

**ACTIVITY:** Swimming

**CASE:** GSAF 2007.03.12

**DATE:** Monday March 12, 2007

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Coral Sea at Moore Park, near Bundaberg in southeast Queensland, Australia.

**NAME:** Mary Jane Ryan

**DESCRIPTION:** She is a 59-year-old female.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At 15h00, Bundaberg recorded partly cloudy skies and visibility of 19 miles [30 km]. The air temperature was 93°F [34°C], dew point 77°F [25°C], humidity 52%, sea level pressure 29.66 inches [1004 hPa], and wind direction was East at 13.8 mph [22.2 km/h]. At Moore Park, however, the air temperature was 38°C.

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Gibbous (Last Quarter), 51% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. New Moon, March 19, 2007.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea was calm and the incident took place at low tide.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Moore Park, a beachside community, is located 21 kilometres north of Bundaberg. During the summer months it is a loggerhead and green turtle nesting area.

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Chest-deep

**TIME:** 15h30

**NARRATIVE:** Escaping the sweltering heat, Mary Jane Ryan was taking a leisurely swim. She was alone. "Suddenly I felt like I'd been hit by a truck," she said. "I knew it was something big. I knew it was a shark and I had to get out of there or I'd be dead. End of story. People said, 'did you look around?' and it was like 'no', I just knew I had to get out of there".

**INJURY:** The woman sustained bruises to her right hand and arm, cuts to her foot and a laceration on her lower leg. "The doctors even found some of its teeth in my bone," she said

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** "Well, I just ran towards the beach. I started to fall because I knew I was losing blood," said Ms. Ryan. "I was scared to death that the thing was going to come back and take another bite out of me...or there was a pack of them. I was remembering that girl that got attacked off Stradbroke and I could see the blood coming down my leg and I ran up the beach to where my towel was and I wrapped the towel around my leg. There was no one on the beach, so I ran to the kiosk where I knew Jay (the owner) was and I was screaming 'help, help' because there was a flap on my leg that was open and you could see all the fat and muscle." Kiosk owner Jay Walls and a passing woman rushed to Ms Ryan's aid and kept pressure on the wound with towels until ambulance



officers arrived, by which time she said she was in excruciating pain. Queensland Ambulance Service transported her to Bundaberg Hospital.

After surgery to clean the wound, Ms Ryan was scheduled for another round late the next day to suture the laceration which runs from her ankle to her knee. She is expected to make a good recovery.

**SPECIES:** Ms Ryan said doctors estimated the shark had probably been 2- to 2.5-metres in length, judging by its teeth marks. Locals believe it may have been a bull shark – one of the species which frequents Bundaberg waters.

**SOURCE:** ABC News Online

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200703/s1870374.htm>; <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,21385646-421,00.html>

**NOTE:** Ms. Ryan said she regularly swam at the beach, where she had lived for the past 10 years but would not be going back in again. “I will not go in at Moore Park again,” she said, adding that she now wanted to warn others about the dangers. “This has been really frightening...the worst thing that's ever happened to me in my life. It would have killed a child or a person who was small and frail.”



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