

ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE: [GSAF 2014.08.16](#)

DATE: Saturday August 16, 2014

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean off Gnaraloo, Western Australia.

NAME: Adam Haling

DESCRIPTION: He is a 31-year-old male from Perth, a mining project manager.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, August 17, 2014

ENVIRONMENT: Gnaraloo, located on Gnaraloo Bay, is famous for its beaches, surf and fish. It is adjacent to the Ningaloo Marine Park and 150 km (93.2 miles) north of Carnarvon.

DEPTH OF WATER: 2.5 metres

TIME: 14h30

NARRATIVE: Adam Haling was spearfishing with his friend, Mick Slocombe. Haling had just speared a fish and was swimming back to shore when a reef shark suddenly rammed him in the face, ripping off his mask. The forced Haling to drop his catch. "I can remember [the shark] being right on my face, seeing the front of its mouth on my face," he said. "Its top jaw hit my mask, and the bottom jaw hit underneath my chin. As it came down it ripped my mask."

Haling said he then watched the shark circle him as he was holding his neck, where he had been bitten. "I saw the fin do a big arc, and I thought, oh o...surely the shark realises that I have dropped the fish. It was a bit like Jaws," he said. "It then took the fish I had and it was gone. I think it was chasing the fish I had in my hand, and at the last minute it hit me instead the fish."

Haling said his first priority was to get himself and his friend out of the water. Slocombe, 31, was still 100 to 200 metres away in the water, when Haling yelled out: "Shark. Help. We need to get out of here". "I was still holding my face together when I got Mick's attention, and realised my whole body was covered in blood, and that I was in real danger with the amount of blood I was losing," he said.

INJURY: Lacerations to face and neck.

FIRST AID: Haling started feeling light headed as he was running back to their car "I then had to walk back to the car, I could feel my face was really loose, there was flapping skin, I knew it was an emergency.. . I thought I'm in trouble here I might not make it to the car, I was thinking s**t, this could be it," he said.



Gnaraloo Bay off the coast of Western Australia. Picture: Supplied



Adam Haling and his girlfriend Sonia Harvey. Picture: Courtesy Adam Haling.

Slocombe followed Haling's blood trail and then drove him back to a camp site at nearby Gnaraloo Station. But it was only the beginning of what became a 10-hour journey for treatment.

At the station, an ambulance and The Royal Flying Doctor's Service were contacted for help. Two doctors who were holidaying at the station, gave him pain relief and determined he had not ruptured his carotid artery or jugular vein.

Slocombe then drove Haling halfway to the next big coastal town of Carnarvon, which was 150 kilometres away where they met up with an ambulance. Haling said they were able to save time on the road after the mine opened a private road for Haling and Slocombe's use - the most direct route to Carnarvon. They reached Carnarvon three hours after the attack. "Surprisingly I was running on adrenalin the whole time, the only thing you can do in these situations is make light of it. The nurses were very helpful and took great care of me, and cleaned me up," said Haling.

Finally, he was flown by The Royal Flying Doctor's Service to Royal Perth Hospital where he arrived just after midnight. After three and a half hours of surgery, doctors were able to successfully sew his face back together. "The doctors said I had very clean cuts, as a shark's teeth is so sharp, they were able to sew everything back together, even the nurses never thought it'd come back together like that," Haling said.

SPECIES: According to Haling, the incident involved a "reef shark".

