

**ACTIVITY:** Fishing  
**CASE:** [GSAF 2009.03.01.b](#)  
**DATE:** Sunday, March 1, 2009  
**LOCATION:** 15 km off Bell Block, Taranaki, North Island, New Zealand.

**BOAT:** Unknown  
**OCCUPANTS:** Boyd Rutherford and Hamish Roper

**BACKGROUND**

**ENVIRONMENT:** The two fisherman noted that a feature of this summer's game fishing season had been the large number of makos in Taranaki waters.

**NARRATIVE:** The two friends were trolling and had already tagged and released two smaller mako sharks when the large shark arrived.

"We didn't see it coming," said Mr Rutherford. "We were trolling at around seven knots when the boat shuddered. I thought we'd hit a log. And then this big buggler of a shark came straight out of the water. It attacked the outboard, then it carried on up over the back of the boat and bit into the transom. It held on for a while then rolled back into the water. I'll always remember its teeth and one big eye that just looked at us."

**SPECIES:** According to Mr. Rutherford, the incident involved a mako shark 18 feet in length with a mass well over 400kg



*Boyd Rutherford surveys tooth marks on his boat's outboard motor after Sunday's attack by a monster mako shark. There are also tooth marks on the propeller proof of the size of the shark's jaws.*

### Brush with shark gets hearts pumping

***Two New Plymouth fishing buddies got the fright of their lives when their boat was attacked by a giant mako shark.***

But Boyd Rutherford and Hamish Roper are sure it was the shark that came off second-best because it left a trail of blood behind it after chomping into the spinning propeller of the boat's 200hp outboard motor.

But the big fish also caused some damage. Not only did it leave big toothmarks on the motor and on the boat's thick aluminium transom, but it also left bits of teeth embedded in the alloy.

The attack on Sunday was enough to make the two men high-tail it back to Port Taranaki for a calming beer at the New Plymouth Sport Fishing and Underwater Club.

"It got the heart going, that's for sure," said Mr Roper, a seasoned sport fisherman who during summer spends almost every day on the water big-game fishing with clients.

"There's a mako on the wall at the fishing club that weighed in at 379kg. I reckon the one that hit us was bigger than that," he said.

The two friends were trolling about 15km off Bell Block and had already tagged and released two smaller mako when the monster arrived.

"We didn't see it coming," recalled Mr Rutherford.

"We were trolling at around seven knots when the boat shuddered. I thought we'd hit a log. And then this big bugger of a shark came straight out of the water.

"It attacked the outboard, then it carried on up over the back of the boat and bit into the transom. It held on for a while then rolled back into the water.

"I'll always remember its teeth and one big eye that just looked at us."

Mr Roper remembers wondering if the monster shark was going to join them in their boat.

"Makos always attack from underneath, and this bugger absolutely nailed us.

"He was huge I'd estimate he may have been 18 foot and well over 400kg. I'm glad he didn't come aboard."

The pair say a feature of this summer's game fishing season had been the large number of makos in Taranaki waters.

The mako is not to be confused with another shark domiciled in Taranaki waters, the notorious 6m great white known as the Taranaki Terror.

**SOURCE:** Rob Maetzig (rob.maetzig@tnl.co.nz), Taranaki Daily News, Tuesday March 3, 2009, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/dailynews/4865838a6002.html>