



**ACTIVITY:** Wading

**CASE:** GSAF 2015.06.14.a

**DATE:** Sunday June 14, 2015

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean near the Ocean Crest Motel. Oak Island, Brunswick County, North Carolina, USA.

*33°54'44.16"N, 78°08'46.97"W*

**NAME:** Kiersten Yow

**DESCRIPTION:** A 12-year-old female from Ashboro, North Carolina. wearing a blue bathing suit.



*Kiersten Yow*

### **BACKGROUND]**

**WEATHER:** At 16h35, KSUT (the nearest airport to Oak Island) recorded clear skies and 10 mile visibility. The air temperature was 90°F, heat index 100°F, dew point 75.4°F, humidity 62%, sea level pressure 30.03 inches, and wind direction was South at 6.9 mph.

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Crescent, 4% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, June 16, 2015.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** Mean high tide occurred at 18h35 and the sea was murky.

**ENVIRONMENT:** The incident took place approximately 50 yards from Ocean Crest Fishing Pier, and a blogger on a local news site said her husband was told that there were some kayaks near the pier on Friday June 12, and they were chumming. Another blogger says he has seen sharkers fishing at Yaupon Beach and one SUV had a shark fishing website on it. The Oak Island Town Manager, Mayor, and the Caswell Beach Commissioner/Mayor Pro

Team. confirmed that there is beach shark fishing on the Island, and chumming activity does occur with some beach shark fishermen anchoring chum bags off the beach to attract sharks. According to Ocean Crest Pier website, trout were caught from the pier during the morning and late afternoon of June 14, 2015. All that week: Black Drum (*Pogonias cromis*), sheepshead (*Archosargus probatocephalus*), bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) and Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*) were also being caught. Sharks and skates were plentiful, with dogfish being caught in the 12"-14" size range. According to witnesses on the beach, there were small baitfish in the water at the time of the attack and pelicans were diving into the water.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 20 yards

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Waist deep

**TIME:**16h40. (Some reports said the call was received by dispatch at 16h12 but at the press conference the authorities gave the time of the attack as 16h40).

**NARRATIVE:** Kiersten Yow was swimming with several people, including her cousin, when she was bitten.

**INJURY:** Lower left arm below the elbow was severed by the shark and a large portion of tissue was removed from the left leg from the buttock to the posterior aspect of the knee, but the femoral artery was undamaged.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** Marie Hildreth, a paramedic from Charlotte, happened to be nearby the girl and rushed to help. She used strings from a boogie board and a tent to help stop blood loss. By-standers on the beach and First Responders helped save the life of the patient; the injury was life-threatening and without their assistance the injury might well have proved fatal. The patient was air lifted to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington. Damage to the patient's left arm necessitated surgical intervention below the elbow by Dr. Borden Hooks. She was subsequently transferred to N.C. Children's Hospital at UNC and finally Levine Children's Hospital. She was released from the hospital on July 14, 2015.

Six years after losing her arm to shark attack, she will study medicine at the University of North Carolina

**SPECIES:** Undetermined, but possibly a bull shark or tiger shark. Brunswick County Sheriff John Ingram said aerial and shore patrols will continue monitoring the coastline. Ingram said two sharks, or possibly the same one, were spotted after the attacks. The size of one shark sighted was estimated at about seven feet long. The second sighting was a shark of the same general size.

**SOURCES:** CBC, June 15, 2015, Charlotte <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/north-carolina-shark-attack-victims-were-in-waist-deep-water-1.3113508>

WPIX 11 New York, June 14, 2015, <http://pix11.com/2015/06/15/shark-attacks-how-likely-are-they/>

Boston Globe June 15, 2015, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2015/06/15/vacationers-lose-limbs-separate-shark-attacks/ChZnDgiGwlbbm4POZaC4yJ/story.html>

Fox News, June 15, 2015, <http://www.fox10phoenix.com/story/29327611/2015/06/16/2-youths-hurt-in-shark-attacks-on-north-carolina-coast>  
*+1,700 additional media reports on the internet*

La Noticia, July 5, 2021

<https://lanoticia.com/a-6-anos-de-perder-el-brazo-por-ataque-de-tiburón-nina-estudiara-medicina/>

**NOTES:** On Monday, June 15, I met with Oak Island Town Manager Tim Holloman, Oak Island Mayor Betty W. Wallace, and Caswell Beach Commissioner/Mayor Pro Team. They all confirmed that there is beach shark fishing on the Island, and chumming activity does occur. I also witnessed beach shark fisherman anchor chum bags off the beach to attract sharks. It is not known if there was shark fishing/chumming activity the day before the day of or night before the attacks. If there was chumming in the area Friday or Saturday, it could have lured a large shark to the area. I recommended that chumming regulations be reviewed and a county ordinance set in place to prohibit chumming from the beach.

Six years after the accident, Kiersten Yow was enrolled at University of North Carolina School of Medicine.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Clay Creswell, Global Shark Accident File.