



ACTIVITY: Standing (Swimming/Snorkeling)

CASE: [GSAF 2015.03.18](#)

DATE: Wednesday March 18, 2015

LOCATION: The incident took place at Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area, Hawaii, USA.

NAME: Dr. Ken Grasing

DESCRIPTION: He is a 58-year-old male from Overland Park Kansas.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 11h00, the wind was West at seven knots.

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 2% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, March 20, 2015.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 78°F and waves were one to two feet. Mean low tide occurred at 09h15, mean high tide at 15h08. The sea was turbid.

ENVIRONMENT: The white sand beach at Hapuna stretches for over half a mile between the points of lava that form its boundaries. During the summer months, the beach is more than 200 feet wide-the widest white sand beach on the Big Island but high winter surf often erodes the beach considerably. About midway along the beach, a lava promontory that was known to Hawaiian fishermen as Ihumoku (the “bow [of the] ship”) crosses divides the beach in half. To the south of this rocky point is Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area. The long, wide, flat white sand beach slopes gently into the deeper offshore waters, utilized by swimmers, snorkelers and scuba divers. Sea cliffs are at southern end of the beach, terminating in sea cliffs at the southern end of the beach. During the winter months, usually from October through April, there High surf strikes the beach, generating a pounding shorebreak and extremely powerful, shifting rip currents. Powerful winds, particularly common in the months of January, February, and March, can also pose a danger sweeping rafts and people on them out to sea. Hapuna Beach has full time year round professional lifeguards.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 yards

DEPTH OF WATER: 4 to 5 feet

TIME: The South Kohala police were notified at 11h46

NARRATIVE: Ken Grasing was snorkeling with his family about 20 yards off a point popularly known as “Jump Rock” at the south end of Hapuna Beach. “This black cloud



“Hapuna-beach-aerial” by Polihale

appeared, and I wasn't sure what it was and the shape moved towards me quickly, and it materialized into a ten to twelve-foot shark," Grasing said. He said that he acted quickly on instinct. "This is a magnificent animal swimming with great speed and power. I was really at its mercy, and if it had mind to do anything more, that would have been the end of me," he said. "I'd heard that you should hit the shark in the face, but it's very difficult to hit the shark in the face because there's a lot of teeth. It's moving fast and it's happening very quickly, but I hit it in the side of the head. The shark then swam around me, stayed in the area, and I stood there just yelling. It was quite a dramatic moment. My two boys were with me in the water and I was very concerned that the shark would attack them."

Numerous snorkelers were in the water when the shark attacked, and several bystanders helped drag the injured man in, ocean safety officers said. Police said the man had been snorkeling with his family at the time. "There was commotion in the water and we responded. Initially we didn't know what happened," lifeguard Paul Tucker said. "Then we saw bystanders dragging him in."

Authorities closed all beaches between Beach 69 and Kaunaoa.



Ken Grasing

INJURY: Grasing sustained severe lacerations to his left forearm, resulting in tendon, nerve and muscle damage, lacerations to his left hand and thigh.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: A body boarder and lifeguards assisted the man to the shore and put a tourniquet over the injured arm while waiting for emergency services to arrive. He was transported to North Hawaii Community Hospital for treatment, then transferred to The Queen's Medical Center on Oahu in stable condition. He is expected to make a full recovery.

SPECIES: The incident involved a tiger shark, eight to 12 feet in length. The shark continued to cruise just outside the surf line at Hapuna an hour after the attack. A Hawaii County Fire Department helicopter tracked the animal and confirmed seeing stripes on the shark's body.

SOURCES: KMBC, March 19, 2015, <http://www.kmbc.com/news/shark-attacks-overland-park-man-snorkeling-in-hawaii/31882786>
West Hawaii Today, March 19, 2015, <http://westhawaii.com/community-bulletin/beaches-set-open-two-days-after-shark-attack>
CNN, March 21, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/21/us/hawaii-shark-attack-victim-talks/>
ABC 13, March 22, 2015, <http://abc13.com/news/shark-attack-snorkelers-hand-mangled-by-tiger-shark-in-hawaii/568429/>