

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 1996.11.29](#)

DATE: Friday 29 November 1996

LOCATION: The incident took place the Pacific Ocean at Salmon Creek Beach, near the mouth of Salmon Creek, near Bodega Bay, Sonoma County, California, USA.

38°21.5'N; 123°04.6'W

NAME: Greg Ferry

DESCRIPTION: He was a 45-year-old male, and was wearing a black wetsuit, boots and an ankle leash.

SURFBOARD: The surfboard was bright yellow on the bottom, aqua blue on top.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: There was a light wind and only intermittent sunshine through the high scattered clouds.

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 82% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon was 25 November 1996.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was very cold, and underwater visibility was less than a metre due to stormy sea conditions..

ENVIRONMENT: The sea floor was primarily sand.

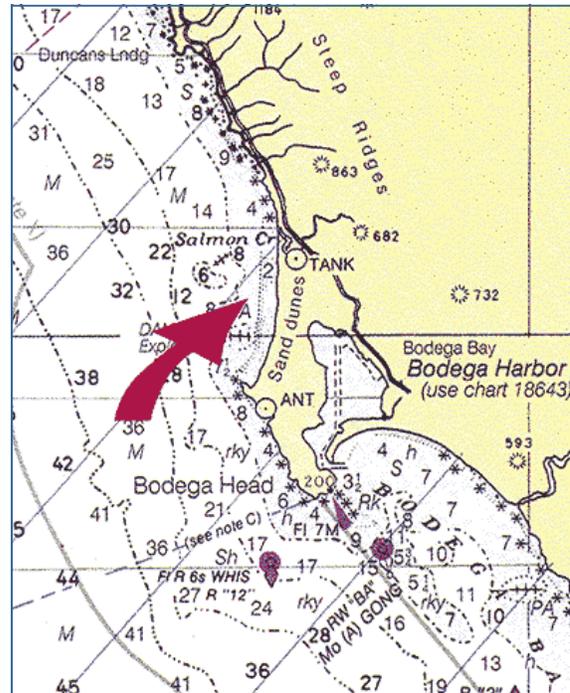
DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 300 metres

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: Two to three fathoms

TIME: 08h30

NARRATIVE: Greg Ferry, along with surfing companions, Tod and Harold Robinson, had been surfing for about an hour. They were at the point where the largest waves were breaking. As a large wave approached, Ferry pushed his board away and dived underwater. Upon surfacing, he pulled the leash to retrieve his board, then climbed back onto its port side. He felt something strike his shin, just above the ankle. "It felt like a ball-peen hammer striking the front of my left leg. I thought this was odd, but dismissed it momentarily until I felt something brush up against the calf of my right leg. I immediately knew it was a shark. I hastily climbed onto my board, and within moments the board started to thrash. I instinctively knew to hold onto the board. When the thrashing stopped, I yelled to my buddies and caught the next wave. My buddies figured it out that I wasn't B.S.-ing them and did the same. The time from the first strike until the end of the thrashing was no more than 10 seconds, more like four."

INJURY: Ferry sustained a cut four cm in length on his left ankle.



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TREATMENT: He was transported to Palm Drive Hospital in Sebastopol. To close the surfer's wounds required eight sutures. "I now have a scar like a Nike swoosh," said Ferry.

SPECIES INVOLVED: A. Peter Klimley of the Bodega Bay Marine Laboratory at Bodega Bay believed that the incident involved a white shark, three to five metres in length. This was determined from the tooth impressions left in the tail of Greg Ferry's surfboard.

SOURCE: Ralph Collier (2003), page 158

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier