

**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2003.04.20.c](#)

**DATE:** Sunday April 20, 2003

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Canaveral National Seashore, known among locals as Playalinda, in Brevard County, Florida, USA. 28°39'53"N, 80°38'21"W

**NAME:** Tommy Ryan

**DESCRIPTION:** The surfer is a 30-year-old male from Orlando, Florida. He has been surfing for 15 years.

### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Gibbous, 81% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Last Quarter, April 23, 2003.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Playalinda Beach is on a barrier Island separated from the mainland by the Indian River. The barrier island is a thin ribbon of sand lying between the Atlantic Ocean and Mosquito Lagoon. In some places it is no more than 100 yards wide. Unlike many barrier islands with primary and secondary dunes, Playalinda has only a single dune. There were no lifeguards nearby, but Ryan said he doubted a lifeguard could have done much to prevent his injury.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 15 yards

**TIME:** Afternoon

**NARRATIVE:** He was surfing with friends. "The shark came up from underneath and grabbed my foot. I knew immediately that I'd been bit by a shark," said Ryan. "I got back on my board and sat down. I turned around and started paddling in, trying to keep my bloody foot out of the water," he said.

**INJURY:** The surfer had a five-inch-deep wound in his left foot. "There's major lacerations on each side of my foot, even up by the toe," said the surfer. "[The shark] dug in and severed four tendons and sank into the bone."

**FIRST AID:** "I walked up to where my friends were and they helped me from there, carried me over the dune, over the bridge and down the stairs." An off-duty police officer in the parking area assisted Ryan into the back of his truck and tried to stem the bleeding with a surfboard leash. "By the time we got up to the ranger's station, there was blood all over," said Ryan.

**TREATMENT:** Ryan was treated by Dr. Robert McShane, orthopedic surgeon, at Parrish Medical Center in Titusville.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** Not identified

**SOURCE:** Orlando Sentinel, April 22, 2003, page B3

© Global Shark Accident File, 2003. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced in any form without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.

