

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2014.06.01.b

DATE: Sunday June 1, 2014

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Tasman Sea at Seven Mile Beach, New South Wales, Australia.



NAME: Bob Smith

DESCRIPTION: He is a male from Nowra.

SURFBOARD: He was using a long board.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was overcast.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 10% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, May 29, 2014.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was murky, the waves were “alright” and the “water temperature was surprisingly warm.

ENVIRONMENT: Stephen Buckless of Eden’s Southland Fish Supplies said his suppliers had seen an increased number of many shark species including bronze whalers and great whites. “Fish stocks have increased and there are a lot of bait fish around here, and that’s what they eat,” he said. “The water is also warmer and conditions are right for them at the moment.”

DEPTH OF WATER: Shoulder-deep

TIME: Early morning

NARRATIVE: Apart from a couple swimming in the water, Bob Smith and Glenn Askew, had the surf to themselves. At the end Smith’s third wave, he jumped off his board and felt something brush his right leg.

“I instantly thought leg rope, and then it latched onto my left leg. It started thrashing. It was like a banging sensation. I thought, ‘You’re not going to get me that easily.’ You know how people say you get more strength when things like this happen? Well I grabbed my longboard and pulled it right down into the water. “I got on and the shark let go. But I didn’t even get a glimpse of it.”

Glenn Askew paddled over to him. “I said there’s a shark under me, and he caught the next wave in,” said Smith. “But my board was still pointing out and I had to dangle my leg in the water to turn it around. It was a horrible feeling. Then I paddled straight in, I wasn’t waiting for a wave.”

INJURY: He sustained gashes and 15 puncture wounds to his foot and ankle. He discovered more to his lower leg when he rolled the leg of his wetsuit up.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Smith lay on his board until Askew noticed the couple who were still swimming and said he would paddle back out and bring them back to shore. “I was a bit shook up. But there was still a guy and a girl out there,” Mr Smith said. “I didn’t really want to go back out. But I’ve got some conscience and when Glenn suggested paddling back out I said, ‘Stuff it’ and I paddled out with him to get them. They decided to swim back in. They had flippers so it didn’t take them long.”

After wrapping his foot in paper towels and a plastic bag Mr Smith made his way to Shoalhaven Hospital for treatment.

SPECIES: “Thankfully, it wasn’t a man-eating 12-footer; it was a sneaky little blighter that took a bite,” said Smith. “Since Sunday I spoke to a guy who said there were reports of bronze whalers down the coast, nipping people.”

