

The Rocks, Hutchinson Island



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 1998.09.27](#)

DATE: Sunday September 27, 1998

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at The Rocks, an unguarded beach on Hutchinson Island, Martin County, Florida, USA.

NAME: Kai Haire

DESCRIPTION: A six-year-old male from Jensen Beach.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, September 28, 1998

SEA CONDITIONS / ENVIRONMENT: The Rocks is a popular surfing spot north of Bathtub Reef Beach. Kai's mother blames the outer fringes of Hurricane Georges for churning local waters and bringing marine life closer to shore. "I think [the shark] just got brought out by the hurricane. All the jellyfish were out, all the sharks were out," she said. "The locks have also been open, and the water is pretty murky." Capt. Bruce Shaw of the Martin County Marine Safety department also said, "There's a lot of baitfish this time of the year migrating down the coast. Any time that happens, you have more sharks."

NARRATIVE: Kai's parents, Ron Haire and Suzanne Deuser, are longtime surfers who moved from Hawaii to Jensen Beach about 11 years ago. Kai, which means "ocean" in a Hawaiian dialect, was raised around the water and already has gone lobster diving off the Keys. His parents began teaching him how to surf about a year ago.

As Kai was paddling his board to catch the next swell, a shark grabbed his leg and dragged him off his board. Kai began kicking and thrashing in the water, and the shark quickly let go.

Kai said, "It was scary. I knew it was a shark 'cause it feeled like one," Kai said. "It pulled me under, too. It hurt." The boy made his way to shore. Next day, the boy was already planning to get in the water; he said, ""Surfing is fun. I won't get hit again."

"He was fine the whole time," said his mother. "I was the one who was a mess."

INJURY: The boy sustained puncture wounds to the leg.

TREATMENT: Kai's parents drove him to Martin Memorial Medical Center in Stuart where the wound was repaired with 30 stitches.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

SOURCE: The Stuart (Florida) News, September 29, 1998