

ACTIVITY: Scuba diving

CASE: GSAF 2008.11.28

DATE: Friday November 28, 2008

LOCATION: The accident took place in the Red Sea on Elphinstone Reef, about 6.5 nautical miles from the Egyptian shore.

NAME: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Female

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, November 27, 2008

DEPTH OF WATER: The incident involved a submerged diver. The diver was at a depth of 30 feet when bitten.

TIME: Morning

NARRATIVE: "I was on a dive where there was a shortage of dive guides. At one point I saw an oceanic whitetip shark follow a diver. She had separated from the group and was 100 ft down. I followed ... just in case. It turned out that the diver was in a full blown anxiety attack but the dive guide had his own problems so I did a controlled emergency ascent with her. At the surface I calmed her down while still peeking down to see what the shark was doing (he was very excited, turns out he was fed before). The other divers interpreted his presence as curiosity and closed in on him to get their pics. At that point I saw that the shark is gonna bite if they don't back off. So I was in a bind: the girl was still in a near panic mode and I could not leave her at the surface (the dive guide was still involved in his problem) and I had to make a decision: stay with her or get the divers away from the shark (to give him space).

"I decided to stay with the woman until the Zodiac picked her up (since we were in the open ocean, she would have been completely lost if I had left her alone) and I just watched. Within 30 seconds it happened. It was to be expected. The shark showed very clear signs and the situation was text book ... I even heard the clamping of the shark at the surface (it happened about 30 ft down) ... I will write it down in great detail."

"I then ripped the dive base operator: one can't let nine divers go on an open water dive with just one dive guide who is not savvy with sharks of the area ... and I don't care if it is not cost efficient to have a second dive guide. This situation proved one more time (for me at least) that one can predict a bite if reading the body language and the situation correctly." ...*Dr. Erich Ritter*

INJURY: Laceration to fingers of one of the group of divers. When the shark approached her too close for comfort, she pushed the shark away and her fingers slipped into its



© Global Shark Accident File, 2008. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced in any form without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.

mouth.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: The diver was evacuated to Hurghada for medical treatment.

SPECIES: The incident involved a small oceanic whitetip shark.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Erich Ritter, GSAF



Oceanic whitetip shark, *C. longimanus*