

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2007.03.11](#)

DATE: Sunday March 11, 2007

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Tiger Shores Beach on South Hutchinson Island. Tiger Shores Beach is a quarter-mile north of Stuart Beach off State Road A1 in Martin County, Florida, USA.

NAME: Adam McMichael

DESCRIPTION: He is a 29-year-old male from Boynton Beach, a Palm Beach County prosecutor. McMichael and his wife, Amber, an attorney based in Coral Springs, are avid surfers who often come to Stuart's beaches on weekends.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 12h53, Stuart recorded visibility of 10 miles [16.1 km] and scattered clouds. The air temperature was 77°F [25°C], dew point 60.1°F [15.6°C], humidity 56%, and sea level pressure was 30.18 inches [1021.8 hPa].

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 57% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Last Quarter, March 12, 2007.

SEA CONDITIONS: The National Oceanic Data Center reports the average coastal water temperature at Stuart Beach in March is 70°F. However, beaches along the eastern coast of Florida were reporting higher water temperatures than usual.

The water was murky and choppy, but the waves were "kind of flat," according to the surfer.

ENVIRONMENT: The incident took place at unguarded beach; no lifeguards were present.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 40 yards

TIME: 13h00

NARRATIVE: Adam McMichael waded in, paddled out "maybe 40 yards", caught a wave, then another and on the third he dropped off the board and plunged underwater. As he was preparing to push off to the surface, his right arm swept the ocean floor. At that instant, the shark swam underneath him and grabbed his arm. The surfer swung at the shark with his left hand and after a second or two it let go.

When he surfaced, his first thought was to get out of the water as quickly as possible. "I didn't really think the shark would hit me again, but I tried to get on my board and paddle in. When I looked down in the water, there was blood everywhere," he said. He held his injured arm in the air and yelled for help. As he paddled back toward the beach, he saw people responding to his calls, and another surfer, Craig Price, swimming out to meet and guide him to shore.



Adam McMichael

INJURY: The surfer sustained lacerations to his right forearm and hand.

FIRST AID: As McMichael paddled back to shore, at least 10 people ran toward the water to help him. Jensen Beach resident Craig Price, heard someone yell, 'Shark!' One of the other people rushed to retrieve a medical kit from his car and dressed the wound while two off-duty paramedics elevated McMichael's arm and compressed an artery to slow blood loss.

During the brief wait for Martin County Fire-Rescue workers to arrive, McMichael, who never lost consciousness, told Price he "just felt a tug" and never saw the shark.

TREATMENT: The surfer was taken to Martin Memorial Medical Center in Stuart where nerves were reconnected and an artery was repaired during a two-hour surgical procedure. According to the surgeon, the shark's teeth missed all the major tendons and ligaments. The surfer, he said, would lose some sensation on the dorsal surface of his right hand, but should recover all motion. The surfer was discharged from the hospital on Monday March 12, 2007.

SPECIES: Not identified. The surfer never got a look at the shark, but he could feel its broad nose and estimated it to be three to four feet in length.

NOTE: Beachgoers farther south were dealing with a different sort of danger in the water. In a three-hour period, lifeguards on Miami Beach had to rescue 15 people from strong rip currents. Two of those rescued were taken to local hospitals as a precaution. The hospitals said both were treated and released. Yellow and purple warning flags were put up at lifeguard stands to warn those on Spring Break of the hazardous conditions in the water. High atmospheric pressure in our region is expected to keep up those dangerous conditions in the water through Monday [March 12, 2007].

SOURCES: Jeremy Ashton, TCPalm, March 12, 2007,
http://www1.tcpalm.com/tcp/local_news/article/0,2545,TCP_16736_5410953,00.html

CBS4.com, http://cbs4.com/topstories/local_story_071085015.html

Michael Laforgia and Daphne Duret, Palm Beach Post, March 13, 2007

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/localnews/content/local_news/epaper/2007/03/13/m1a_mcshark_0313.html?imw=Y