

ACTIVITY: Boogie boarding
CASE: GSAF 2010.02.01
DATE: Monday February 1, 2010
LOCATION: Oreti Beach, South Island, New Zealand.

NAME: Lydia Ward
DESCRIPTION: She is a 14-year-old female from Invercargill. She was wearing a wetsuit, colored light blue and navy blue.
BOOGIE BOARD: The upper surface of the board is blue, pink and white. The under surface is uniformly blue.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 19h00, Invercargill recorded visibility of 12 miles. The air temperature was 69°F, dew point 57°F, humidity 56%, sea level pressure 30.17 inches, and wind direction was SW at 12.7 mph.
MOON PHASE: Full Moon, January 30, 2010
DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 metres
DEPTH OF WATER: Chest-deep
TIME: Evening, after 18h30

NARRATIVE: Lydia was boogie boarding about 500m north of the main entrance to the beach. Her brother, Alex, was swimming next to Lydia when she thought she stepped on the shark. "I tried to move away and stood on it again," she said. The shark bit her but she whacked the shark on the head with her body board until it released her.

INJURY: Minor injury. Puncture wounds to her right hip. The arc of puncture wounds spans 22 cm.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Her family took her to a hospital emergency room to have the deepest wound treated, but left after a long wait. They planned to see a doctor the next day.

SPECIES: According to Lydia's brother, the incident involved a 1.5-metre shark. The incident may have involved a sevengill shark.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Richard D. Weeks, Global Shark Accident File.



Barry Harcourt/The Southland Times

Lydia Ward holds the boogie board she used to fend off a 1.5m shark that bit her on the right hip at Oreti Beach



Lydia Ward showing the teeth holes in her wetsuit and the bodyboard she used to fend off a shark after it latched on to her right hip.

New Zealand girl, 14, beats off shark attack

A 14-year-old New Zealand girl told how she beat off a shark which grabbed her in shallow water off a southern beach by hitting it with her body board.

Lydia Ward said she stood on the 1.5- metre shark while body-boarding at Oreti Beach, near Invercargill, Monday evening and it lunged at her, wrapping its jaws around her hip.

As the sand shark's teeth penetrated her wetsuit and her skin she bashed it with her polystyrene body board until it let go.

She and her brother, who was swimming but not wearing a wetsuit, ran from the water and up the beach to her father, who did not believe her at first. "But then I showed him my wetsuit with all the blood coming out and he believed me," she told Radio New Zealand.

She was not seriously hurt but her parents took her to hospital to get the deepest wound treated.

Police patrolled the beach after the attack but the shark was not seen again.

"It was an unfortunate incident but when sea creatures are stood on, people are always at risk," Senior Sergeant Bruce Terry told the Southland Times newspaper.

SOURCE: TimesLive, February 1, 2010, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/news/world/article287331.ece>

Girl bashes shark with boogie board

A 14-year-old teenage girl in New Zealand has fought off a 1.5-metre long shark by whacking it with her boogie board.

Lydia Ward was boogie boarding late yesterday with her younger brother at a beach near Invercargill, at the bottom of New Zealand's South Island.

She was in chest deep water when she stood on something that moved in the sand. "I just heard my brother say 'whoah', so I looked to my side and I saw this big, grey slippery thing twisting in the water," she said. The shark sunk its teeth into her hip, biting through the wetsuit. Ms Ward had read a book on shark attacks and knew her boogie board was her best weapon. She hit the animal on the head.

"It has sort of put me off and I want to stick to rivers and lakes now," she said. Ms Ward was not planning to go to hospital, but now thinks she might need a tetanus injection.

SOURCE: Kerri Ritchie, ABCNews, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/02/2807460.htm?section=world>

Invercargill girl fights off shark

LATEST: The mother of a 14-year-old Invercargill girl who was attacked by a shark has praised her daughter's remarkable calm.

Lydia Ward had to pound a shark in the head with her body board to make it release her from its grasp after it latched on to her hip in waist-deep water at Oreti Beach near Invercargill last night.

Fiona Ward said the shark's bite penetrated Lydia's wetsuit and her skin.

Lydia thought she stood on the shark, tried to move away and stood on it again, she said. "It just came right out of the water and bit her." But the quick-thinking teenager furiously whacked the shark on the head with her body board until it let her go, Mrs Ward said.

Lydia said she did not realise she had been attacked until she saw the look of horror on her brother's face. "I saw my brother's face and turned to the side and saw this large grey thing in the water so I just hit it on the head with a boogie board," she said.

She said she had read "lots of magazine articles and things" about shark attacks which said that's what she should do. Lydia, whose story has also made headlines across the Tasman, said she was still a "bit shocked" by the occasion. "I'm sort of fine. It still doesn't really feel real that it actually happened."

Her brother, who was swimming next to her, estimated the shark was about 1.5m long. Lydia said it was lucky the shark had not attempted to bite him also as he was not wearing a wetsuit. The pair had fled from the water straight after the attack, with Lydia showing her wounds to her dad. "Dad thought I was crazy when I came out of the water but then I showed him the wetsuit and he was pretty shocked."

Mrs Ward agreed they had struggled to believe what had happened at first. "She just came out and said 'I've been bitten by a shark' and honestly, the terrible thing about it was I thought she was having me on and then she just pointed to her wetsuit and there's the bite marks." "I was like, 'for real', and her brother who was in the water with her said 'yeah it was this big grey thing came out of the water'", and showed the shocked parents the size of the fin.

Lydia was not seriously hurt but got "quite a fright". The family had been to the emergency department but given up due to the wait. They were going to visit the doctor again today.

Ms Ward praised her daughter's level-headedness. "I couldn't believe the lack of fuss. I would've been hysterically screaming but no, there was no screaming. She was just standing there looking a bit shaky."

The former competitive swimmer who was a regular visitor at the beach would now be sticking to rivers and lakes, she said.

Senior Sergeant Bruce Terry of Invercargill police said the girl was body boarding about 500m north of the main entrance to the beach at the time. Police patrolled the beach without further incident, he said. "It was an unfortunate incident but when sea creatures are stood on people are always at risk."

SOURCE: Sam McKnight and Michael Fox, The Southland Times, February 2, 2010, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/news/3283261/Invercargill-girl-fights-off-shark>

Bitten teenager got off lightly - shark expert

A teenage girl who fought off a shark was lucky the animal only gave her an "exploratory bite", an expert says.

Lydia Ward, 14, struck the shark with her boogie board after it had bitten through her wetsuit and sunk its teeth into her hip. She did not realise until she scrambled to shore at Oreti Beach, near Invercargill, that she had been bitten. Her injuries were not serious. "I think it's quite lucky that I did wear my wetsuit," Lydia told the Herald. "Because my brother was 2m away from me, and he wasn't wearing a wetsuit."

Shark expert Clinton Duffy, from the Department of Conservation, said the shark that attacked Lydia was most likely a broad-nosed sevengill shark, which had a "very good set of teeth" and was known to sometimes view humans as prey. It could have been stalking her for a while before the attack, and was capable of inflicting "very serious injuries". In Lydia's favour was that this shark would investigate its potential prey with its teeth first, and was easily dissuaded if a person fought back, Mr Duffy said.

Lydia was chest deep in water, waiting to catch a last good wave alongside 10-year-old brother Alex on Monday night when she stepped on something slippery on the sea floor. "At first I wasn't quite sure what it was. And I was trying to say to myself it was just a piece of driftwood," she said. "Then I stood on it again, and I just looked at my brother's face and he said 'whoa'. And I looked to my side and I just saw this massive grey thing twisting in the water."

The shark lunged at her and bit her. Lydia thinks the adrenaline flowing through her body might have prevented her from feeling anything. "So I hit it with the end of my boogie board and that scared it away." She could see blood in the water "but I couldn't run ... so it was quite nerve-racking. "I only realised it bit me when I hopped out of the water and saw the bite marks through my wetsuit."

Mr Duffy said Oreti Beach had been the site of shark attacks in the past, but overall attacks were rare in New Zealand. There are only 13 shark attack fatalities on record in New Zealand waters, and on average there are about two unprovoked shark bites a year, usually resulting in minor injuries.

Lydia and her brother said they thought the shark was about 1.5m long, which Mr Duffy said was standard for a sevengill shark.

SOURCE: Jarrod Booker, New Zealand Herald, February 3, 2010, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10623757



'I saw some blood in the water'

A 14-year-old Invercargill girl bitten on the right hip by a shark at Oreti Beach last night believes it was defending itself.

Describing the attack this morning, Lydia Ward said she bore no ill feeling towards the shark, which had reacted after she stepped on it twice.



Her second footfall caused the shark to react, swimming up from the seafloor and latching its jaws around her right thigh towards her buttock. She pounded the shark in the head with her body board to make it release her.

She was in chest deep water when the encounter happened.

"I brushed my foot on something." It was a chilling realisation and instinctively, she knew she had stepped on something possibly alive. "When I first stood on it I tried to tell myself it was piece of driftwood," she said, but her imagination took over. "I thought it was a body...I dunno...It was cold and slippery but soft, like it gave way a bit." She treaded water and tried to move away before she had to place her feet down again, she said.

Again, she stood on the shark.

"I looked at my brother and he just said `whoa'...then I saw this massive grey thing twisting in the water." Initially she did not realise the shark had her in its jaws. "I didn't feel anything...then I saw some blood in the water," Lydia said. Instinct kicked in and something she had read about sharks just snapped into her brain, she said. "I had read to get them (sharks) away you hit them on the head, so I hit it with my body board." She had little time to think, let alone panic, she said. The shark released its grip, but because of traces of blood in the water she thought it might come back. The time it took to travel the 20m back to the beach dragged out, Lydia said. "I was so frustrated because I couldn't run."

Lydia, who had gone to the beach with her parents and 10-year-old brother Alex about 6.30pm, said her parents initially did not believe her when she caught her breath and told them what had happened. However, when they saw the puncture marks in her wetsuit and the blood they changed their minds.

Her brother said the shark estimated could have been about 1.5m long. While her wetsuit was left with a set of holes after the shark's teeth sliced through the fabric, her only injuries were two puncture wounds about 22cm apart, Lydia said.

Lydia was to visit a doctor today to check her bites.

SOURCE: Jared Morgan, The Southland Times, February 2, 2010, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/news/3285302/I-saw-some-blood-in-the-water>

ACC pays for shark injuries

\$150m has been paid out over four years to people who have been attacked by animals. Twenty people have received ACC payouts for injuries by sharks so far this year.

It has been revealed that in the past four years, the organisation has paid out more than \$150 million to people who have been kicked, butted or bitten by pets and other animals.

Information provided to the Herald by the Accident Compensation Corporation shows that between 2008 and June this year more than 300,000 animal-injury claims were accepted, at a cost of more than \$150 million.

This year alone, \$21,139,467 has been paid on 73,104 claims - including 20 for injuries caused by sharks. Privacy laws prevented ACC from disclosing the full details.

But most related to shark "bites" or people being injured or stabbed by tails or spikes. One claimant said they were out on the water fishing and "a shark bit my middle finger".

Other descriptions included being stabbed by a shark tail on the left forearm and being bitten by a shark on the right thumb.

ACC could not give a full break-down of the other animal claims made between 2008 and this year, but was able to tell the Herald they related to kicks, butts and bites from cattle, deer, dogs, horse, sheep and "other" animals.

This year they had accepted 2631 claims for injuries caused by cats, 2088 for spiders, 80 for goats and 8651 for dogs.

Almost 60,000 other claims have been made this year where the injured person has specified the offending animal in the "other" category.

ACC's website gives the definition of a physical injury as something that causes "actual damage" to the body. An actual diagnosis of the injury is required, not just a diagnosis of pain.

Physical injuries can include: wounds, lacerations, contusions, burns, sprains and strains; fractures, amputations or dislocations; infections or diseases caused at work by performing a particular task; blindness and poisoning.

Many of these injuries can obviously be inflicted by an animal.

Attacks rare but terrifying

A surfer bitten in the calf in Taranaki and a teenage girl nipped in the hip while bodyboarding in Invercargill are two recent survivors of shark attacks in New Zealand waters.

Aucklander Peter Garrett was surfing about 100m offshore near Opunake in March when a shark bit his leg. Onlookers told the Herald Mr Garrett was "shrieking and thrashing about" in the water before frantically swimming to shore. A vet who was surfing nearby treated the "nasty bite" on the man's calf. At the time, DoC marine scientist Clinton Duffy said Mr Garrett was unlucky to get bitten, but lucky to survive.

In 2010, Invercargill teen Lydia Ward fought off a shark after it sank its teeth into her hip. She was boogie boarding with her brother when the shark bit through her wetsuit.

She wasn't seriously injured, but had to hit it away with her board after it lunged at her.

Mr Duffy said on average there were two unprovoked shark bites a year, usually with minor injuries.

The damage

Accepted claims for injuries by animals

2008 \$37m for 77,865 claims

2009 \$35m for 79,135 claims

2010 \$29.7m for 72,962 claims

2011 \$27.6m for 78,987 claims

2012 (to date) \$21.1m for 73,104 claims

Total: \$150.4m

Claims by animal for 2012

2631 cat

8651 dog

80 goat

20 shark

2088 spider

59,634 other

SOURCE: The New Zealand Herald, Monday Sep 24, 2012,
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10836075