



ACTIVITY: Scuba diving
CASE: **GSAF 2013.02.09**
DATE: February 9, 2013
LOCATION: Bora Bora, French Polynesia.

NAME: Zohar Kritzer
DESCRIPTION: He is a 48-year-old male from Canada.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 08h00, Bora Bora recorded clear skies and visibility of 25 miles. The air temperature was 84°F, dew point 74°F, humidity 64%, sea level pressure 29.91 inches and wind direction was north at 11.5 mph.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, February 9, 2013

TIME: 09h00 to 09h30

NARRATIVE: Zohar Kritzer was diving with a group along the outer reef of Bora Bora at a site called Tapu, and had only been in the water a few minutes. According to Emmanuel Bonifait, the sharks did not show any unusual aggressiveness that day, which was corroborated by five other divers. It appears that the diver was injured as the shark was “trying to snatch his watch”.

INJURY: Lacerations to right hand and forearm.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: The diver received first aid from the team at Topdive Bora Bora



Dive Center, and the clinic on Vaitape, Bora Bora Then he was transported by helicopter to Tahiti for surgery at Ta'aone Hospital.

SPECIES: According to the diver, the incident involved a sicklefin lemon shark, *Negaprion acutidens*.

Polynésie. L'attaque de requin à Bora Bora prise très au sérieux Sorties requin-citron suspendues

Le 9 février, un requin-citron a mordu la main d'un touriste canadien lors d'une plongée à Bora Bora, apparemment attiré par sa montre. En attendant de comprendre pourquoi, la direction des centres de plongée Topdive a décidé de suspendre les sorties requin-citron.

« Les plongées sur les sites d'observation des requins citron ont été suspendues jusqu'à nouvel ordre, a confirmé lundi, Emmanuel Bonifait, responsable marketing à Topdive. Nous attendons que des plongeurs spécialisés, et qui connaissent très bien cette espèce, aillent observer ces spécimens afin d'essayer de comprendre les raisons de ce comportement le jour de l'accident. »



Zohar Kritzer avait été grièvement blessé au bras droit après qu'un requin-citron eut, selon les premières observations, tenté de s'emparer de sa montre de plongée. *Photo La Dépêche de Tahiti*
Zohar Kritzer was seriously wounded in the right arm after a shark took a lemon, according to preliminary observations, tried to seize his diving watch. *Photo Dispatch Tahiti*

Le 9 février, vers 9 h 30, Zohar Kritzer, un Canadien de 48 ans avait été grièvement blessé à l'avant-bras, quelques minutes à peine après son immersion avec un groupe de plongeurs, lors d'une plongée classique en bouteilles, le long du récif extérieur de Bora Bora, sur le site appelé Tapu.

Inexpliquée. Après avoir reçu les premiers soins par l'équipe du centre de plongée Topdive Bora Bora, puis par le dispensaire de l'île, le plongeur avait été transporté vers Tahiti pour y être opéré à l'hôpital de Taaone. Il devra suivre une longue rééducation de plusieurs mois pour retrouver la complète motricité de sa main droite.

Une attaque qui reste à ce jour inexpliquée, d'autant plus que les requins ne faisaient manifestement preuve d'aucune agressivité particulière, ce jour-là. « Topdive est en Polynésie française depuis 1998 et, en 15 ans, ce qui représente des dizaines de milliers de plongées, c'est une première, poursuit Emmanuel Bonifait. Le spécimen n'était pas agressif. Cinq témoignages de plongeurs nous ont permis d'exclure tout comportement de frénésie. Il semble réellement que ce requin citron a blessé le plongeur en tentant de lui arracher sa montre. »

Le centre de plongée qui envisageait même, hier, de remonter l'accident à la société Casio, concepteur de la montre de plongée portée par le touriste, dans l'hypothèse où ce modèle, en tant que tel, pourrait avoir attiré le squal.

« Nous vendons du loisir. Il est hors de question de mettre nos clients en danger, y compris nous-mêmes ! », avance Emmanuel, qui veut par ailleurs en savoir plus sur l'attrait éventuel de ces animaux pour tel ou tel équipement de plongée.

Tuamotu. S'il s'agit de la première attaque dans le cadre d'une plongée, ce n'est pas la première fois qu'un requin-citron s'en prend à un être humain en Polynésie. Le 4 août dernier, Téophane, pêcheur sous-marin, a été mordu grièvement à l'épaule par un requin-citron, à Kaukura, aux Tuamotu. Ce jour-là, après avoir harponné deux poissons dans une eau trouble, il voit un requin gris qui lui tourne autour. Téophane tire une flèche dans sa direction pour le faire fuir. Mais alors qu'il est occupé à réarmer son fusil, il est surpris par un imposant requin-citron d'une longueur de 2,5 à 3 mètres. Mordu à l'épaule, le pêcheur perd son masque et une palme. Il parvient difficilement à regagner le bateau, nageant avec son seul bras valide. Heureusement, le squalo n'est pas revenu à la charge.

Généralement peu agressif, la taille du requin-citron (deux à trois mètres) le rend potentiellement dangereux pour l'homme. Les attaques de requin sont rarissimes en Polynésie, et s'il y en a, elles ne sont pas forcément rapportées à la presse. Toutefois aucune attaque n'a fait de morts à ce jour.

Polynesia. The shark attack in Bora Bora taken seriously
Outputs lemon shark suspended
(Google translate)

On 9 February, a lemon shark bit the hand of a Canadian tourist at a dive in Bora Bora, apparently attracted by his watch. Wanting to understand why the direction of the dive centers Topdive decided to suspend the outputs lemon shark.

"The dive sites of observation lemon sharks have been suspended until further notice, confirmed Monday, Emmanuel Bonifait, marketing manager at Topdive. We expect that specialized divers, who are very familiar with this species, go watch these specimens to try to understand the reasons for this behavior on the day of the accident. "

February 9, 9 am to 30 Zohar Kritzer, a Canadian 48-year-old was seriously wounded in the forearm, a few minutes after immersion with a group of divers during a scuba dive along the outer reef of Bora Bora on the site called Tapu.

Unexplained. After receiving first aid by the team of diving center Topdive Bora Bora, and the clinic on the island, the diver was transported to Tahiti for surgery at the hospital Taaone. It will take a long rehabilitation for several months to regain full traction with his right hand.

An attack that remains unexplained to this day, especially the sharks did clearly show any aggressiveness special that day. "Topdive is in French Polynesia since 1998, and in 15 years, which represents tens of thousands of dives, this is a first, says Emmanuel Bonifait. The specimen was not aggressive. Five testimonies of divers allowed us to exclude any behavior frenzy. It really seems that the lemon shark diver injured while trying to snatch his watch. "

The dive center which envisaged same yesterday, to trace the accident the company Casio, designer dive watch carried by tourists, assuming this model, as such, may have attracted the shark. "We sell hobby. It is out of the question to put our customers at risk, including ourselves! "Advance Emmanuel, who also wants to learn more about the potential appeal of these animals to a particular diving equipment.

Tuamotu. If this is the first attack in a dive, this is not the first time a lemon shark attacks a human being in Polynesia.

August 4, Téophane, spearfishing, was severely bitten in the shoulder by a shark, lemon, Kaukura,

the Tuamotus. That day, after spearing two fish in muddy water, he saw a gray shark that revolves around him. Téophane shoots an arrow in his direction to scare them away. But while he is busy rearming his gun, he is surprised by a huge lemon shark with a length of 2.5 to 3 meters. Bitten on the shoulder, the fisherman loses his mask and a palm. He finds it difficult to return to the boat, swimming with his one good arm. Fortunately, the shark is not returned to the charge.

Generally not aggressive, the size of a lemon shark (two to three meters) makes it potentially dangerous to humans. Shark attacks are rare in Polynesia, and if there are, they are not necessarily reported to the press. However, no attack was dead today.

SOURCE: Les Nouvelles caledoniennes, Thursday, February 21, 2013,

“Shark attack on Bora Bora dive! For real! I was there!”

Reviewed February 14, 2013

I am not kidding! I will NEVER dive with sharks again. First, Top Dive Bora Bora did NOT check if I had my certification with me (I didn't but I am PADI certified and should have had it with me) nor did they ask the 3 other people I was with if they had theirs. There were 9 divers on the boat with 2 dive masters.

We went to Tapu to dive with Lemon Sharks. The minute the boat stopped, the lemon sharks showed up. There were probably about 8 in the beginning. We split into 2 groups - 4 in mine and 6 in the other. Because one in my group had a hard time clearing on the way down, we were about 10-15 minutes behind.

We finally got to about 70 ft. The other group had gone one way, we went another. We had only been moving about 10 minutes when the other dive master showed up and we were told to "stop". The other DM was "talking" with ours and making signs that I wasn't familiar with. He left quickly. Our DM signaled to follow him and we headed back toward the line connected to the boat.

We were very confused when he told us to surface. The guy going up first stopped at 15 ft to decomp but the DM kept signaling to keep going and hurry. I noticed many other sharks had shown up and were circling the boat but we still didn't realize what had happened (thank goodness!). Two of my group had gotten into the boat when I surfaced. I was waiting for a DM to come get my tank etc. like usual but no one was coming. I was trying to get up but there were big swells and I was knocked off the ladder several times (big bruises to show it). Finally I said "can someone help me?" And my friend came over and pulled me up, tank and all, saying "don't panic but a guy got bit".

Talk about WOW! Got on the boat and sure enough, a guy from the other group was sitting with an oxygen mask on and with his arm wrapped in a bandage, blood seeping through and dripping down.

After everyone got on board, we raced to Vaitape to drop the guy off. He was a guest on a cruise ship and an employee with the ship was with him. His dive partner had been behind him while diving and told us he had seen this shark start following him and it was like he was tracking him. The dive partner saw the attack. It bit through his dive watch which fell on the bottom (they were right above bottom) and the victim kept swimming! Didn't know he'd been bit until it started bleeding. The partner said it just layed open a big flap in his arm - to the bone! He didn't seem to be in much pain but I'm sure he was in shock.

After we dropped him off to be heli flighted to Tahiti, the DM's asked if we still wanted to go on our dive but INSIDE the lagoon. We all talked it over and decided to go ahead and dive. Mostly so we could get through the fear we had and not be scared to dive again. I have to COMMEND the DM's for doing a great job keeping calm and keeping us calm. They had never experienced an attack before but I have to say there was no panic from anyone on the boat and it was because the DM's and boat driver were extremely calm. Aside from the large number of divers they took at one time and that they didn't check certs, they did a great job with the emergency. The dive we finally did was a poor one - visibility was bad and fish scarce. We did see an eagle ray and that was cool. Unfortunately, almost all of the coral is dead in the lagoon and so diving isn't good so, that's my true story. I tried to find some news of it on the net but found nothing. Probably, they are keeping it quiet so it won't hurt business in Bora Bora.

SOURCE: http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g669130-d1939970-r152081644-TOPDIVE_Bora_Bora-Vaitape_Bora_Bora_Society_Islands.html

Lemon Shark Attack in French Polynesia

On February 9th, Zohar Kritzer was seriously wounded by a shark while scuba diving in Bora Bora. It's a small island that belongs to the Leeward group of the Society Islands in French Polynesia. A sicklefin lemon shark bit on the right forearm of the 48-years old tourist from Canada. The incident occurred during a dive excursion along the outer reef at Tapu. This place is considered as a famous dive site to see lemon sharks.

The injured diver received first aid by the team of the local Topdive Diving Centre. Later, Mr. Kritzer was transported to Tahiti for surgery at the hospital of Taaone. It is reported that the victim faces several months of rehabilitation to recover from his injuries.

According to the source (published on February 21st), the Topdive Diving Centre has decided to suspend all dive trips to the lemon sharks in Bora Bora until further notice as a precaution.

It is believed that the shark was attracted by the diver's watch (also shown in the photo below). Emmanuel Bonifait of Topdive is quoted as saying: 'The specimen was not aggressive. Five testimonies of divers allow us to exclude any frenzied behavior. It really seems that the diver was injured while the lemon shark was trying to snatch his watch.'

There are two different species of lemon sharks: the Atlantic lemon shark (*Negaprion brevirostris*) and the Sicklefin lemon shark (*Negaprion acutidens*) which is distributed in the Indo-West and central Pacific. Both species are described as quite shy when approached by divers, but they are potentially dangerous species and should be treated with respect.

According to the International Shark Attack File, lemon sharks were involved in only 10 non-fatal unprovoked attacks. In November 1976, our Shark Year's Al Brenneka almost lost his life in an unprovoked attack by a specimen of the Atlantic species. Please see the related video at: <http://sharkyear.com/2012/shark-week-2012-shark-fight-shark-hunters-change-of-heart.html>

According to a scientific study released in 2005, scuba divers were involved in the majority (46 percent) of 54 recorded shark attacks and bites that occurred in French Polynesia. But in all these bite incidents, the divers were performing ' shark feeding '. So fish blood or flesh close to the victims appears to have worked as a stimulus on sharks. The author noted that shark feeding should be considered as a major factor of such bite incidents (Ref. C. Maillaud et al. 2005).

SOURCE: Helmut Nickel, Shark Year Magazine, February 24, 2013, <http://sharkattacksurvivors.com/2013/lemon-shark-attack-in-french-polynesia.html>