

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: [GSAF 2007.09.30.a](#)

DATE: Sunday September 30, 2007

LOCATION: The attack took place in the South Pacific Ocean in the Bay of Luengoni at Lifou, the largest of the Loyalty Islands, a territory of New Caledonia.

NAME: Stéphanie Belliard

DESCRIPTION: She was a 23-year-old female. She was a nurse from mainland France who had just finished contract work at Gaston Bourret Hospital in Nouméa, New Caledonia. She was in Lifou for a short beach holiday before flying home.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 05h00, Mou recorded an air temperature of 62°F [17°C], dew point 58°F [14°C], humidity 81%, sea level pressure 30.09 in [1019 hPa], and wind direction was East at 6.9 mph [11.1 km/h]. By 11h00, the air had warmed to 76°F [25°C], dew point 60 F [15°C], humidity dropped to 47%, sea level pressure was 30.11 inches [1020 hPa], and the wind increased to 13.8 mph [22.2 km/h].

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 79% of the Moon is illuminated (October 1).

ENVIRONMENT: A series of earthquakes rocked the Loyalty Islands on September 28, 2007. There were many turtles in the water and animal waste had been dumped nearby.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 200 metres.

DEPTH: "Relatively shallow water"

TIME: Early morning.

NARRATIVE: Stéphanie Belliard and a friend went for an early morning swim and were taking photographs. They were swimming to Rocher Conforama, a small islet, when Stéphanie was bitten by a shark.

Her friend managed to swim ashore to seek help. A small boat (punt) set out from shore and retrieved the girl's body.

INJURY: Fatal. She sustained a deep bite that extended from the hip to the right knee and measured 35 to 40 cm. She died as result of massive blood loss while in the water.

SPECIES: It was initially believed the accident involved a four-metre tiger shark. An analysis by E. Clua and B. Séret based on the size and coloration of the shark, the characteristics of the wounds, and the behavior of the shark before and after the bite



Bay of Luengoni, Lifou



Rocher Conforama

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suggested that the accident involved a white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*, about four metres in length.

SOURCES: Les Nouvelles Caledoniennes, October 1, 2007; Clua E. and Séret B, Unprovoked Fatal Shark Attack in Lifou Island (Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, South Pacific) by a Great White Shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*: American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology, 2010 Jul 2



The Loyalty Islands are part of the French territory of New Caledonia, whose mainland is 60 miles [100 km] distant.

The archipelago consists of six inhabited islands: Lifou, Maré, Tiga, Ouvéa, Mouli and Faiava, and several smaller uninhabited islands and islets.

The attack took place on the southeast side of Lifou Island, in the Bay of Luengoni.

Following the attack, beaches were closed between Pointe Daussy and Cap De Flotte.



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