

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 2002.07.20

DATE: Saturday July 20, 2002

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off the 6600 block of Ocean Drive in Emerald Isle, Carteret County, North Carolina, USA.

34.7°N, 77.0°W

NAME: Mary Katherine Strong

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer is a 15-year-old female from Greensboro, North Carolina.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 16h55, Cherry Point recorded mostly cloudy skies and visibility of seven miles. The air temperature was 93.9°F [34.4°C], dew point 73°F [22.8°C], humidity 51%, sea level pressure 29.92 in [1013.1 hPa], and wind direction was West at 10.4 mph [16.7 km/h].

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, July 24, 2002

SEA CONDITIONS: High tide was at 16h16, low tide at 20h05.

DEPTH OF WATER: Four feet

TIME: 17h00

NARRATIVE: Mary Katherine Strong had just arrived for vacation with her parents and was swimming while her family unpacked the car. She was in the water for about five minutes before something bit her leg. She got out of the water without assistance.

INJURY: The swimmer's calf was bitten. No bones were broken or fractured but there was considerable tissue damage and tooth marks were evident.

TREATMENT: She was initially treated in the ER at Carteret General Hospital, then transferred to Duke University Medical Center where she underwent surgery.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Based on a photograph of the wound, Frank Schwartz, a shark expert at the UNC Marine Lab in Morehead City, confirmed that the incident involved 1.8- to 2.1-metre [six to seven foot] bull shark, *Carcharhinus leucas*, with a mass of approximately 190 lbs.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Clay Creswell, GSAF



Expert suspects vacationer bitten by 6-7 ft. bull shark

Greensboro teen recovering after surgery at Duke center

BY THOMAS DAIL

DAILY NEWS STAFF

EMERALD ISLE — A suspected shark attack in Emerald Isle over the weekend isn't keeping swimmers out of the beach town's waters.

Monday, vacationers ventured into the ocean near the site where 15-year-old Mary Katherine Strong of Greensboro was bitten Saturday by what a marine expert identified as a 6-to-7-foot bull shark.

Ken Sensor of Collingswood, N.J., said Monday the attack wasn't going to keep him out of the water.

"Not at the prices I pay to get down here," he said.

Ken and his wife, Nancy, were on the beach less than a block from the attack all day Saturday, but went inside at 4:30, about a half-hour before it happened.

Nancy said the rare prospect of a shark attack makes her a little reticent of the ocean, but doesn't keep her out of it.

"I'm always a little nervous about it," she said.

Resort town issues advisory

Emerald Isle town officials issued an advisory Monday morning listing steps swimmers could take to avoid trouble with sharks. Meanwhile Strong was recovering from surgery at Duke University Medical Center. She was listed in good condition Monday afternoon.

Strong had just arrived for vacation with her parents and was swimming in about 4 feet of water near the 6600 block of Ocean Drive around 5 p.m. while her family unpacked the car. She was in the