

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 1988.10.23

DATE: Sunday October 23, 1988

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean at Indian Beach at Ecola State Park just north of the town of Cannon Beach, Clatsop County in far northwestern Oregon, USA.

45°50.3'N, 123°58.2'W

NAME: Wyndham Kapan

DESCRIPTION: He is a 21-year-old male. He was wearing a blue wetsuit.

SURFBOARD: A two-metre yellow and white trifin surfboard

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: "It was a beautiful Indian summer day, the sky was clear with a light wind coming out of the east," said Kapan.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 96% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon, October 25, 1988.

SEA CONDITIONS: Underwater visibility was in excess of 10 metres.

ENVIRONMENT: The ocean floor is primarily a flat expanse of sand, broken by an occasional volcanic rock.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 metres

DEPTH OF WATER: Three to four fathoms

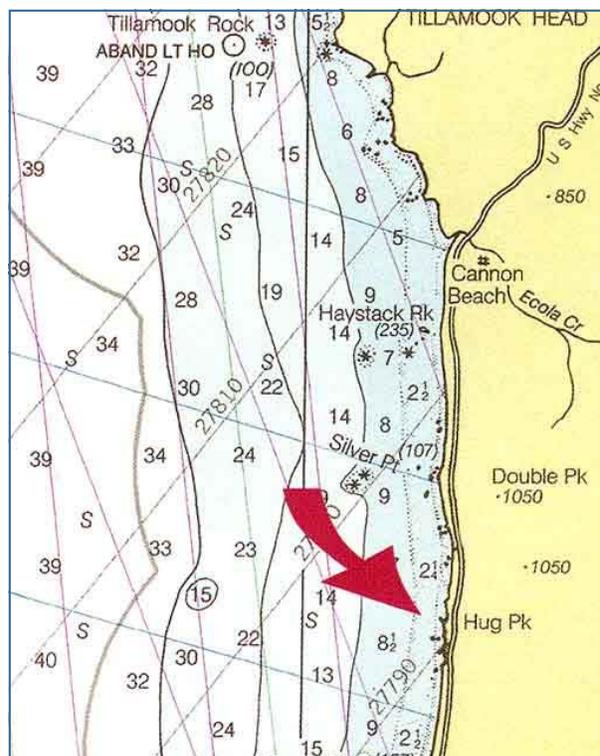
TIME: 18h15

NARRATIVE: Wyndham Kapan had been in the water for 30 minutes and was sitting upright, legs dangling off either side of his board, when he felt something suddenly clamp onto his right leg. "At first I couldn't believe it; a big white shark had my leg in its mouth," he said. The shark vibrated all over, shaking Kapan's leg violently for 10 to 20 seconds before releasing the surfer and submerging from view.

Kapan waited for about a minute to see whether the shark would return, then caught a wave toward the point and the safety of the beach.

INJURY: Physicians describe his wounds as "a fractured right femur with multiple tooth punctures to the upper right leg."

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Upon reaching the shore, Kapan called to several tourists for help, but — for reasons that are hard to imagine — was ignored. Finally, the surfer sighted friends down the beach who heard his cries for help. They drove Kapan to Seaside Hospital in Seaside for emergency treatment. He was then transferred to Providence St. Vincent Hospital in Portland for further evaluation. The surfer's injuries required more than 20



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sutures for closure of the punctures. He was given antibiotics for several days and expected to make a full recovery.

SPECIES: The incident involved a white shark, 5.5 to six metres in length, based on wound and surfboard tooth interspace measurements.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier