

ACTIVITY: Fishing

CASE: GSAF 2000.06.29

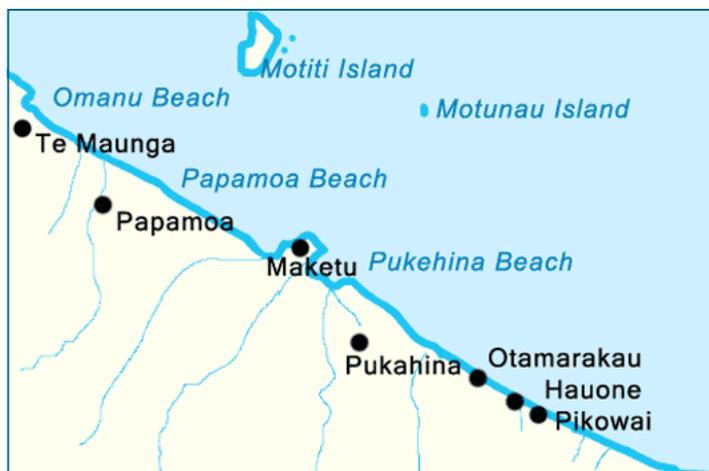
DATE: Thursday June 29, 2000

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Bay of Plenty off Papamoa Beach, North Island, New Zealand.

37°43'S, 176°19'E

BOAT: A 3.8-metre rubber dinghy powered by an outboard motor.

OCCUPANTS: Two males: 26-year-old Craig Ward and 33-year-old Gavin John Halse.



BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 11% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. New Moon, July 2, 2000.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Five kilometres

TIME: 07h30

NARRATIVE: When the shark started circling their dinghy, the two men started their outboard, pulled in their lines and moved away. Ten minutes later they judged it safe to start fishing again. Without warning, the shark came back and sank its teeth into the front of the boat, holing the main air compartment. "There was a massive hiss. I put my hand into the water and over the hole to slow the air coming out, while Craig tried to cut the anchor rope," said Mr Halse. The anchor rope was too difficult to slice through, so the men hauled it up and took off, trailing a fishing line while using a mobile phone to call police. After putting a couple of kilometres between them and the shark, the pair struggled into lifejackets they had taken off while fishing. In their haste, Mr. Halse tumbled into the sea, but managed to scramble back on board. The two men then worked frantically on the boat's foot pump, eventually reaching shore in the longest 15 minutes of their lives – with a very flat and dodgy dinghy.

Inspector Mark O'Connor said police could not believe how calm Mr. Halse was, briefing them clearly from the sinking boat with his phone and even using a global positioning system to provide a grid reference. But Mr. Halse wasn't so sure: "I didn't feel that calm. The boat was getting flatter and flatter." Mr. Ward, said that being able to see the shore gave him confidence but it was "all on out there for a while. It has certainly made my holiday, but with no boat we might have to go surfcasting or something safer."

INJURY: No injury to occupants of the boat

DAMAGE TO BOAT: The boat was nearly deflated when the men arrived back on shore.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a two-metre mako shark. The fishermen described the shark's behavior as "inquisitive".

SOURCES: New Zealand Herald; Interview with G. J. Halse.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Richard Weeks, Global Shark Accident File