



ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE: GSAF 1984.02.11

DATE: Saturday February 11, 1984

LOCATION: Derwent Island, 48 km north-east of Mackay, Queensland, Australia.

NAME: Greg Pearce

DESCRIPTION: He is a 27-year-old male, a diesel fitter.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, February 10, 1984

NARRATIVE: Greg Pearce was spearfishing with two friends. Mackay fireman Joe Ellrott, owner of a 10-metre game-fishing boat, said Pearce was towing a diving buoy with fish attached 300 metres behind their boat when he felt the shark taking bites at his catch. "He started pulling the buoy away when the shark attacked," Mr Ellrott said. "He started screaming and I thought he was saying, 'I've got a big fish'. But then I saw the blood and I realised he was yelling 'I've been bitten'". Mr Ellrott said Pearce jabbed the shark on its snout but the shark grabbed his right hand and tore it severely. He pulled his hand away. When the shark circled him several times, he shot it with his speargun. The shark swam away with the spear and gun.

INJURY: Lacerations to right hand. Two nerves and two tendons were severed.

FIRST AID /TREATMENT: It took two and a half hours to get Pearce back to shore where an ambulance took him to Mackay Base Hospital.

SPECIES: A 1.5 m white-tipped reef shark

SOURCES: Courier-Mail, February 14, 1984, page 3;
The Canberra Times, Tuesday February 14, 1984, page 11

Attacked by shark

MACKAY: A man was recovering yesterday in Mackay Base Hospital after being mauled by a shark on Saturday.

Police said that Mr Greg Pearce, 27, diesel fitter, had suffered a gaping wound when his hand was bitten, severing nerves and two tendons.

He had been spearfishing with two friends off Derwent Island, 48 kilometres north-east of Mackay, on Saturday when a 1.5-metre white-tipped reef shark attacked him.

Mr Joe Ellrott, whose 10-metre game-fishing boat took Mr Pearce ashore, said Mr Pearce had been fixing speared fish to a buoy 15 metres behind the boat when he felt the shark biting at his catch. He had been pulling the buoy away when the shark attacked.

Mr Pearce had jabbed the shark on its snout and wrenched himself away with his free hand.

The Canberra Times