

**ACTIVITY:** Swimming

**CASE:** [GSAF 2012.09.10](#)

**DATE:** Monday September 10, 2012

**LOCATION:** The accident took place in the Pacific Ocean off Eueiki Island in the Vava'u island group of the Kingdom of Tonga.

**NAME:** Kylie Maguire

**DESCRIPTION:** She is a 29-year-old female, and experienced diver, surfer, photographer and conservationist from Lennox Head, New South Wales Australia. She has been working on *Ice*, a boat owned by a wreck-hunting company, Tonga Blue, that has been working with the Tongan government.

### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At 16h00, Fuaamotu recorded mostly cloudy skies and visibility of 6.2 miles. The air temperature was 71.6°F, dew point 69.8 F, humidity 94%, sea level pressure 30.04 inches and wind direction was South at 11.5 mph.

**MOON PHASE:** Third Quarter, September 9, 2012 at 02h16

**NARRATIVE:** *Ice's* captain Don McIntyre reported that Kylie and Kim Hands had set off in an inflatable kayak from the boat anchored at Treasure Island Resort about 16h00.

Kylie was swimming with Kim when she was bitten by a shark. Kylie told her father that she didn't see the shark, but it hit hard on her thighs and buttocks. "She was fighting it ... she doesn't really remember what happened next but then she was back in the kayak," he said.

**INJURY:** Captain McIntyre said, "There was major trauma to the area around her buttocks and inner thighs."

**TREATMENT:** Kylie was hospitalized in Tonga. When doctors in Tonga advised her parents that her wounds were infected and skin grafts might be required, emergency arrangements were being made to transfer her to a hospital in Australia.

**SPECIES:** Doctors who treated Kylie in Tonga estimated the length of the shark to be 3m, with teeth about 25mm across and a 40-45cm bite circumference. They speculated the accident may have involved a bull shark.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Richard Wylie



Don McIntyre

Kylie Maguire

## Treasure hunter's emergency dash

A LENNOX Head woman has been attacked by a 3m shark while working for professional treasure hunters in Tonga.

Kylie Maguire has worked on *Ice* for four months, a boat owned by wreck-hunting company Tonga Blue. This year the company has been working with the Tongan Government to uncover the area's "hidden maritime past".

The 29-year-old is an experienced diver, surfer, photographer and conservationist.

Kylie's father, Mike Maguire, yesterday told *The Northern Star* he was told on Monday afternoon his daughter had been attacked by a shark while swimming with another woman, Kim Hands.



*Kylie Maguire in hospital in Tonga with friend Kim Hands.*

"Kylie told me that she didn't see the shark, but it hit hard on her thighs and buttocks," he said. "She was fighting it ... she doesn't really remember what happened next but then she was back in the kayak."

Doctors who treated Kylie in Tonga estimated the length of the shark to be 3m, with teeth about 25mm across and a 40-45cm bite circumference. It was possibly a bull shark.

Mr Maguire and his wife, Denise, were originally told that Kylie would recover well in the Tongan hospital. But yesterday they were told her wounds were infected and skin grafts might be required. Emergency arrangements were being made last night to transfer her to a Sydney hospital.

"There's a large part of the flesh wound that's just not healing and the captain of the boat told us that if it was his daughter he'd be getting her back to Australia," Mr Maguire said. "So we're trying to get her on the first flight we can. We've been talking to Kylie and she seems pretty down. I think she has realised that this big adventure is all coming to an end. She's a tough bugger. I don't know how many lives this girl has got. Once she had to be airlifted by the Italian navy during gale-force winds and she's also been caught out on boats during cyclones. Kylie's actually pretty lucky - not many people survive a shark attack."

*Ice's* captain Don McIntyre posted on his blog, bluetreasure.me, that Kylie and Kim had set off in an inflatable kayak from the boat anchored at Treasure Island Resort in Vava'u about 4pm on the day of the shark attack. Shortly afterwards the captain went ashore for a meeting and turned off his radio. But after hearing faint cries for help, he turned it back on and heard Kylie calmly saying she had been bitten by a shark. She was still conscious and talking, but not moving her legs. "I did not know what to expect, but felt it must be a non-life threatening injury, possibly small, because of Kylie's responses," he blogged. "But at my first sight of the wound it appeared quite the reverse. "There was major trauma to the area around her buttocks and inner thighs."

Despite her ordeal, both the ship's captain and Kylie's father stressed that Kylie loves sharks.

**SOURCE:** Northern Star, Wednesday September 13, 2012, <http://www.northernstar.com.au/story/2012/09/13/treasure-hunters-emergency-dash-shark-attack-tonga/>

### Kylie attacked by shark!! She is OK!

Posted on [September 11, 2012](#) 10th Sept 2012

1600hrs Kylie and Kim set off from "ICE" then anchored at Eueikil Island (Treasure Island Resort), for Paulsland one mile to the east. Kylie is paddling a two person Kayak. Kim is swimming. Kylie is a 28 yo. Professional Photographer, free diver, Scuba diver, surfer, conservationist and water baby!, Kim is a 30yo. Dive master and Marine Biologist working for an international Whale Shark research center ([www.whaleshark.org.au](http://www.whaleshark.org.au)) in Australia and Marathon swimmer in training for an upcoming event. This outing was a training swim for her. The Kayak is a quality two person inflatable Kayak. They had with them water and a Hand held VHF radio and were advised to monitor channel 26. (Channel 26 has repeater stations throughout Vavau and is an unofficial safety and calling channel for most boats in the area.) Kylie is a competent crew member with STCW 95 and has been permanent crew on ICE for four months.

They completed the swim to Pau island in quick time and I monitored from ICE, with Binoculars, their arrival and dragging the kayak ashore.. Shortly thereafter, I went ashore on Eueiki island for a meeting and took my VHF Handheld with me, monitoring ch. 26. At around 1700hrs, I turned my radio off, as we made a conference phone call to associates in Nuku'Alofa. My radio was still turned off at around 1520hrs when we heard a faint shout for Help?..I moved out of the restaurant thinking it came from a guest in distress on the island and shouted "where are you?" Then another shout from the water and I saw Kym paddling the kayak hard, toward the beach about 250 mtrs away. I turned on my radio, called them and Kylie answered calmly, saying she had been bitten by a shark!

I screamed to all on the beach who were wondering, "Shark Bite", so they were aware of the urgency. The Islands Aluminum Tender was already being launched. I headed to the beach destination of the Kayak, with Kim still paddling hard and strong, wondering how long Kylie had been in the Kayak and curious about how calm she was on the radio. I confirmed to the tender, as it sped past, that it was a shark bite and to NOT remove her from the Kayak, fearing more blood loss or trauma from shock. Amit was in the water chest deep and would be the first to reach the Kayak from shore. The tender reached it about 1 minute before Amit, but stood by, as advised, with Kim going for it. Kylie was still conscious and talking, but not moving her legs. She had not looked at the injury. I had prepared Amit with the instruction to pull the Kayak fast through the shallows to the jetty where two doctor "guest" on the resort were now headed.

As soon as the Kayak was in shallow water, I was able to check Kylie. She was conscious and talking. I did not know what to expect, but felt it must be a non life threatening injury, possibly small, because of Kylies responses' but at my first sight of the wound it appeared quite the reverse. There was major trauma to the area around her buttocks and inner thighs. I immediately investigated for major blood loss, hoping the femoral artery had not been cut? but fortunately there was no flowing blood from the substantial skin and fatty tissue lacerations. I did not try to move her, as she had the weight of her good leg on top of the wound and I thought it may be restricting the blood flow. The lower part of her leg was also pressured from being jammed into the inflatable floor and side tubes. Her color was ok and breathing appeared normal and she gave a faint smile, so I did not see any sign of imminent collapse, I knew the Kayak floor was watertight and would hold any blood loss, so carefully checked for blood , but there was VERY little?? The doctors, one an ER specialist, the other a pediatrician then arrived and I handed Kylie to their capable hands.. they were total champions!!

As the doctors took over and having seen the wound, I told everyone we will need emergency evacuation and efforts were started to prepare the Resorts High speed boat currently on a mooring. We needed to notify the hospital and police for them to be on standby. I asked for phone

numbers which were being chased up, but to save time decided to call NeiafuPort control on Ch 26 at around 1735hrs. No response. I decided to call a Mayday on Channel 16, as while Kylie appeared stable for the moment, I considered this a very serious if not potentially a life threatening situation. One yacht north of the island responded, but I advised the situation and wanted contact from Neiafu , A further call and no response. I advised I was switching to Channel 26 and gave another Mayday call which was immediately returned by the 'Aquarium restaurant-Mike". I advised the situation, requesting they contact the hospital and police and that we may be leaving Eueiki Island shortly as soon as her condition was assessed and stabilized. Mark the resort Owner, then advised the beach on the Island of Panqaemotu that she would be headed for, so the Ambulance should make for that spot. Mike at Aquarium had everything under control very efficiently and would also make his way to the beach in his private vehicle as backup.

The Doctors on the beach could use items from *ICE's* comprehensive first aid equipment, so I returned to *ICE*, recovered the kits and sent them ashore, while I remained onboard to recover our Oxygen bottle and giving set. Before I could get them out, the Doctors decided on immediate evacuation and departed at approx 1750hrs with Kylie still in the Kayak, now onboard the resort boat and the two doctors in attendance. I continued relaying radio advice from *ICE* to Mike regarding the rendezvous and updating ETA's etc. including notifying and updating next of Kin. I prepared *ICE* for departure to town. Kylie's parents later confirmed Kylies blood group after checking with the local hospital in Australia. Via the Ch26 net other cruisers were on standby to offer blood.

Mike from Aquarium and the Ambulance arrived just as Kylie hit the beach and an efficient transfer took place around 1825hrs. Kylie was still conscious and remained so through out. The guest doctors and resort staff accompanied Kylie to Hospital with the ambulance and conferred with the local doctors. She arrived at the hospital around 1850hrs. All were happy about the proposed treatment plans. The resort Doctors felt her treatment would be as good as and identical to what would be expected in New Zealand or Australia. The resort Doctors then contacted Kylies parents for an update and returned to Treasure Island.

At around 2030 hrs I made it to the hospital after mooring *ICE*. At around 2115hrs the hospital surgeon requested B+ Blood, so I sent out a call on Ch26 and we checked blood groups with friends at the hospital. We had a few responses and shortly after, Angelina from the yacht "*La fiesta*" agreed to be donor and headed to the hospital. Kylie went to the operating theater at 2230 hours. Two hours later Kylie emerged sedated. The local surgeon and team five others reported that the main wound on her buttock had been cleaned and stitched, and another on the front of the opposite leg dressed.. She will be in Hospital for at least a week. He stressed that she was very lucky which we all knew.

Before the operation Kylie described the events that happened. Before setting off from Pau for the return swim, they both discussed the risk profile specifically in relation to sharks. Kylie felt a bit uneasy but they both agreed that they were in the sharks environment, but it was what they both do and they would continue with the planned 1 mile swim home, as the risk was acceptable. Kylie was swimming approx 2 to 3 mtrs off the Kayak on the right side, aft while Kim paddled. They had cleared the outer reef areas and were now swimming over deep Blue water about 700mtrs from Pau island. She did not see the shark until it hit hard and she kicked and fought it off, then swam, left, straight into the back of the kayak losing her fin in the process. She did not look at the injury but told Kim who could not see it either but started paddling hard. Kylie did not move, but tried to call *ICE*. The Neiafu port control heard her calls and asked if she needed help. She replied no, she was Ok, but had been bitten by a shark and was trying to call *ICE*. Another yacht then replied and asked Kylie to confirm she was OK and did not require assistance. Kylie forcefully advised NO she was OK , she had a Kayak and was making for *ICE*...meanwhile she kept calling *ICE*. She was in the Kayak for approx 15 minutes before we became aware of the emergency.

Kylie believes the shark was over 3 mtrs in length, but not certain of the type other than NOT a reef shark. It may have been a bull shark? The doctors have estimates the teeth to be about 25mm across with a bite height top to bottom of around 40 to 45 cm. Miraculously Kylie appears to have suffered no muscle or tendon injury and her vital blood veins were all missed. She is happy that she put on 6kg in the past few months from Jane's cooking, as the fatty areas took the hit!..her words not mine!

A personal observation from me, in hindsight, as to why the shark may have attacked? It is humpback whale season here, with many new calves being born. The underwater "visual profile" of the blue/grey kayak at about 4mtrs long, with the forward paddler hitting the water alternately each side and then Kylie with her BIG free-diving fins, off the right back side of the kayak, could well look like an injured whale calf to a shark. It would appear as if it is struggling and separated from it's mother and escort, possibly already having been attacked by other sharks. In that situation, a shark needs to move fast and whilst this is pure speculation, it may be plausible? There is nothing about this attack that should alter the way cruisers and snorkelers dive coral reefs or anybody goes whale swimming in Tonga. Swimming with a mother and calf in deep blue water, as a controlled group, with a trained guide, is NOT looking making you like an injured whale calf.

The response from the local community and businesses, officials and medical staff, ambulance drivers! Mark at Treasure island resort, Mike from the Aquarium restaurant and "yacht help Vavau" and the local cruisers net on Ch26, was totally effective , very helpful and honestly quite amazing....it made my job easier! so from all the crew on *ICE*..THANKS TO EVERYONE.

Finally Kylie and Kim are both committed conservationists, who love everything that is on and in the ocean. They have always considered it a special place. Kylie loves sharks and wants to save everyone of them from Finning and unnecessary slaughter. She ventures willingly amongst them, in their world and will continue to do so responsibly. She says a very special thanks to all and wants to get back in the water as soon as possible.

#### [Kylie is still smiling...!!](#)

Posted on [September 12, 2012](#)

Kim has spent the last two nights sleeping on the floor beside Kylie and assisting with nursing. There is always a constant flow of people when she is not asleep and kylie is making the best of it. The nursing staff and doctors are doing all they can and fortunately she is still in the intensive care room which she has to herself. I was there for the change of dressings today and one of the two wounds is good but the second has to be left unstitched as there is skin missing and that will take some time to heal, as long as four weeks or more. This may mean many more weeks in Hospital so the medical insurance team is now looking at the logistics for a Medivac to Australia.

The hospital is big and open on the top of a hill with breezes. All the bedding is off "*ICE*" and we bring all meals and drinks to the patient, which is the way in Tonga. Jane is on the next 24 hr roster to sleep on the floor and assist during the night. A local family turned up today with food for Kylie..the locals are so cool!. unfortunately she is on liquids only..but they said no problem..they will bring soup tomorrow!

*Don*

#### [Plane on it's way!](#)

Posted on [September 12, 2012](#)

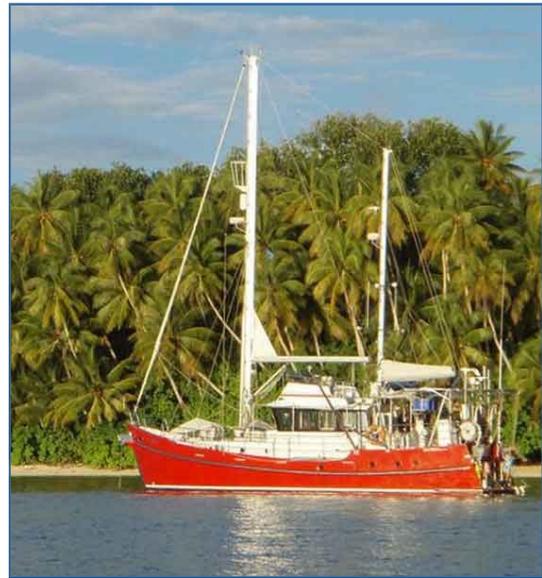
After a long night of frustrating comms with the UK based response team, all the paper work was completed around 0700hrs this morning. Tongan phones and faxes would not work etc etc, but the UK team did everything they could. Jane was up all night and I was onto comms constantly from 0200hrs. At 0400hrs I commandeered a car to rush to the hospital and the driver was way cool!..

So the Careflight Australia Medivac team flew out of Sydney at around 0800hrs this morning bound for Vavau and will arrive here around 1800hrs tonight. The medical team will examine Kylie in the hospital and then as the pilots have run out of Command Flight hours for the day, they have to sleep. Kylie will then fly out of here at 0600hrs tomorrow, bound for Brisbane, arriving around 0930hrs tomorrow local time. Not sure of the hospital yet. Her parents are in the "loop" now with the Australian side of logistics.

If you ever wondered about travel insurance..here is your answer...this is with INSURE4LESS...the only one that we could find that would insure for more than three months out of the country....they have been superb so far!!!

Kylie is comfortable and still smiling, but then again, she has been smiling forever, even from the moment she was bitten...that is just her!! The first Mermaid we have had on *ICE*!

**SOURCE:** <http://bluetreasure2.wordpress.com/>



*ICE*

### Shark attack victim coming home

A north coast woman attacked by a shark in Tonga is being flown back to Australia

A Lennox Head woman will be flown back to Australia after being attacked by a shark off Tonga.

CareFlight will tonight fly to Tonga to meet Kylie Maguire and transport her back to Brisbane tomorrow morning. She will then be taken to the Gold Coast Hospital at Southport.

Ms Maguire, 29, was bitten on the thighs and buttocks by what is believed to have been a three-metre bull shark.

Her father Mike Maguire said the attack occurred on Monday and his daughter had been recovering well until one of her wounds became infected. "Apparently she's been smiling and joking and being her normal, incredibly strong self," he said. "She was hit by the shark in the right thigh, it was about an 18-inch-wide bite with one-inch teeth they reckon. But the problem is the inside of the left thigh has had about a six-inch bite, two-inch-piece of chunk taken and this is becoming infected. So we've gone from Monday everything not being too bad to yesterday, no she has to be airlifted out there's infection setting in. She said when they changed the dressing it was quite painful, but I also was told the bite marks around her buttocks and thighs on the right hand side are looking really good. The main thing is they've missed all the major arteries and nerves which is really important."

Ms Maguire had been working in the area as a 'treasure hunter' with the Tongan government and shipwreck explorers Tonga Blue. Her work involved diving at recently discovered shipwrecks.

However, at the time of the shark attack, Ms Maguire was swimming behind a kayak off a resort in Vava'u. Mr Maguire said there were a lot of whales and calves in the area and one theory was that the shark had mistaken the dark, rubber kayak for a whale.

He also said the marine life in Tonga was one of the attractions to his daughter who was a keen conservationist with a particular penchant for sharks. "Kylie wants to protect every shark and wants to stop finning happening," he said. "She's very environmentally conscious and has even tried to sign up to the (whale conservation group) Sea Shepherd."

**SOURCE:** Samantha Turnbull and Katya Quigley (with Sarah Ndiaye), ABC North Coast, September 13, 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2012/09/13/3589473.htm>

### Shark victim on the mend

A LENNOX Head woman who was attacked by a shark while working for professional treasure hunters in Tonga is recovering at the Gold Coast Hospital after a second operation this week.

Kylie Maguire, 29, was attacked by what was believed to be a 3m bull shark while swimming near Treasure Island Resort in Vava'u on September 10. The shark bit her on the thighs and buttocks. She was immediately taken to a local Tongan hospital where she had surgery. But one of her wounds was not healing well, and her family made the decision to fly her back to Australia for treatment.

Arrangements were made with CareFlight and Kylie was flown into Coolangatta on September 14. She was then transferred to the Gold Coast Hospital at Southport and had a second operation this

week to close up the wound which had become infected at Tonga.

At the time of the attack, Kylie was working on the ship ICE, a boat owned by wreck-hunting company Tonga Blue, which this year started working with the Tongan government to uncover the area's "hidden maritime past".

The ship's captain, Don McIntyre, has continued to stay in touch with Kylie, who he calls "our mermaid". He posted on his blog, [www.bluetreasure.me](http://www.bluetreasure.me), that she was "all smiles". "She misses ICE and the crew plus all her friends in Tonga, but is happy to be getting all the care," he said. "We will miss you, Kylie, but know you will be back ... we have some unfinished business, hey!"

Her father, Mike Maguire, told the Northern Star recently that his daughter was keen to get back to Tonga. "This has been a big adventure for her," he said. "She was loving it over there and was devastated when she was attacked by the shark and had to come home. Kylie's already talking about when she might be able to get back."

**SOURCE:** Northern Star, September 22, 2012,  
<http://www.northernstar.com.au/story/2012/09/22/shark-victim-on-the-mend-kylie-maguire/>

## My Experience Being Bitten By A Shark

*By: Sea Shepherd Australia*

**Williamstown, Victoria Feb. 20, 2014** – As a surfer, diver, sailor and person who has lived by the sea my whole life, I feel an infinite connection with and love for the ocean. In 2012 I was bitten by a shark in Vava'u, Tonga. Two weeks later, I was discharged from hospital in Australia.

I started asking questions and researched sharks, out of interest and as a foundation to help me deal with the sudden spotlight put on me by the media. It was then that the horrifying shark facts stared me in the face, and the facts had nothing to do with attacks on humans; in fact, it was the attack on sharks that was most worrying.

One of the biggest threats currently facing our marine ecosystems is the massive decline in shark populations throughout the world. But not even the rapid decline in shark species, and their important role to keep our oceans clean, healthy and balanced can save them right now. I often wonder, if we could turn back time, how different the stigma of sharks would be if the movie *Jaws* had not been made.

Sharks have had a hard time at the hands of humans; not only are they portrayed as



*Kylie Macquire, Deckhand on The Sam Simon*

Photo: Andrew J Correll

malicious ocean beasts, but they are often killed as by-catch from fishermen. Globally, over 100 million sharks are killed every year, 78 million of these for their fins alone, to support growing demand for shark fin soup.

Even the so-called protection title “Endangered Species” has not helped our ocean’s apex predator. In Australia – a so-called developed and educationally advanced country – the green light has just been given to kill Endangered sharks on the West coast, using baited drum lines. On the East coast, it is currently legal for 100,000 sharks to be killed every year inside the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, all to support the shark fin industry.

I knew that after the shark encounter I would possibly have psychological hurdles to face. In all honesty, being bitten has not deterred me, but deepened my respect for sharks. The ocean is not our personal playground, but a complex bio-diversity and self-regulated ecosystem – it is wild and governs itself. How dare we, humans, take away a shark’s right to life, and their role within the habitat where they breed, gestate, feed and live!

I still surf as much as I can, and dive, and swim in the ocean, because it is such an amazing place to me. I have respect for the territory that a shark calls home. I have also taken the time to understand sharks, which has opened a door of genuine empathy. I can see that beneath the negative image is another animal, a big fish that has grace, elegance, and is in great need of our help.

Footage of free-divers swimming harmoniously with sharks is slowly circling the globe. Researchers are working intimately with sharks and people are experiencing beautiful encounters under the water. A new and more honest understanding is emerging, while our politicians are feeding fear and making decisions they are not entitled to make.

Sharks, like all species, have the right to live. Any person who spends time in the ocean is already aware that s/he is in same water that sharks patrol. During my research while healing, I watched documentaries and read various stories from other shark encounters around the world. Not one person felt ill feelings towards sharks; in fact, they agreed to the importance of conservation and protection.

My heart goes out to all those who have passed away who love the ocean. I wonder what they would feel about the shark cull in Western Australia?

I feel shame and embarrassment for the direction that Australia has taken on this issue. We urgently must put a stop to the brutal killing of sharks around our coast, and demand use of the sophisticated and intelligent information that is already available, yet ignored, to protect this very beautiful and misunderstood animal.

**SOURCE:** February 20, 2014 Michael “Beach Mick” Hudson, Beach Carolina Magazine, February 20, 2014, <http://beachcarolina.com/2014/02/20/my-experience-being-bitten-by-a-shark/>



*A Tiger Shark, one of the victims of the Barnett government's shark cull*