



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2009.07.07](#)

DATE: Tuesday July 7, 2009

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Kakgats" at Jogensfontein, Stilbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

NAME: Paul Buckley

DESCRIPTION: He is a 37-year-old male from Claremont, Cape Town. He was wearing a wetsuit.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, July 7, 2009

SEA CONDITIONS: Still Bay NSRI station commander Rico Menezies said the water was "unclear" and the waves were "quite big". Earlier in the morning, however, the waves were perfect. "It was brilliant," said surfer Phil Norton. "It was probably the best. We were surfing six-foot peeling perfection," he said.

ENVIRONMENT: Stilbaai is situated along and around the estuary of the Goukou River. Jogensfontein lies (10 km / 6 miles) west of Stilbaai along a rocky coastline. Whale watching is a popular attraction in the area. Whales can be seen in the shallow water with mostly new-born calves from June through November. Two whales, as well as Cape fur seals, were in the vicinity at the time of the incident.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 metres

TIME: 11h15

NARRATIVE: Only one other surfer was still in the water when Paul Buckley encountered the shark. "I was actually paddling back to shore because I hadn't had that great surfing when I was flipped in the air with such force that I knew in my gut that it was a shark," said

Buckley. "It was like a 500-pound Rottweiler in a very bad mood; the force was incredible. I didn't see the shark's eyes because his back was towards me, but that's when I grabbed it by the tail. I thought if I held it by the tail, its mouth could not reach me again." Seconds later the shark released Buckley and he made it to shore.

Pieter "Boeta" de Witt, 14-years-old, witnessed the accident from the patio of his parents home. He said he saw two surfers in the water and one began to thrash about wildly. Boeta ran to the beach while his sister, Wilmarie, brought the car around. They saw Buckley paddle to the beach and ran to help him.

INJURY: The surfer sustained "a deep wound" to his left thigh.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Boeta and his sister rushed Buckley to a local doctor. Then the surfer was transferred to a hospital in Mossel Bay, 110 km from Stilbaai. The injury required 150 stitches and the surfer was discharged the next day.

DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD: The bite to the surfboard measured about 37cm [14.5 inches] in width.

SPECIES: According to the surfer, the shark was about 2.5-metres in length, but after examining the bite marks on the surfboard, NSRI station commander Rico Menezies estimated the shark to be more than 3.5 metres in length. Menezies said he was almost certain that the incident involved a white shark.

SOURCES: Weekend Post, July 8, 2009
<http://www.weekendpost.co.za/article.aspx?id=443196>
The Herald, July 9, 2009
<http://www.theherald.co.za/article.aspx?id=443438>
et al



*Paul Buckley, left, with Boeta de Witt who helped him get medical help after the shark accident
Note the shark bite on the surfboard*