

**ACTIVITY:** Spearfishing

**CASE:** GSAF 2006.09.30

**DATE:** Saturday September 30, 2006

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in False Bay, near Miller's Point between Rumbly Bay and Castle Rock, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

34°13'S, 18°28'S

**NAME:** Joseph Johnston

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 36-year-old male from Strandfontein, a fire department training officer and a rescue diver. He was wearing a camouflage wetsuit.

### BACKGROUND

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter

**SEA CONDITIONS:** Underwater visibility was "good".

**ENVIRONMENT:** A week before this incident, a white shark, estimated to be about 4.5 metres in length, was spotted off Fish Hoek beach and on October 1st a white shark was seen in Fish Hoek Bay. White sharks appear

to be following their spring migration inshore into False Bay, according to experts. "We are hoping that, particularly at this time, people are going to report sharks spotted from the shore and in the water," said Yvonne Kamp, co-ordinator of the shark-spotting program.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 300 metres

**TIME:** Afternoon

**NARRATIVE:** Joseph Johnston and a group of divers were spearfishing from shore and about to move to another reef when the shark swam towards him, its jaws agape. "We often see sharks and they never bother us, but this one was heading straight for me," he said. When the shark was about two metres away from Johnston it opened its jaws. Johnston said he had instinctively grabbed his speargun, aimed and fired. "I hit it in the nose and it turned and headed towards Louis."

Louis Simpson of Ottery was a about two metres away. "It moved underneath me – it was definitely a great white. It could've been at least four metres," Simpson said. The shark moved vigorously in the water, causing the top of the 7mm-diameter spear to break off. It swam away with the point stuck in its nose.

Simpson said the shark's appearance had been unexpected because the group had used camouflage suits, so that they could not be mistaken for seals and had boogie boards, so there was no fish blood in the water.

"We got everyone out of the water and called the shark spotters to notify them about the injured animal," Johnston said. The encounter did not put Johnston off spearfishing; he was back in the water next day.

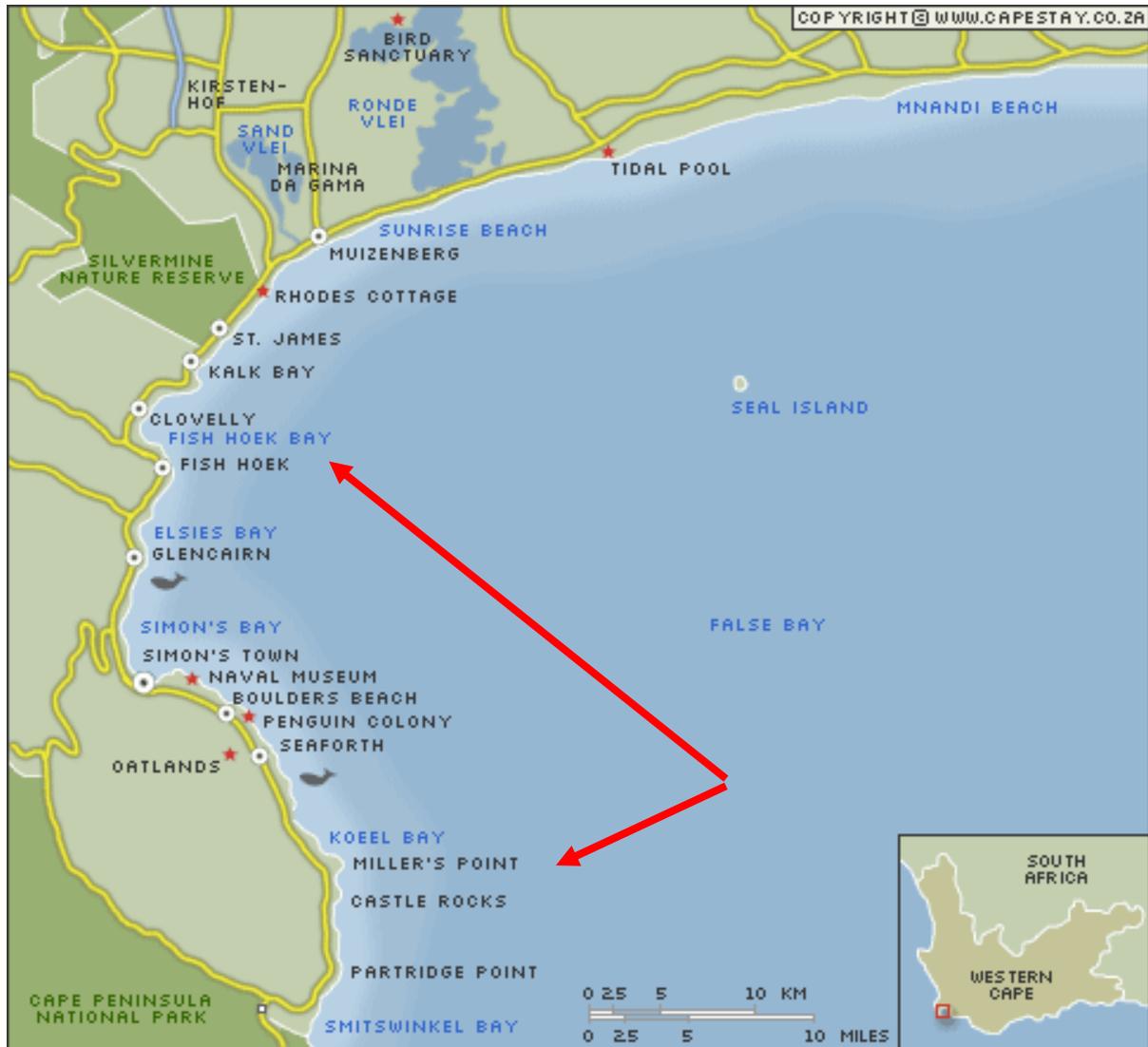
**INJURY:** The shark simply made a 'threat display', but did not injure the diver.

**SPECIES:** According to the divers, the incident involved a white shark, *Carcharodon*



*carcharias*, about four metres in length.

**SOURCE:** Natasha Prince, Cape Argus, October 2, 2006,  
<http://allafrica.com/stories/2006100220609.html>



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