



**ACTIVITY:** Spearfishing

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

**DATE:** Sunday September 20, 2015

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean off Upolu Point, North Kohala, Hawaii, USA.  
*20°16'07.13"N, 155°51'12.90"*

**NAME:** Braxton Rocha

**DESCRIPTION:** A 27-year-old male from Kapaau.



*Braxton Rocha*

#### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Waxing Crescent, 45% of the Moon was illuminated. First Quarter, September 20, 2015.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea was brown and murky due to heavy rain in the area.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 60 yards

**DEPTH OF WATER:** 25 feet, estimated

**TIME:** Fire Rescue crews responded at 15h52

**NARRATIVE:** Braxton Rocha said the attack occurred after he swam about 60 yards offshore in search of fish. After checking an underwater cave, he caught a flash of stripes in the corner of his eye and was face-to-face with the largest tiger shark he had ever seen. "She was jaws wide open, right in front of my face," Rocha said. he put his hands on top of the shark's nose to try to control it. But the fish was too strong, he said, and its massive jaws clamped down on his leg. Once she locked on my leg ... I cocked back, I punched her in the nose," he said. "She let go and she swam away." Rocha said adrenaline and the shark's sharp teeth kept him from immediately realizing he had been bitten. "I started making some strokes in after I punched her and that's when the blood just started gushing everywhere in the water, and I was like, this is not good," he said. "I started getting scared because I thought she was going to come back in for more." Rocha said he swam as hard as he could against a strong current to get to shore about 60 yards away.

Rocha shouted to dive buddy, Shannon Pasco, who was diving close to the rocky shoreline.

“I was screaming to him for a few minutes,” Rocha said. “But the wind was howling so loud and the waves were crashing so loud, you couldn’t hear a thing.” When Pasco finally raised his head out of the water, Rocha warned him about the shark. “Then he saw the shark,” Rocha said. “I thought it swam away but after it attacked me I guess it went for him.” No beaches were closed because the incident occurred in an isolated and remote area.

**INJURY:** A severe laceration to the left distal thigh and calf.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** Once out of the water, Pasco loaded his Rocha into the back of a pick-up truck before placing a tourniquet around his thigh. The two headed to town, waiting for cellphone service so they could call 911. Rocha panned a cell phone camera down to the wound on his leg, then uploaded the footage to Instagram. The Hawaii County Fire Department ambulance met the truck near the 21-mile marker on Akoni Pule Highway just before 16h00. An ambulance took him to Kamehameha park and then he was flown by a Hawaii Fire Department helicopter to North Hawaii Community Hospital in serious condition, and taken into surgery. The following day, The Daily Mail reported that his mother said he was doing better after surgery and should recover in a few days.

**SPECIES:** A tiger shark, 13 feet in length.

**SOURCES:** Hawaii247, September 20, 2015

<http://www.hawaii247.com/2015/09/20/man-attacked-by-tiger-shark-in-north-kohala-airlifted-in-serious-condition/>

The West Australian, September 21, 2015

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/29592467/man-shares-his-own-brutal-shark-attack-on-instagram-moments-after-it-happened/>

Associated Press, September 21, 2015

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/H/HI\\_BIG\\_ISLAND\\_SHARK\\_ATTACK\\_HIOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/H/HI_BIG_ISLAND_SHARK_ATTACK_HIOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)

Star Advertiser, September 21, 2015

[http://www.staradvertiser.com/news/breaking/20150920\\_Man\\_27\\_bitten\\_by\\_tiger\\_shark\\_off\\_north\\_shore\\_of\\_Hawaii\\_island.html?id=328461341](http://www.staradvertiser.com/news/breaking/20150920_Man_27_bitten_by_tiger_shark_off_north_shore_of_Hawaii_island.html?id=328461341)

NBC News, September 21, 2015

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/man-attacked-tiger-shark-hawaii-while-spearfishing-n431231>

Daily Mail, September 21, 2015

<http://www.newsjs.com/url.php?p=http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3243470/Victim-shark-attack-posts-graphic-video-injuries-left-giant-gash-leg-managing-swim-60-yards-safety.html>

National Post, September 24, 2015

<http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/i-just-got-attacked-by-a-tiger-shark-hooo-hawaii-fisherman-posts-viral-video-of-injuries-on-route-to-hospital>

