

**ACTIVITY:** Floating

**CASE:** GSAF 2001.07.00

**DATE:** July 2001

**LOCATION:** The accident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Jekyll Island, Glynn County, Georgia, USA

**NAME:** John Davis

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 35-year-old male, a school custodian from Milledgeville.

**BACKGROUND**

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Knee-deep

**TIME:** 18h30

**NARRATIVE:** He was floating in the shallows, feeling for sea shells, when his foot was nipped.

**INJURY:** He sustained a two-inch cut on the dorsum of his left foot.

**TREATMENT:** He was treated at Southeast Georgia Regional Medical Center in Brunswick. The injury required six stitches and he received a tetanus shot.

**SPECIES:** Davis did not see the shark, but it was thought that the accident involved a small pup.

**SOURCES:** Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 5, 2001; Florida Times-Union, September 5, 2001; Rome News-Tribune, Thursday September 6, 2001, page 5A



*Jekyll Island*



# Few shark attacks in Georgia waters

● The state has had only 9 confirmed attacks off its coast since 1918.

The Associated Press

Scientists and fishermen say there are plenty of sharks in the waters off Georgia's coast, but records show they almost never bother swimmers.

There have been just nine confirmed attacks off the state's coast since 1918, according to the University of Florida's International Shark Attack File. None of those attacks was fatal.

Interest in shark attacks has been heightened this summer because of highly publicized attacks, including a man who was killed by a shark in North Carolina waters last weekend and an 8-year-old Florida boy whose arm was torn off.

But the number of attacks this year has not been unusually high, according to the ISAF. Worldwide, 52 attacks have been recorded this year, compared to 84 recorded in all of last year.

Still, officials on Tybee Island have introduced a resolution to close the municipal pier and beaches to shark fishing. The measure will come up for a second reading Sept. 13, city manager Tom Cannon said.

"We were having people throwing chum (bloody bait) off the pier, right in the center of one of our most popular swimming beaches," he said.

A Milledgeville man said he was bitten on the foot in July by what may have been a small shark while he was floating in

knee-deep water feeling for sea shells on Jekyll Island.

Because the man, John Davis, did not see what injured him, the bite was not recorded as a shark attack, said Susan Bates, spokeswoman for Southeast Georgia Regional Medical Center in Brunswick.

Davis, a 35-year-old school custodian, said a doctor at the hospital told him he probably was bitten by a baby shark, which has enough teeth to do damage. "He knew as soon as he looked at that it was a shark bite," Davis said.

The bite left a 2-inch cut on top of his left foot that required six stitches and a tetanus shot.

Coastal fishermen have long claimed that St. Andrews Sound, between Jekyll and Little Cumberland islands, is a gathering area for large sharks.

But Carolyn Belcher, a biologist for the University of Georgia Marine Extension Service, said her studies show Georgia's most prevalent shark species are Atlantic sharpnose and bonnethead sharks, which are both small.

Belcher has conducted research in the state's nine inshore sounds and estuaries as part of an East Coast project to determine the location of shark nursery grounds.

This year, she has caught and released more than 300 juvenile sharks. She's seen 10 different species, including blacktip, sandbar, Atlantic sharpnose, bonnethead, finetooth, scalloped hammerhead, bull, lemon and spinner.