*Frank Schwartz, "Sharks of the Carolinas" March 1989 edition.*