

ACTIVITY: Snorkeling

CASE: [GSAF 1988.09.13.a](#)

DATE: Tuesday September 13, 1988

LOCATION: The attack took place at Shell Island, a 700-acre barrier island opposite Panama City Beach, Bay County, Florida, USA. Panama City is on the panhandle of northwest Florida on St. Andrews Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.



NAME: John P. Martin

DESCRIPTION: He was a 38-year-old male from Panama City Beach.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, September 11, 1988

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was murky from recent rains and decomposing seaweed.

ENVIRONMENT: Shell Island is an uninhabited island with great stretches of white sand and windswept dunes. Several sharks were sighted off area beaches that day.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 yards east of the jetties

DEPTH OF WATER: Eight feet.

TIME: 15h00

NARRATIVE: Martin was snorkeling when the shark bit him, pulling him beneath the surface three times before departing.

INJURY: Fatal. When rescuers brought Martin's body ashore, there was a 14-inch wide bite in the right leg and thigh, and other injuries (defense wounds) on his hand.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Three-metre [10'] bull shark

NOTE: About 30 minutes after Martin was bitten, Dennis and Ann Hadden, a couple from Georgia, were snorkeling with others near the same location when Dennis felt something brush his legs. Then the shark circled his wife and bit her forearm [GSAF 1988.09.13.b]. The Haddens kicked and drove the shark away. Some believed it was the same shark that killed Martin.

SOURCES: Daily Herald, Thursday, September 15, 1988; M. Womack, News Herald; <http://www.news.herald.com/articles/2001/07/29/lo072901e.htm>

Shark attacks leave one dead

PANAMA CITY BEACH, Fla.
— A shark killed a 38-year-old man before his horrified girlfriend, and two other swimmers were injured in a separate shark attack at a popular state park, the Florida Marine Patrol said Wednesday. Panama City Beach resident John P. Martin, 38, was killed in the first attack Tuesday. Later, Dennis Hadden, 42, and his wife, Ann, 41, suffered cuts and abrasions from a shark attack near the site of the first attack. The incidents took place off Shell Island, a section of St. Andrews State Park. According to witnesses, Martin was struck twice by one of two sharks in the area, estimated as between 6-9 feet long. Martin's girlfriend, another woman and a bystander in a second boat frantically tried but were unable to pull Martin on board.