

**ACTIVITY:** Swimming  
**CASE:** GSAF 2009.03.16.a  
**DATE:** Monday March 16, 2009  
**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Alenuihaha Channel.

**NAME:** Mike Spaulding  
**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 61-year-old male from Kula. He was inducted into the Hawaii Swimming Hall of Fame in 2008 for his seven successful channel swims between Hawaiian Islands.



### BACKGROUND

**WEATHER:** At 19h54, Kahului, recorded light rain and visibility of eight miles. The air temperature was 70°F, dew point 68°F, humidity 93%, sea level pressure 30.01 inches and wind direction was SE at 3.5 mph.

**MOON PHASE:** Last Quarter, March 18, 2009

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 11 miles

**DISTANCE FROM KAYAK:** Three feet

**TIME:** 20h00 (8 p.m)

**NARRATIVE:** Mike Spaulding was attempting to swim the nearly 30-mile Channel from the Big Island to Maui between the northern tip of the Big Island and the southeast shore of Maui. He had been swimming for four-and-a-half hours when he felt a sharp pain on his sternum and began moving toward the kayak accompanying him. About 15 seconds later, "I got hit in the calf," he said. "It was such a disappointment because I knew the swim was over. I was bleeding profusely." . . . "I didn't see it," he said of the shark. "All I felt was the bite, and I got the hell out of the water as quick as I could."

**INJURY:** He sustained a superficial wound to the chest and a three-inch-diameter, one-inch-deep wound to the posterior lower left leg.

**FIRST AID:** Spaulding scrambled into the kayak where Bubba McLean used a VHF radio to call a nearby support boat for help. The boat and its crew picked up the men and the kayak. Kihei resident Rob Phillips, coach of the Kihei Canoe Club, was on the boat and said everyone did what they could to make Spaulding comfortable and to stop the bleeding. Pressure was applied to the wound with a towel. Then, an antibiotic was put on the wound, which was covered with gauze and secured with duct tape, Phillips said. The crew took Spaulding to the Kihei Small Boat Ramp where his wife, Jill, was waiting to drive him to Maui Memorial Medical Center. Spaulding said that the boat ride took two-and-a-half hours, but he was not in a lot of pain. Instead, he was upset that his attempt to cross the channel was cut short.

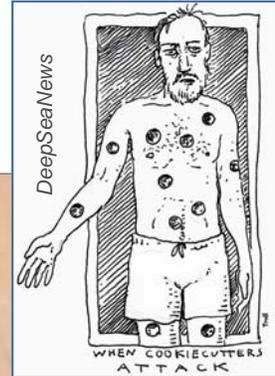
**TREATMENT:** The patient was treated at Maui Memorial Hospital.

**SPECIES:** It was speculated the incident involved a cookie cutter shark.

**SOURCES:** Brian Perry, Maui News,  
<http://www.mauinews.com/page/content.detail/id/516174.html?nav=10>

Ilima Loomis, Maui News,  
<http://www.mauinews.com/page/content.detail/id/546855/-Pushing-through-barriers--to-set-an-example.html?nav=10>

DeepSeaNews, <http://deepseanews.com/category/biodiversity/>



*Bite marks on Mike Spalding's chest, Tuesday, March 18, 2009  
Photo: Maui News*



*Registered nurse Lia Hannon waves goodbye to Kula resident Mike Spalding after paying him a visit in his room Tuesday afternoon at Maui Memorial Medical Center. Spalding was recuperating after being bitten Monday night, probably by a cookie-cutter shark, while attempting to swim from the Big Island to Maui in the Alenuihaha Channel Photo: Maui News*



*Mike Spalding uses a toy shark to show where he was bitten on his leg. Photo: Maui News*