

Don't mention the Jaws

TWO Brits who saw a shark eating a human corpse off Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh resort were told to keep quiet — as it might hit tourism.

The pair watched in horror from their dive boat as the 16ft tiger shark tore at the body less than a third of a mile from the shore.

But the crew continued with the trip — not stopping to fish out the female corpse. They told Richard King, 32, partner Laura Hooper, 29, and five other tourists not to speak out in the resort — blighted by shark attacks last year.

Police later recovered the body and began an inquiry.

Salesman Richard, of Swindon, told how the crew saw the shark soon after leaving Sharm Beach for a day's scuba diving. He said: "As we got closer, we clocked that it had been feeding on a human body. Laura ran into the boat in tears. We were asked by the crew not to say anything as it would be bad for tourism. We couldn't believe it when there were people swimming in the water the next day. There was no mention of sharks in the water or a dead body."

The crew completed the day's diving and took the pair home. The couple cut their week's hols short due to the incident. Richard said: "Neither of us felt like getting in the water again."

Spokesman for their tour operator told The Sun the incident was reported as soon as the boat got back, and added: "It was not a shark attack that killed the person."

And last night the dive centre insisted they reported the body *during* the trip. A spokesman said: "A guide asked if they wished to proceed and they all said 'yes'. The other guide phoned the authorities."

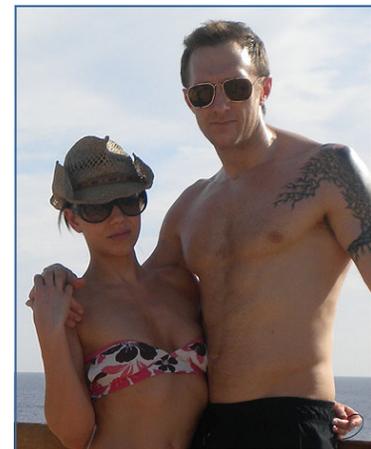
The resort's beaches were closed last year following shark attacks that killed a tourist and injured two* others.

SOURCE: Sean Hamilton, s.hamilton@the-sun.co.uk, The Sun, March 9, 2011,
<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/3455004/Brit-couple-see-tiger-shark-eating-a-human-body-at-Egypt-resort.html>

COMMENT: In 2010, *seven people were attacked by sharks, one fatally, at Sharm, so right off the bat the reporter didn't get the facts straight. Further, unlike some tourist areas, the Sharm resorts *do not* have a history of hushing up shark attacks; they have been very public about them. Authorities recovered the body and autopsy revealed death was due to drowning (see next page)



Shock ... tiger shark splashes



Horrified ... Brits Richard King and Laura Hooper

myView (Sean Hamilton's)
THIS latest shark incident will have a far greater impact on UK visitor numbers than last month's revolution.

The Red Sea resort has staked its reputation on being able to offer unrivalled diving and snorkelling. But with this shark attack seemingly ignored by locals desperate to return to normal, things are not looking good for Egypt's tourist industry. Authorities need to get to grips with the problem quickly before it spirals out of control. If they can't guarantee safe diving, Brit tourists will just go elsewhere.

Holiday horror while on Red Sea driving trip

WHAT was meant to be a romantic diving trip turned into the holiday from hell for two holidaymakers when they witnessed a 16ft shark feasting on a human corpse.

Both Richard King, 32, and girlfriend Laura Hooper, 29, of the town centre, decided to cut short a romantic week-long holiday in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh after seeing the tiger shark lunching on a woman's body.

But just minutes after the incident the pair were diving in the balmy waters of the Red Sea, as crew members asked them to keep it quiet.

Mr King, a salesman, said that the group of tourists had clamoured to see when the crew pointed out the shark thrashing about in the water ahead. But as the boat drew nearer they came across the horrendous scene.

He said: "We were out on a diving trip and we saw something thrashing about in the water. "It was a tiger shark and so everyone ran to the edge of the boat to get a picture. But as we got closer we realised it was eating a body. We thought it was a fish at first because the body had been in the water for a while. We got some horrendous pictures by accident. Laura was upset and ran into the boat crying. She was shocked."

But Mr King, a qualified diver, said that the pair both took the plunge just 10 minutes after the incident, as the cruise continued without stopping to recover the body.

"I'm really into my diving and I wanted to get Laura into it," he said. "We carried on and about 10 minutes later we both dived in. Laura calmed down soon after and was very brave. I'm proud of her for getting in the water. I've been out to Sharm el-Sheikh before and it's a beautiful place. The only thing I was a little frustrated with was the next day people were snorkelling and swimming."

The resort hit the headlines at the end of last year for a number of shark attacks that forced the closure of beaches. One tourist was killed and another two injured in those attacks but it is not thought that the woman in this latest incident was killed by a shark.

Egyptian police were understood to have launched an investigation after later recovering the body.

Dr Adel Taher, consultant in diving hyperbaric medicine, director of the Hyperbaric Medical Centre in Sharm el Sheikh, regional medical director of DAN (Divers Alert Network) and who examined the victim, declared that the cause of death was not due to shark attack but due to drowning and subsequent propeller injuries. He said: "Small to medium sized marine creatures also nibbled at the cadaver which is to be expected for any organic matter that has been submerged for 4 days. "No signs of shark attack could be identified on the body, for example semi circular bite marks or shark teeth marks."

SOURCE: Scott D'Arcy, Swindon Advertiser, March 10, 2011;
http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/8899743.Couple_shocked_by_shark_attack/