



**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2010.09.27](#)

**DATE:** Monday September 27, 2010

**LOCATION:** The accident took place in the Pacific Ocean off the south jetty of the Umpqua River in Winchester Bay, Douglas County, Oregon, USA.

**NAME:** David Lowden

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 29-year-old male from Coos Bay. He is 5'8" tall, weighs 155 lbs, and was clad in a full black wetsuit.

**SURFBOARD:** He was using a 6' white surfboard with one small red logo on each side: swallow tail.

### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** The air temperature at the incident site was approximately 65°F. It was sunny with light fog coming and going, light north winds.

At 15h55, North Bend recorded clear skies and 10-mile visibility. The air temperature was 69.8°F, dew point 62.6°F, humidity 78%, sea level pressure 30.02 inches and wind direction was NNW at 11.5 mph

**MOON PHASE:** Last Quarter, September 30, 2010

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The water temperature was approximately 58°F. There were large swells. Underwater visibility was poor, no more than four to five feet.

**ENVIRONMENT:** The incident took place over a sandy bottom, about 20 yards from a deep-water channel or drop off; erosion along the jetty wall created a trench deeper than the surrounding ocean floor. There was no fishing activity or kelp in the area, and no unusual behavior of fish, birds or marine mammals was noted, but there had been numerous

sightings of sharks in the area during the last 20 years.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 80-100 yards

**DEPTH OF WATER:** 15 to 20 feet

**TIME:** 16h00 - 16h15

**NARRATIVE:** Dave Lowden, Mark Lorincz and Justin Martin paddled out at the south jetty at Winchester bay around 15h30. Surf conditions were good with large swell with good interval and light winds. The water temperature was much higher than normal, around 56° to 58°F. High tide was at 14h15 that day and the peak they were surfing farther from shore than usual due to the size of the swell. After surfing for about 30 or 45 minutes and catching only two waves, the current pushed Lowden towards the outside and wide of the peak that was breaking about 30 feet south of the jetty. "I paddled hard to fight the current and regain position in the peak," said Lowden. "During this effort I was struck from underneath by the unmistakable force of a shark (due to past experience being bumped by a great white in September of 2006 at the same location, I knew right away from the hardness of the object that it was a shark). The shark was at full attack speed nailing the tail of my board ejecting me forward as the shark breached the surface of the water with most of its body. I got a pretty good look at the overall presence but it happened so fast I wasn't able to pick out details."

"The shark turned on its side as it headed back down, thrashing its tail a couple times before disappearing somewhere underneath or behind me. Frantic, I pulled my board back toward me by the leash. I then began to paddle as fast as I could toward the jetty which seemed much closer than the beach. Luckily, during the encounter I had been pushed inside and toward the peak enough to grab the first wave in that came moments later."

"After regrouping on the beach, the other two surfers were able to fill in the blanks as to what really happened as both saw the entire incident take place. We came to the conclusion it was a great white between 11 to 14 feet in length, and it either miscalculated the attack or aborted at the last second clipping the tail of my board striking the fins first which I think must have gave it a bit of a shock and caused it to thrash about after the initial contact."

**INJURY:** The surfer was not injured.

**DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD:** "My board sustained minimal damage considering, losing a fin and crushing a fin box and creasing the tail," reported Lowden.

**SPECIES:** The surfers believe the incident involved a white shark 11 to 14 feet in length.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Ralph Collier