



ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE: GSAF 2005.11.24

DATE: Thursday November 24, 2005

LOCATION: The incident took place in the South Pacific Ocean off Nali, Maré, Loyalty Islands.

NAME: Emile

DESCRIPTION: He is a male.

BACKGROUND

ENVIRONMENT: The archipelago of the Loyalty Islands lies 100 kilometres east of mainland New Caledonia, separated by a 2,500-metre-deep strait. Maré is the southernmost of the four Loyalty Islands. Its 7,000 inhabitants live in the island's eight districts: Guahma, Tadine, Wabao, Eni, Medu, Laroche, Tawainedre and Penelo. An island of contrasts, there are 50-foot cliffs, basalt rocks, dark forests, and small coves with caves and white sand beaches lining the clear waters of the lagoon. On the west coast are stands of coconut palms, pines, and natural rock pools framed by coral.

The divers were aware that sharks frequented the area, but had never experienced a problem with them.



TIME: 20h30 (9:30 pm)

NARRATIVE: Emile and his friends were spearfishing at night. He had one fish on his belt and had just speared another. He was at his bag (where he kept his catch) and was removing the fish from his spear when he felt a pain in his forearm. As he lifted his hand, the shark bit his arm, then released him. The diver believed that the shark was after some fish, and when it realized his arm was not a fish, it released its grip.

His friends were too far away to be of help, so the diver fashioned a tourniquet with an elastic cord. He swam ashore and drove to a dispensary for medical treatment.

INJURY: The diver's forearm bitten. The wound measured about 15 centimetres.

TREATMENT: At the dispensary, the wound was repaired with 15 sutures.

SPECIES: Not identified.

SOURCE: Les Nouvelles Caledoniennes, November 29, 2005