



**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** GSAF 2015.04.12

**DATE:** Sunday April 12, 2015

**LOCATION:** The attack took place in the Indian Ocean on the west coast of Reunion at Cap Homard, Saint-Gilles-les-Bains. 21°01'57"S, 55°13'18"E



*Elio Canestri*

**NAME:** Elio Canestri

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a 13-year old male. A junior surf champion, he participated in the championships of France in 2014 and was part of the Reunion Surf League's team.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** The sky was clear, the air temperature ranged from 68° to 75°F and the wind was SSW at three knots. After mid-March the southeast trades reappear, so do the powerful groundswells from the southern ocean. Things are humming by mid-April, with lighter winds and epic days on the west coast.

**MOON PHASE:** Last Quarter, 43% of the Moon was illuminated.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea surface temperature ranged from 22° to 29°C. Mean high tide at St. Gilles-les-Bains occurred at 06h44, mean low tide at 13h58, and at 10h00 the surf height was nine to 11 feet with two to six-foot SSW swells.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Réunion has little in the way of industrial or sewage pollution.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 50 feet

**TIME:** Shortly after 09h00



**NARRATIVE:** Elio Canestri was surfing with six or seven friends in an area where surfing was banned due to the high risk presented by sharks. The shark charged from below propelling Elio off his board and into the water. Witnesses described the child being flung around in the water as the shark bit into his abdomen. The shark then tore off the child's right arm and right leg before dragging him out to sea. One source says, Elio was brought to the beach by his friends, while another says: "A boat was launched very quickly, and the victim was dragged out of the sea."

The beach was immediately evacuated and surfers who witnessed the attack were provided with trauma counseling. Later the same morning the red flag was hoisted on all beaches of the western coast of the island and several commercial fishing vessels were mobilized by the prefecture to capture the shark responsible for the death of the teenager.

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**INJURY:** Fatal. The injuries were not survivable despite immediate medical help.

**SPECIES:** A few hours after the attack a 3.5 metre tiger shark was caught in the vicinity, and shortly afterwards a 4.2 metre tiger shark was caught, but it was not known if either of the sharks was responsible for the attack.



**SOURCES:** France 24, April 2015, <http://www.france24.com/fr/20150412-la-reunion-attaque-mortelle-requin-adolescent-aigrettes-saint-gilles-les-bains/>  
Le Huffington Post, April 12, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2015/04/12/attaque-mortelle-requin-reunion-mort-adolescent-13-ans\\_n\\_7048734.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2015/04/12/attaque-mortelle-requin-reunion-mort-adolescent-13-ans_n_7048734.html)  
<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/faits-divers/20150412.OBS6986/attaque-de-requin-a-la-reunion-ce-que-l-on-sait.html>  
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*Elio Canestri*

*Reunion local Jeremy Flores, winner of the Billabong Pipeline Masters in Hawaii in 2010, paid tribute to Canestri on Instagram: "ANOTHER shark attack in Reunion island this morning. 13 year old Elio was one of our best up and coming surfers. Words can't describe how sad and angry i am. So young !!! Heart breaking News. RIP :("*



*Elio Canestri*



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