

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2000.07.17

DATE: Monday July 17, 2000

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean near the Oceanic Pier at Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina, USA.

34.2°N, 77.8°W

NAME: Patrick G. Bruff

DESCRIPTION: The surfer is a 16-year-old male from Wilmington, North Carolina.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, July 16, 2000.

ENVIRONMENT: “This time of year we have a lot of baitfish in the water, and predators follow that bait in,” said Andy Wood, education curator at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. Sharks are a common sight along area beaches, but bites are rare.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 25 yards from the beach and 150 yards north of the pier.

NARRATIVE: There were “a lot of people in the water” reported the press. Patrick Bruff was with a group of other surfers waiting for a wave. He was sitting on his board, his feet dangling in the water, when he felt a tug on his leg. He looked down and saw his foot in the mouth of a shark.

INJURY: The surfer’s right foot was bitten.

FIRST AID: The surfer was brought to the beach and treated by lifeguards until an ambulance arrived.

TREATMENT: He was treated at New Hanover Regional Medical Center and released.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

SOURCES: Charlotte Observer, July 20, 2000, page 1A and August 23, 2000, page 2B; Frank Schwartz, page 23

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Clay Creswell, GSAF



A Shark WMS 9-18 2-18-00

Teen-age surfer suffers fish's bite

By **MARK SCHREINER**

Staff Writer

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH — A surfer was severely bitten by a fish here Monday, the second such incident in as many days in regional waters.

Police said Patrick G. Bruff, 16, of Wilmington was bitten in the right foot while surfing in the Atlantic Ocean near the Oceanic Pier. Mr. Bruff told authorities he believed a shark bit him, but because the incident happened quickly, that could not be confirmed.

He was treated and released at New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

It was the third reported shark bite along North Carolina shores this summer.

A 14-year-old was bitten while surfing off Holden Beach in Brunswick County on Sunday evening. He believed he was bitten by a shark and described the animal as 6 feet long with a 1-foot dorsal fin.

Patrick told authorities the animal was gray and that its mouth was approximately 1½ feet across, but he couldn't estimate its length or direction of travel.

He and several surfers were about 25 yards out to sea and about 150 yards north of the pier. He was sitting on his board and dangling his feet in the water when he was bitten.

"There were a lot of people in the water and then there was some commotion," said Bill Columbus, a fellow surfer. "At first I thought someone was hit by a surfboard."

Patrick was brought to the beach and treated by lifeguards until an ambulance arrived.

"You could see that he was bit pretty bad," said Justin Hovey of Columbia, Md., who watched the attack from the deck of the nearby Hanover Seaside Club.

Sharks are a common sight along area beaches, but shark bites are rare. Surfers and swimmers have also been bitten when they encounter patrolling bluefish or barracudas.

"It's not beyond the realm of possibility that it was a shark," said Andy Wood, education curator at the N.C. Aquarium at Fort Fisher. "This time of year we have a lot of bait fish in the water, and predators follow that bait in."