

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1995.02.19 / SA-0417

DATE: Saturday February 19, 1995

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at Kidd's Beach, 25 kilometres south of East London in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

33°08'S, 27°42'E



NAME: Johand Deetlefs

DESCRIPTION: He is a 22-year-old male, 1,97 metres tall and weighs 90 kg. He was wearing red board shorts and a copper bangle. He had no injuries prior to the incident.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sun was shining but the sky was partly cloudy. Air temperature was 29°C and there was a west wind.

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 83% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated. Last Quarter, February 22, 1995.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was grey-blue and water temperature was 19°C (estimated). There was surf with a west-to-east current. "It was pushing high tide," according to Mr. Deetlefs, and underwater visibility was "good".

ENVIRONMENT: No unusual bird or fish activity was observed, nor were any dolphins or marine mammals in the vicinity. There was fishing activity nearby, but it is not known what species were being caught. No underwater channel was present.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 40 metres

DISTANCE FROM ROCKS OR PIER: 25 metres

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: 1,5 metres

TIME: 17h15

NARRATIVE: About 50 people were on the beach and 20 others were surfing or swimming. Of these, 10 were within 15 to 30 feet of Mr. Deetlefs, and one was within 10 feet of him. He had been in the water for 40 minutes when the incident took place. He had just jumped a wave and was treading water, facing seawards. A surfer shot past him right to left and seconds later the shark approached from the right and seawards, grabbed his lower leg, shook him and pulled him beneath the surface. "The shark had a grip on my foot and ankle," said Mr. Deetlefs. "I used my left foot to kick at the shark and pulled my right foot out of the shark's mouth. The shark did not come back for a second strike, even though the attack caused severe damage and great loss of blood."

INJURY: Mr. Deetlefs sustained severe lacerations to his right foot and ankle.

FIRST AID: On reaching shore a relative, Andries Gideon du Preez, bound Mr. Deetlefs' foot in a towel and he was transported to the hospital in a private vehicle. He began to feel pain about 15 minutes after the incident.

TREATMENT: Mr. Deetlefs arrived at Grey Monument Private Hospital in King William's Town some 40 minutes after he was bitten by the shark. (King William's Town is approximately 45 km from Kidd's Beach.) At the hospital he was treated by Dr. Willem

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Gerber. Mr. Deetlefs' right foot was severely damaged, requiring approximately 75 sutures and reconstruction of the foot and ankle area.

SPECIES INVOLVED:

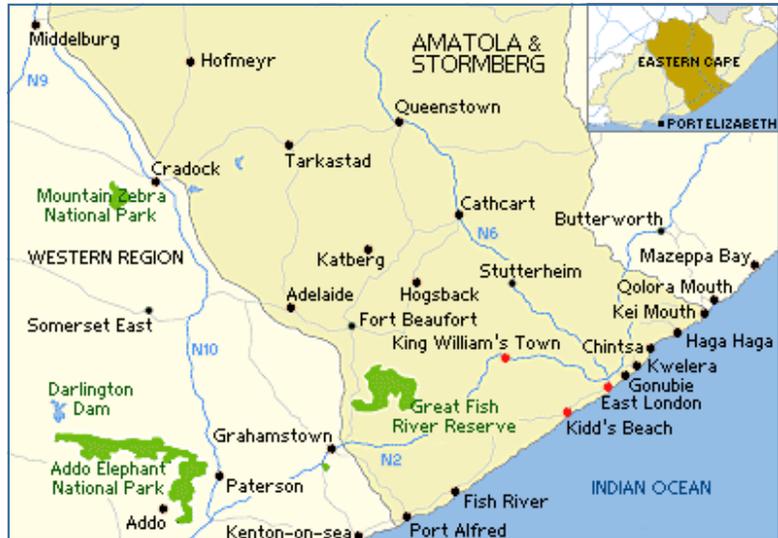
According to Mr. Deetlefs, the incident involved a two-metre shark, either a raggedtooth shark, *Carcharias taurus*, or possibly even a Zambesi shark. A tooth fragment was removed at the hospital staff two months later when his wound became septic. Unfortunately, the fragment had disintegrated and it was disposed of by medical personnel thus species of shark involved was not confirmed.

COMMENT: Mr. Deetlefs believes the shark was actually following the surfer when he appeared in its path. Regarding his injury, he writes that he cannot really draw teeth marks as the shark grabbed him around his lower leg and pulled him beneath the surface. In pulling his foot from the shark's mouth, the shark's teeth lacerated his leg, foot and ankle. In his opinion the shark never got a good grip on his foot. He also said that if the shark had bitten his upper leg, he doubts he would have survived "as the shark was very powerful."

NOTE: Mr. Deetlefs attended school with Bruce Corby (GSAF 1994.07.09.b).

SOURCE: Johan Deetlefs

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Andrew Gifford, Shark Research Institute-South Africa



Shark victim recovering

KING WILLIAMSTOWN—Shark attack victim Johan Deetlef, 21, was in a satisfactory condition yesterday, a day after his brother wrenched him from the grip of a shark at Kidd's Beach near East London.

Mr Deetlef was recovering at home after receiving 25 stitches in his right foot at a private clinic.

He was swimming when the shark, believed to have been a raggedtooth, grabbed him by his right foot and pulled him under. His brother, Gideon du Preez, plunged into the water and pulled him free. — (Sapa)

Natal Mercury, February 21, 1995