

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1992.01.23

DATE: Thursday January 23, 1992

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Tiger Rocks, Isipingo Beach. The beach is located 18 kilometres [11 miles] south of the entrance to Durban Harbour, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

30°00'S, 30°57'E



Tiger Rocks

NAME: Noor-Mubeen Shaik

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 19-year-old, is a member of the Tiger Rocks Surf Lifesaving Club. He was clad in pink baggies with a horizontal white band, and red swim fins with black foot pockets. He wore no jewelry and had no injuries prior to the incident.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was cloudy and there was a moderate north-easterly breeze.

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, January 26, 1992

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was rough with a two-metre [6½'] swell. The water was green and visibility was poor. The incident occurred an hour before high tide. No longshore channel was evident but waves were breaking on a sand bar.

ENVIRONMENT: No dolphins had been seen and no one was fishing. The beach is not protected by shark nets.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 metres [109.4 yards]

DEPTH OF WATER AT ATTACK SITE: Three metres [10 feet]

TIME: 17h30

NARRATIVE: Shaik, along with 12 other lifesavers, was training for a Surf Proficiency Award. For 20 minutes the lifesavers had been swimming out to the breaker line and catching waves to the beach. Five minutes earlier Shaik kicked something, but thought it was a rock and dismissed the incident. He was 50 metres [55 yards] seaward of the other lifesavers and in the line of breakers, facing seawards and, treading water, when he felt a tug on his right fin. Although startled, he was uncertain of what had happened and swam unaided to the beach.

INJURY: The lifesaver sustained three parallel lacerations, each about a centimetre in length, on the dorsal surface his right foot, above the first, second and third toes. The distances between the lacerations were one centimetre and 0,5 centimetres.

FIRST AID/TREATMENT: Shaik was unaware that he had been bitten until he removed his swim fin on the beach and noticed that his foot was bleeding. The club trainer, Leonard Pillay, initiated first aid; he elevated the lifesaver's leg and applied direct pressure to control blood loss. After 15 minutes the lifesaver was driven to Dr A. Wahed's surgery where the wounds were sutured. Afterwards he was sent to Addington Hospital for x-rays. No bones were broken and no tooth fragments were recovered.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The bite pattern on the swim fin appears to have been caused by a blunt-snouted carcharhinid shark. The seven cuts on the upper surface of the swim fin were made by serrated teeth, the six puncture marks on the under surface were made by spiked teeth. The tooth pattern of a 1,76-metre [5'9"] (PCL) Zambesi shark, *Carcharhinus leucas*, closely matched the tooth patterns in the fin. Case investigator Jeremy Cliff reported that the shallowness of the tooth impressions suggest that the shark made investigatory contact.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Jeremy Cliff, Natal Sharks Board