

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2009.10.24

DATE: Saturday October 24, 2009

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean off Trail 5, San Onofre, San Diego County, California, USA.

33.3°N 117.3°W

NAME: Scott Barton

DESCRIPTION: He is a male, 5'10", weighs 190 pounds, and was wearing a short-sleeve wetsuit.

SURFBOARD: A 9'4" longboard

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The surfer estimated the air temperature at San Onofre was 75°F, and the air was calm. At 16h56, Camp Pendleton recorded clear skies and visibility of 10 miles. The air temperature was 73°F, dew point 55.9°F, humidity 55%, sea level pressure 29.83 inches and wind direction was SSW at 8.1 mph

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, October 25, 2009

SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature was about 68°F, and the water was glassy and calm. Underwater visibility was three to four feet.

ENVIRONMENT: There was no deep-water channel or drop off at the incident site but there was a lot of kelp floating around in the surf. No one was fishing nor were any marine mammals observed, but the surfer saw and felt fish in the water around his feet and legs prior to the accident.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 yards

DEPTH OF WATER: Four feet

TIME: 17h30

NARRATIVE: Scott Barton and Emily Sondergaard had been surfing about 45 minutes. "It was a beautiful afternoon, with almost no wind, warm air and water, and two to four foot fwaves coming in," said Scott. "I had just caught a wave and rode it in, and was turning my board around to paddle back out. As I was about to get back on my board to begin paddling, I felt something brush against the calf of my leg. I was wearing a spring suit, so I could distinctly feel that it was some type of animal, and not just a piece of kelp or seaweed. It startled me, so I kind of jumped up a bit to try to get back on my board, but before I could, I felt several sharp teeth puncture my big toe and underside of my foot. It caused a sharp pain, and I knew instantly that I was bleeding. My first reaction was to try to get it off so I shook my leg hard, and it let go. I called to my girlfriend that I had just been bitten, and that we should get out of the water. So we both exited the water and walked up the beach."

INJURY: Scott's left foot was injured. He sustained three puncture wounds on the big toe, each about 1 cm apart, one of which had a 1 cm tear. He also sustained a 1 cm laceration on the arch of his foot.



FIRST AID / TREATMENT. The two surfers cleaned and dried the cuts on the beach and went home.

SPECIES: The surfer did not see the shark. "I can guarantee it was not a stingray wound, as that would only leave one puncture and most likely, the stinger would be present," said Scott. "And it was not broken glass or anything, because I distinctly felt something clamp down on my toe/foot."

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier