



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2010.10.28](#)

DATE: Thursday October 28, 2010

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean off the North Jetty, Siuslaw River, Florence, Oregon, USA

NAME: Seth Mead

SURFBOARD: A 6'2" inch white thruster

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 15h20, Newport Airport recorded overcast skies and visibility of 10 miles. The air temperature was 57.2°F, dew point 48.2°F, humidity 72%, sea level pressure 29.95 inches, and wind direction was SSE at 9.2 mph.

MOON PHASE: Last Quarter, October 30, 2010

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 54°F and there was a four- to six-foot swell. Underwater visibility was poor.

ENVIRONMENT: The incident took place over sandy bottom. Nobody was spearfishing but about 100 yards from the deep channel of the Siuslaw River. Kelp was nearby and, as the men exited the water, they saw a few harbor seals just past the shoreline. "At some point before the 'experience, I remember observing a large female loon (~20 yards from me) acting a little unusual," said Seth Mead. "Most of the time birds either duck dive or fly out of the impact zone during sets. This one seemed to be struggling to get out of the way of the

set. The first wave just throttled her and she barely and rather clumsily crawled over the next wave. I remember wondering what her deal was but in hindsight I kind of wonder if she hadn't already been sampled by the same shark, rendering her flightless (but who knows)."

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 75 yards

DEPTH OF WATER: ~15 feet

TIME: 15h15

NARRATIVE: Seth Mead and Gus Gates were surfing together. Seth relates what happened:

"I suited up and was in the water for about 15-20 minutes when Gus made his way out the rip. The swell was really south and so the sets were focusing ~200 yards down the beach. It was kind of all over but if you could find that right spot there looked like some fun to be had. I had just caught a nice right and was paddling the white water line back to the peak.

"I was on my stomach paddling when he blasted me; coming full force from below the right side of my board. He hit me hard enough that it threw me 3-4 ft off my board and in essence out of immediate harm's way. I turned around to see the animal still holding on to my board with it 'tomb stoning' out of the water (2-3 ft of the tip was still exposed). I will never forget that image. . .the animal was completely broadside to me and right below the surface. I could see him completely with the head to the right and his tail sticking out of the water to the left. I know that water distorts images to some degree but I would say it was about 10 ft in length, definitely smaller than the one that hit me at the mouth of the Rogue River (GSAF 2004.09.10). After a few seconds he let go of my board and just seemed to linger there, acting somewhat confused. My board kind popped up in my direction and I sheepishly climbed on, the whole time watching the shark right next to me.

"As far as I could tell the shark never made another gesture in my direction. The further I paddled away the less and less I could see until it was completely obscured from my view. The paddle in went faster than it should have thanks to a timely set. I caught the first one and stood up. I went down the line and did one turn. As I came up on the wave I kind of glanced behind and around and didn't see anything but nonetheless decided to jump back on my stomach to maximize the length of the wave. The next couple waves washed me in to the beach where wide eyed and full of adrenaline; I met up with Gus who had seen it all from a distance."

"Seth was relieved that he was not hurt, and said that he hadn't even peed in his wetsuit," said Gates. "I told the Coast Guard officer who was on the beach about the encounter and asked that she notify others in the event that they might paddle out."

INJURY: "The bottom of my board was thrashed, with some additional damage to the right side rail, but not a scratch on me," reported Seth.

SPECIES: Gus Gates described the shark as "Large grey dorsal fin and tail." Seth, who saw the shark clearly, identified it as a white shark approximately 10 feet in length.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier

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Seth Mead board — bite



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Seth Mead board — tooth



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Seth Mead board — tooth



Seth Mead board — Slash