



ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: [GSAF 1996.03.05](#)

DATE: Tuesday March 5, 1996

LOCATION: The incident took place at Heron Island at the southern end of the 2,050-kilometre-long Great Barrier Reef which lies off Queensland, Australia.

23.4°S, 151.9°E

NAME: Jean Hotchkiss

DESCRIPTION: A 47-year-old female, a British tourist from Warwickshire. She was wearing a bikini.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, March 5, 1996

TIME: Dawn

NARRATIVE: "I had been on the island a week and I was just enjoying my usual early morning swim, doing a gentle breast-stroke, not splashing around, when I looked down to my right I saw this huge shark next to me. The only thing I could see was this big, grey headm" said Jean Hotchkiss. "Before I could do anything, I felt its teeth ripping into my arm, and I started shouting: 'Help, help, somebody help me.' As I did that, the shark let me go. I started swimming away as fast as I could. My biggest fear was that it would come back and take me out to sea." Hotchkiss reached shore unaided.

INJURY: Her arm was bitten by the shark.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Hotchkiss staggered 200 yards back to her hotel, banging on doors and shouting for help. "I managed to get to the reception and they got the nurse. Luckily there was an American doctor on holiday and he organized a tourniquet." She was



Photo: courtesy NASA

Satellite image of Heron Island

wrapped in blankets and flown by helicopter to a local hospital at Rockhampton. There she was “patched up” and transferred to Brisbane by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Some 12 hours after she was bitten, she underwent surgery to repair severed tendons and received skin grafts. It was expected that she would regain full use of her arm.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Hotchkiss identified the shark as a tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier*.

SOURCES: Mercury (Hobart), March 6, 1996, page 11
Alex MacCormick, pages 141-143, citing Daily Mail (London) March 9, 1996 edition.