

**ACTIVITY:** Fishing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2003.09.14.b](#)

**DATE:** Sunday September 14, 2003

**LOCATION:** The incident took place at Melkbosstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

**BOAT:** Rubber Duck [Inflatable boat]

**OCCUPANTS:** Rudolf Bokelmann, 36-years-old, and his friend, 26-year-old Izak Vermeulen of Duynefontein.

### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Gibbous, 87% of the Moon's visible disk illuminated. Full Moon, September 10, 2003.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 500 metres

**TIME:** 09h50

**NARRATIVE:** The men had been fishing for kob but when nothing was happening, decided to pull in their bait. As they were doing so, the cow shark came towards them and lodged its teeth firmly in the front right-hand side of the boat where Bokelmann was working. Bokelmann, whose right hand had been operated on earlier in the week, jumped back in fright.

Vermeulen came forward and stabbed the back of the shark's head eight times. They grabbed its tail and hauled the shark, which was still alive, on board. "This is the first time that a cow shark has attacked in all my time on the sea," said Bokelmann. With the help of other rubber duck crew in the area, they managed to get to shore and report the incident at the Melkbosstrand police station. The police gave them permission to kill the shark.

Bokelmann said he suspected the shark had been after the bait he was pulling in but that its teeth had got stuck in the rubber duck. "It's completely unnatural for a cow shark to attack a boat like this. In my experience, I found that all sharks are human friendly – provided you are not in their territory," said Bokelmann, a part-time fisherman with 20 years experience.

**INJURY:** No injury to occupants.

**DAMAGE TO BOAT:** Vermeulen, who fishes full time and is the owner of the rubber duck, said they would have to patch the front and nose, which would cost about R1500 to R2000.

**SPECIES:** The incident involved a two-metre cow shark,

**SOURCE:** Cape Times

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Erich Ritter, Ph.D., GSAF



*Melkbosstrand fishermen Sakkie Vermeulen and Rudolf Bokelmann with the cow shark they claimed they had to kill in self-defense.*

Photo: Karin Retief, Cape Times