

ACTIVITY: Surf-skiing

CASE: GSAF 2006.07.28

DATE: Friday July 28, 2006

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean just opposite Jaeger's Walk near the point of Fish Hoek Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

NAME: Lyle Maasdorp (or Maarsdorp)

DESCRIPTION: He is a 19-year-old male, a Fish Hoek lifesaver.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 10% of the Moon was illuminated.

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was murky as result of rain and rivers washing sand out to sea, conditions known to increase shark activity.

ENVIRONMENT: From July to October whales come into Fish Hoek Bay and loll around just 50 metres from the shore in preparation for mating and giving birth. Huge schools of dolphins are also sometimes seen. Gregg Oelofse, of the Shark Working Group, said shark spotters between Muizenberg and Fish Hoek had recorded no sightings of sharks in the eight weeks before the incident.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE 20 metres

TIME: 16h30 [4:30 pm]

NARRATIVE: According to Maasdorp, he and four fellow surf-skiers, all crew members of Fish Hoek Lifesaving Club, had launched from Fish Hoek and intended to paddle to Simonstown. Ten minutes later they were passing Fish Hoek Point at Sunny Cove, when the shark was encountered.

"I did not see or hear anything until I suddenly found that I was being lifted up from behind," said Maasdorp. "At first I thought I was on a rock and the water was receding and then I thought one of the guys was playing a trick on me, but then I heard the sound and more crunching sounds. I fell off my surf-ski between my ski and the shark. I realized it was a shark when my hand landed on the shark's back. Then the shark started thrashing, tearing out a piece of the ski. The ski started shipping water and with the



Jaeger's Walk wraps along the rocky coastline taking the visitor as far as Sunny Cove.

buoyancy changing I was sinking down." Maasdorp stayed with his surf-ski and then abandoned it after a fellow paddler helped him onto the back of his surf-ski and paddled him to rocks where they got out of the water.

Lifesaver Anthony Pearse was about 10 metres behind Maasdorp when the shark bit his ski. "There was the shark, out of nowhere, I could not believe it," Pearse said. "I saw him fall out of the ski onto the shark and then climb onto his ski and over the other side."

Pearse paddled up to Maasdorp and when it seemed the shark had left, Maasdorp swam over to Pearse who was a metre or two away. Pearse helped him get onto the back of his ski, then rowed for the rocks about 130 metres away, where they both got out of the water "quite quickly", Pearse said. Maasdorp caught a lift back to the club, while his companions paddled back, hugging the rocks. He then sped out with a rubber duck to recover the damaged ski.



The damaged surf-ski

INJURY: No injury to surf-skier

DAMAGE TO SKI: The shark took a large bite out of the rear end of the surf-ski. It was too damaged to be repaired. Maasdorp said he plans to cut off the back half and mount it on his bedroom wall.

SPECIES: Allison Kock of the shark working group interviewed Lyle and investigated the bite marks on the surf-ski. She believes the incident involved a white shark, approximately 3.5 to 4 metres in length. The tooth impressions on the surf-ski indicated the width of the shark's jaw was approximately 40 cm.

SOURCES: Cape Argus, July 29, 2006, page 1; Cape Times, July 31, 2006

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Allison Kock