



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2015.01.19.a](#)

DATE: Monday January 19, 2015

LOCATION: Wategos Beach in Byron Bay, New South Wales, Australia.

NAME: Di Ellis

DESCRIPTION: She is a female from Yamba.

SURFBOARD: A high-performance Malibu longboard. It is a fairly light longboard, but it's still fairly solid, said Ellis.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 3% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, January 21, 2015.

ENVIRONMENT: Wategos Beach (NSW 14) is up to 600 metres in length and backed by an amphitheatre-shaped valley near the tip of Cape Byron. It has a shallow sandy seafloor with waves breaking gradually and spilling over a wide sand bar and patchy reef.

NARRATIVE: Di Ellis was on her daughter's surfboard filming a pod of dolphins when they disappeared. "I thought 'oh, they don't want to be filmed, they're being a bit anti-social,'" Di said. "So I paddled back to shore and went to catch a couple of waves. It wasn't long before they came back again, so I paddled back out so I'd be in their path, and I saw them coming."

"I was filming as they came, then I saw a couple come very quickly under my board, but then something suddenly hit me." Di described the sensation of being hit from below the water as like an 'explosion.' "I think the board breaking took the impact and I sort of fell down between the two pieces. Then I was suddenly floundering in the water with two pieces of board," she said.

Di thought that because she had been amongst dolphins that it must have been one of them that knocked her off her board. "I just thought 'wow, a dolphin just ran into me,'" she said. "There was a stand-up paddle boarder nearby and I was very grateful because I felt like I wasn't alone, because we were a fair way out from the other surfers. He was looking around

Di Ellis and her daughter Lilly on Wategos Beach with the board that was snapped in two.



and he saw a small shark – it was only small – so I wasn't really panicked about it, and I was still thinking it was a dolphin.”

The following day, Di showed the board to some friends, including board shaper Cal Liddle who noticed teeth marks in one of the fins. “He noticed what looked like teeth marks on the big fin in the middle,” Di said. “You could see where something had hit one of the side fins at the back and I think that impact at the back, pushing up, had made the board break where I was sitting on it.”

INJURY: No injury

DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD: It was broken in two; it was a clean break. The day after the incident, Di showed the board to some friends, including board shaper Cal Liddle who noticed teeth marks in one of the fins. “He noticed what looked like teeth marks on the big fin in the middle,” Di said. “You could see where something had hit one of the side fins at the back and I think that impact at the back, pushing up, had made the board break where I was sitting on it.”

SPECIES: “So, anyway,” Ellis says, “we're not very sure if it was a shark or dolphin.”

SOURCE: ABC North Coast, January 21, 2015,
<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2015/01/21/4165755.htm?site=northcoast>