



**ACTIVITY:** Marathon swimming

**CASE:** [GSAF 2013.08.29](#)

**DATE:** Thursday August 29, 2013

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Catalina Channel between Catalina Island and mainland California, USA. The Catalina Channel is approximately 20.1 miles wide, the Channel separates the Island of Catalina from Point Vicente on the California Coast

**NAME:** Charlotte Brynn

**DESCRIPTION:** She is a 47-year-old female, an open water swimmer from New Zealand and currently the Executive Director of the Swimming Hole in Stowe, Vermont, U.S.A. She is 5'9", weighs 134 lb, tanned and was wearing a bright green, blue and white bathing suit with a green light attached on the back strap, a light pink swim cap with a green light stick at the back, ear plugs and goggles. She participated in the 28.5-mile Manhattan Island Marathon Swim in June 2013 and the World 10-mile Swimming Championships held in Lake



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Memphremago, Vermont on July 6, 2013. She won the women's division at the 2013 Lake Willoughby Swim in Vermont.

**SUPPORT CRAFT:** Outrider, a white 50ft fiberglass sport fisher boat and a yellow sit-on-top kayak.

## **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** Clear night sky with 10-mile visibility. Winds from the west blowing 15 knots.

**MOON PHASE:** Last Quarter, 37% of the Moon was illuminated.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea surface temperature at the start of the swim was 65°F. The sea was choppy with white caps on surface, and two- to three-foot swells every 10 seconds, and it was mean low tide.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Open water with occurrence of dolphin, sea lions, squid, and mackerel at the surface, and rocky bottom with kelp bed. (Boat crew announced there were squid hatchlings at time she entered the water.)

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 1 to 1.5 miles

**DEPTH OF WATER:** 100 to 500 feet, but the bite took place at the sea surface.

**TIME:** 24h45 - 01h00

**NARRATIVE:** The athlete was attempting 20.1 mile swim across the Catalina Channel, also known as San Pedro Channel. The swim started from Emerald Shoreline, also known as Doctors Cove, Catalina Island. The incident occurred within the first hour and approximately closer to 30 - 45 minutes after the start of the swim.

*"I knew I had been hit, didn't know by what," Brynn said. "It was painful, unlike anything I had ever felt before. Whatever it was clamped on to what felt like my whole right side. My first thought was, 'Wow, that's intense,' followed by, 'What was that?' The impact was sudden/abrupt, I was hit on what felt like my whole right side, very aware of the impact on my right, felt like something sharp hit me hard and fast, I felt like I had been hit on my right buttock, it felt like sharp nails which radiated over my whole upper gluteal area, it was intense."*

Brynn said she was so focused on the swim that she just let it go and kept swimming.

*"I was surprised later to find a mouth mark on my hip, as the area I felt was more on right buttock area. I have a long axis body roll when I swim. This means I roll my body from one side to the other with each stroke, and my body roll is more pronounced to my right side. My illuminate light stick was rolling from side to side, with my body roll."*

She swam for another 11 hours after the bite and didn't mention the attack to her crew.

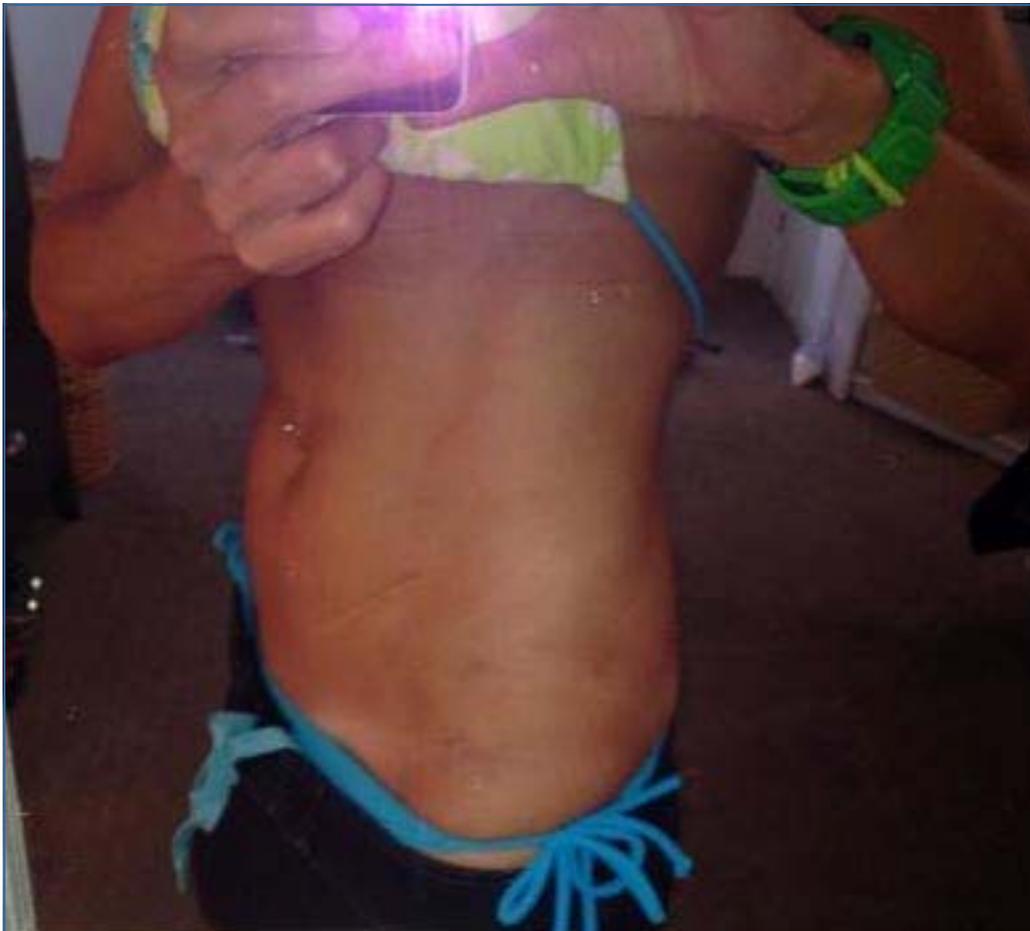
**INJURY:** She sustained a single bite to the right hip consisting of one puncture wound from the upper jaw which broke the surface of the skin and three puncture wounds caused by the lower jaw, A single tooth fragment was found in one of three puncture wounds 13 hours after the incident. The area was bruised, tender to the touch and movement of general area was painful.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** After completing the swim, 13 hours after she had been bitten,

Brynn found a tooth lodged in the puncture wound on her side, and on September 3, 2013, she was treated by Dr Timothy Fitzgerald, Osteopathic Physician/ Surgeon/ Medical Director.

**SPECIES:** A marine biologist apparently confirmed the tooth was from a leopard shark, but the tooth appears to be from a bony fish, not a shark.

*Tooth fragment  
& US dime*



*Wound on Charlotte Brynn's torso  
sustained during a swim of the Catalina Channel.*