

ACTIVITY: Surf-skiing
CASE: **GSAF 2005.10.01**
DATE: Saturday October 1, 2005
LOCATION: Sunny Cove, Fish Hoek, Western Cape Province, South Africa. The incident took place about 100 metres from where Tyna Webb was killed by a shark in November 2004.

NAME: Trevor Wright.
DESCRIPTION: He is a 52- or 54-year-old male from Fish Hoek, a surveyor at the city council.



Photo: Andrew Ingram, Cape Times

Trevor Wright and his shark-bitten ski.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, October 3, 2005

ENVIRONMENT: The National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) warned the public that a four-metre shark had been seen in the waters between Glencairn Beach and Fish Hoek. NSRI's Craig Lambinon said lifeguards at Fish Hoek beach cleared the water on Friday after a shark spotter saw the shark in the area several times. He said the public were asked not to enter the sea between Muizenberg and Simon's Town due to the shark's aggressive behaviour.

Three hours before Trevor Wright's surfski was bitten by a shark, the beach at Sunny Cove was closed because of a shark sighting. Wright said he had heard of two other groups of paddlers who had spotted sharks in the Simon's Town area in the past month. Although the sky was overcast when the incident took place, regular paddler Margaret Silk, owner of Paddlers Kayak in Simon's Town, said: "The sun came out three weeks ago, so there have been more paddlers in the water ever since. The sharks have always been there."

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 80 metres

TIME: 15h00

NARRATIVE: Trevor Wright and his paddling partner Alan Weston set off near Sunny Cove Station. Shortly afterwards Wright felt a knock at the back of his surfski. "I suspected it was a shark and shouted to Alan that there was trouble," he said. "The next thing I knew, the thing had come around to the front of my surfski. All I saw was an open mouth and eyes looking up at me." Wright said although he panicked when he was bumped, he thought: "It's either going to be you or me – and it's not going to be me."

"When I saw the thing with its open mouth at the front of my ski, it looked really mean and I thought this is not going to be a joke. It means serious business," said Wright. While the shark bit the front end of his surfski, Wright rested the back of his paddle on the water to support him so that he would not fall out. Before he knew it, the shark had moved alongside. "I don't know where its head or tail was," he said. "There was just this huge body next to

me. I didn't see the fin. I thought it was going to knock me out, but it must have dived."

Alan Weston said, "It looked like a movie. Trevor shouted to me and I could see there was something wrong. But then I just saw the shark's head breach the water and how it took out his boat. I paddled like heck towards him so that he could hang onto my boat just in case he fell out, but luckily the shark disappeared."

"I just turned towards the rocks and paddled as fast as I could back to the shore," said Wright.

INJURY: No injury

DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT: The bow of Wright's surfski was bitten by the shark.

SPECIES: The incident involved a four-metre white shark.

Next day, four white sharks were spotted hugging the coast in False Bay as the predators moved away from their winter feeding ground off Seal Island. A Base 4 helicopter reported that two white sharks were seen cruising off Muizenberg's back line and another two were swimming close to Fish Hoek beach.

Clive Wakeford, president of Western Province Lifesaving, confirmed that a white shark was also seen swimming near the Sunny Cove walkway at 10h30 on Sunday. According to Wakeford, the shark tends to appear between 10h00 and 11h00, and again at 15h00. "We are not sure why this is the pattern, but Marine Coastal Management will do a study," he said.

SOURCES: News24.com, October 1, 2005; Cape Times, October 3, 2005; Cape Argus, October 3, 2005, page 3

