



**ACTIVITY:** Wading

**CASE:** [GSAF 2015.09.20.b](#)

**DATE:** Sunday September 20, 2015

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean near Beach Access No. 9 at Jasmine Street in Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island, Nassau County, Florida, USA.  
*30°39'19.29"N, 81°25'55.47"W*

**NAME:** Joshua Bitner, Jr.

**DESCRIPTION:** A 4'9" 12-year-old male from Sparks, Georgia.



*Joshua Bitner, Jr.*

### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At 12h30, KFHB (the airport closest to Fernandina Beach) recorded scattered clouds and 10-mile visibility. The air temperature was 89.6°F, heat index 93.4°F, dew point 68°F, humidity 49%, sea level pressure 29.95 inches and wind direction was ENE at 6.9mph.

**MOON PHASE:** Waxing Crescent, 43% of the Moon was illuminated. First Quarter, September 21, 2015.

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Waist-deep (2 to 3 feet)

**TIME:** 12h30

**NARRATIVE:** Josh Bitner Jr. was playing in the water when he yelled to his parents on the beach to show them a big seashell. "Then something grabbed my leg and turned me around," he said. Joshua said that he punched the shark, then grabbed its first dorsal fin and pulled it out of the water and started yelling "shark!" "Then the shark turned me around again, biting me a second time. I was going backward dragging my foot," said Joshua. "I pushed myself out of the water until people saw I was split open, then they lifted me out of the water."

**INJURY:** Lacerations to left leg. No major arteries were cut, but it was still a significant injury as far as the amount of damage that was done to his leg, according to Deputy Mark

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Foxworth of the Fernandina Beach Police Department.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** Paramedics treated the boy at the scene, then he was transported to UF Health Jacksonville.

**SPECIES:** The boy's father, Joshua Bitner of Sparks, Georgia, said he saw a four-foot shark with a black tip on its dorsal fin thrashing in the water near his son. He said what he thinks was a lemon shark was "a little bit smaller" than him, and he's 4'9". "I grabbed its top fin and lifted it out of the water and punched it," the 12-year-old said. "It was just instinct. If something is turning me around and hurting me, then I'm going to punch it."

**SOURCES:** News4Jax, September 21, 2015

<http://www.news4jax.com/news/12yearold-bitten-by-shark-in-fernandina-beach/35391554>

First Coast News, September 21, 2015,

<http://www.firstcoastnews.com/story/news/local/2015/09/21/police-12-year-old-attacked-by-shark-in-fernandina-beach/72557804/>

NBC Miami, September 21, 2015

<http://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/Police-Boy-12-Suffers-Significant-Injuries-in-North-Florida-Shark-Attack-328519811.html>

WOKV, September 21, 2015

<http://www.wokv.com/news/news/local/12-year-old-bitten-shark-fernandina-beach/nnj3q/>

St Augustine Record, September 21, 2015

<http://staugustine.com/news/2015-09-21/georgia-boy-12-fights-shark-fernandina-beach-4-bitten-thursday-first-coast>

ENCA.com, September 22, 2015

<https://www.enca.com/life/surviving-shark-attack-two-boys-recount-their-experiences>

