



ACTIVITY: Spearfishing / free diving

CASE: [GSAF 2012.01.02](#)

DATE: Monday January 2, 2012

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Coral Sea near the north rock wall of Duranbah Beach, Queensland, Australia.

NAME: Hugo Ricardo Mendes da Silva

DESCRIPTION: He is a 34-year-old male from Portugal. He is 1,73 metres tall and weighs 65 kgs. He had only light scratches prior to the incident and was not wearing any jewelry. He was clad in a brown and grey camouflage 7mm wetsuit, and wore a black mask, black weight belt with 7 kg of weight, black carbon fins, blue snorkel and black gloves. He was carrying using a Omer Excalibur black 100cm with aluminum reel, and was towing a red float/buoy on a transparent leash.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a sunny day with no wind. The air temperature was 26°C.

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, 58% of the Moon is illuminated. Full Moon, January 9, 2012.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 26°C (measured). High tide was at 07h00.

ENVIRONMENT: Duranbah is located close to the Tweed River estuary. The incident took place at the mouth of the Tweed River in the northern part of the rock wall. He had shot five mangrove jacks, *Lutjanus argentimaculatus*, and placed them on his float. The diver reported that moments before the incident schools of trevally, *Carangidae*, began moving through the area: bigeye trevally, *Caranx sexfasciatus*; golden trevally, *Gnathanodon speciosus*, and silver trevally, *pseudocaranx dentex*. These schools of fish were followed by many bull sharks.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 metres

DISTANCE FROM ROCKS: 25 metres

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: 10 metres

TIME: 09h00

NARRATIVE: Hugo had been in the water for four hours and was on the surface. He had shot a silver trevally, but when a bull shark pulled the fish off his spear, he decided to stop fishing. He was gathering his float when a tiger shark hit him in the back and took his weight belt. Then the shark returned with the man's weight belt in its mouth and snapped at his swim fin. Hugo placed the shaft of his gun against the shark's head, pushed the fish off, and

Hugo escapes shark attack

REPORTS a mysterious waterman survived an encounter with a large shark off Duranbah Beach yesterday have spread like wildfire through the Coast's surfing community.

Known to the local surf community as 'Hugo', the man was spear fishing near the rock wall on the southern side of Duranbah when he encountered the shark.

A surfer who spoke to Hugo in the water after the attack said the diver had puncture wounds in his flipper from where the shark attacked.

"He is a real hellman spear fisherman and he was out near the rocks. He said he had noticed a few bull sharks," the surfer said. "But he said a four-metre tiger shark hit him in the back and took his weight belt. "It came back around with the weight belt in its mouth and he said that's when it had a go at the flipper."

Lifeguards were alerted to the presence of a shark around 9am and set off a shark warning alarm before heading out to tell other surfers.

It is understood Hugo suffered no serious injuries from the encounter.

Scott McCartney, Northern NSW region lifeguard co-ordinator said lifeguards at Duranbah followed protocol for a shark sighting and kept a lookout for the creature. News of the incident spread quickly on social media, with surfers across the Coast made aware of the attack.

Locals at Duranbah beach yesterday who had heard of the encounter seemed unconcerned. One local, who had brought his daughter to the beach for a surf, questioned the type of shark involved in the attack. "You wouldn't see a tiger shark off here, a bull shark yes but not a tiger," he said. But according to surfing folklore, an old tiger shark has made the popular beach its home and patrolled the waters near Duranbah for years.

Reader Comment: "If a 4m tiger shark had wanted him for breakfast, he wouldn't be around to tell anyone of his 'encounter' with it. He'd be shark poo by now, not a nice way to go. Fortunately, Homo Sapiens isn't on a shark's normal menu, it was probably curious, wondering if the slow moving, clumsy creature in front of it was an injured seal, turtle or dugong, or something that was on its diet. You'd be surprised how much a boogie board (shark biscuit) rider looks like a turtle from underneath!" *Glen Crawford*

SOURCE: goldcoast.com, January 3, 2012,
http://www.goldcoast.com.au/article/2012/01/03/378545_tweed-byron-news.html