



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2011.03.23

DATE: Wednesday March 23, 2011

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Tasman sea off the south side of Crowdy Head, New South Wales, Australia.

31°50'44"S, 152°44'52"E

NAME: David Pearson

DESCRIPTION: He is a 48-year-old male from Coopersnook. He is 167 cm tall [5'6"], weighs 78 kg [172 lbs], and was wearing a black spring suit (wetsuit), 2 mm short arms and legs, and a white surfboard leash. He had no injuries prior to the attack.

SURFBOARD: He was using a new 6'4" cream-colored Firewire trifuin surfboard.



BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The attack took place after a spell of rain and stormy weather. At the time of the attack the sky was partly cloudy, air temperature was 25°C, and wind direction was NE at 10 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 85% of the Moon was illuminated. Last Quarter, March 26, 2011.

SEA CONDITIONS: The swell had picked up along the Mid-North Coast and hundreds of people had surfed around the area that day. The water was blue-green with three- to four-metre underwater visibility. Sea surface temperature was 19°C, estimated. Mean high tide occurred at 21h20.

© Global Shark Accident File, 2011. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced in any form without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.

ENVIRONMENT: A large shoal of mullet was observed in the area next day.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 150 metres

DISTANCE FROM ROCKS OR PIER: 75 metres

DEPTH OF WATER: Five metres

TIME: 17h45 — 18h45

NARRATIVE: David Pearson and his friend, Aaron “Noddy” Wallace of Harrington, were surfing off the rocks just south of the Crowdy Head headland. David had been in the water only 10 minutes. He was paddling back out in the rip after catching a wave and was almost back in line with Aaron, although about 30 metres away. He was paddling over a five-metre-deep channel when the shark surged up from underneath him, striking his board. “It surprised the crap out of me and felt like being hit by a train (that much I remember)”, said David. “I think I was looking over towards the guys as I did not see it at all (I have recollections of a flash of a grey image out of the corner of my eye) and had been checking out the waves coming. The next thing I remember is being underwater with the shark (I am not sure for how long). I came back up to the surface and got back on my board. I remember looking at my arm noticing the blood squirting everywhere and the huge torn gash with the forearm muscle hanging off, I could see the bone and I remember thinking “that doesn’t look right”, it was then I realized that I had been attacked by a shark. I had been in the water 10 minutes max on my new board. I remember looking around me thinking how red the water had turned, I thought it looked just like a movie scene.”

Aaron heard the loud smack of the shark hitting David’s board and looked over to see the shark thrashing on top of him, then disappearing underwater taking David and his board with him. Aaron saw David come to the surface and drape himself over his board, looking down into the water. Aaron asked David if he was OK, and David said the shark was still underneath him and not to come over. “It was getting late, we shouldn’t have been out there,” said Aaron. If you’re going to get attacked that would be the time. It was a stupid time to be in the water.”

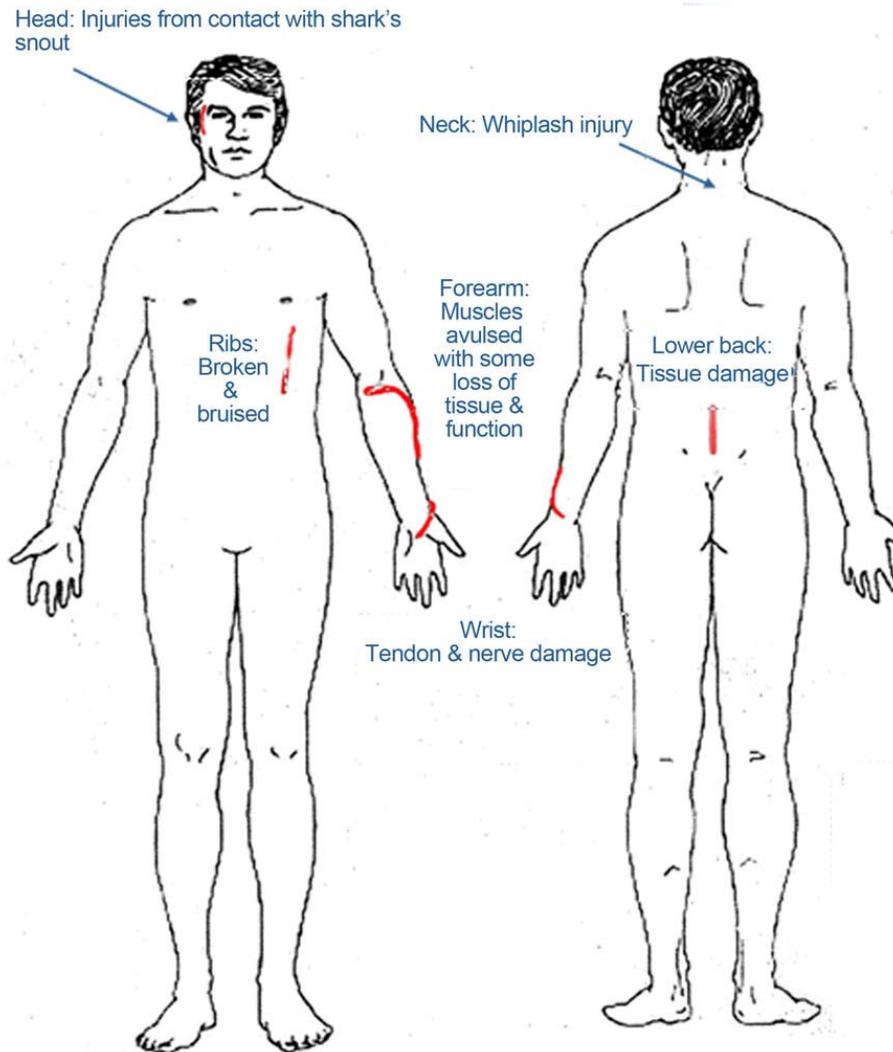
INJURY: The surfer sustained minor puncture wounds, laceration and abrasions to his face. There was an avulsion injury to the left forearm with tissue loss, tissue damage to lower back, tendon and nerve damage to the wrist, and he sustained bruised and cracked ribs, as well as whiplash to his neck. His surfboard was also bitten by the shark.

FIRST AID: Aaron helped David to shore while “another few guys grabbed towels and called the ambulance”. Intensive care flight paramedic Mr. Alan Playford treated David on the beach and said he lost a large amount of blood in the water. Mr. Playford said it was still too early to tell if David would keep his left arm but the actions of people on the beach saved his life. “A lot of people die from losing that much blood, but some people were able to make a makeshift tourniquet on the beach and stop the bleeding,” he said.

TREATMENT: David was airlifted to the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle by Westpac Rescue Helicopter. He underwent a five-hour surgical procedure to repair his injuries and spent less than a week in the hospital.

SPECIES: It was believed that a three-metre bull shark was involved in the attack.

SOURCE: David Pearson



ADDITIONAL SOURCES: Newcastle Herald, <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/468124/shark-attack-surfer-bitten-at-crowdy-head/>

Nine News, <http://news.ninensn.com.au/national/8228439/friend-risks-life-to-save-shark-victim>

The Telegraph, <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/indepth/dave-pearsons-amazing-tale-of-surf-survival/story-e6frewr9-1226027710242>

Manning River Times,

[Http://www.manningrivertimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/surfers-nightmare-shark-attack-victim-speaks/2132491.aspx](http://www.manningrivertimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/surfers-nightmare-shark-attack-victim-speaks/2132491.aspx)

The Daily Telegraph

<http://www.news.com.au/national/fearless-pride-surfer-who-rescued-shark-attack-mate-up-for-pride-of-australia-award/story-e6frfkvr-1226382029098>