



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2009.08.30](#)

DATE: Sunday August 30, 2009

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean off Huntington Beach, Orange County, California, USA.

NAME: Cory Hedgepeth

DESCRIPTION: He is a 6', 200-pound male from Huntington Beach, California, a sports columnist. He was wearing a full wetsuit and is an accomplished surfer.

SURFBOARD: He was using a seven-foot quad green board, pointed at the top with a fish design in back. "It is heavy on the fiberglass which might cause it to be a bit more reflective to light," said Corey.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: Sunny, hot, around 82°F. At 18h55, Los Alamitos recorded clear skies and visibility of 10 miles. The air temperature was 79°F, dew point 58.3°F, humidity 49%, sea level pressure 29.76 inches, and wind direction was South at 6.9 mph.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, September 4, 2009

SEA CONDITIONS: Warm, 69°F, maybe more. Underwater visibility was nil. "It was high tide," said Cory. "Most of the surf was mushy and rather easy to duck dive."

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ENVIRONMENT: Sandy with a few random strands of kelp. The surfer did not observe any marine mammals or fishing activity in the area.

DEPTH: Six feet

TIME: 18h30

NARRATIVE: Cory was just north of the pier, roughly 300 yards, near the grassy hill, but not as far as Dog Beach. The break sits almost dead straight out from the first set of steps on the grassy hill.

He had been in the water 30 minutes and was near the shore (due to high tide). There were swimmers around, probably 9 or 10, and about 12 surfers

“I duck dived under a four-foot wave. While I was underwater, everything was gentle until I felt a sudden jolt on the back of my board. It came from directly underneath and was enough to cause me to go almost vertical, feet up. It also caused the board to slip down my body. In ten years of surfing, I have never felt anything close to that. When I popped up out of the surf, I quickly inspected the board. I didn't see any fin damage. I really thought it had to be some type of strong fish, and considered a shark, but dismissed it due to the rare odds. Within one minute I paddled into the same spot, came down the wave, turned around, and saw a shark swimming into the wave exactly where I was hit. It swam across the wave, it was roughly four feet in length. It then turned on its side, exposing its white belly to me. I had no choice but dive into the wave with it, as the surf was breaking, however, it left me alone. It had a traditional shark body, much like a thresher. It got extremely close to me, within only a few feet. It was sort of thrashing in the wave. Because the sun was on its way to setting in HB, the waves were lit up pretty well, making it easy to see everything. This is the first time I have ever seen a shark in California waters.” ...*Cory Hedgepeth*

INJURY: The surfer was not injured by the shark.

SPECIES: Not identified

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier