



**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2015.10.07](#)

**DATE:** Wednesday October 7, 2015

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Indian Ocean near the Port Bouvard Surf Life Saving Club at Pyramids Beach, 84 kilometres south of Perth, Western Australia.

**NAME:** Eli Zawadzki

**DESCRIPTION:** He is an 18-year-old male.



*Eli Zawadzki*

### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At 17h00, YPPH (the airport nearest Mandurah) recorded a clear sky. The air temperature was 78.8°F, dew point 28.4°F, humidity 16%, sea level pressure 30.09 inches and wind direction was ENE at 6.9 mph.

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Crescent, 28% of the Moon was illuminated

**SEA CONDITIONS:** Mandurah, 15.2 km to the north of Pyramids Beach, recorded sea surface temperature of 20°C and mean low tide occurred at 15h05.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Pyramids beach (WA 777) is a 1.4-kilometre-long beach that commences against the northern beachrock boundary of Florida beach and terminates at the 500-metre-long Dawesville Channel training wall. It is patrolled by the Port Bouvard Surf Life Saving Club.

**TIME:** 16h50, shortly before dusk (twilight occurred at 17h44)

**NARRATIVE:** At 16h15, Brett Pevitt had been surfing for several hours at Pyramids when he decided to call it a day. “The water conditions felt and looked pretty sharky,” he said. “There was a lot of fish activity and it just felt really eerie. But there were pods of dolphins hanging around with their babies, swimming up and down the beach and groyne for about 40 minutes, so that sort of reduced the fear.” But he was concerned about a “fierce rip running straight out in front. I kept thinking that if something goes down, it'll be hard to fight against the rip,” he said.

Former lifesaver Matt Edwards was surfing with his two sons at Pyramids. At 16h30, he decided to play it safe and leave the sea. Edwards had become concerned about the conditions — the combination of a big swell, lots of herring and murky water. “Usually it's clear, but the water was messed up with lots of backwash,” said Edwards. “It was hard to distinguish anything in that water so it would be easy to imagine a shark lunging at a person thinking it's fish.”

Twenty minutes later Eli Zawadzki was alone in the water. He was paddling out to the breaks about 40 metres offshore. Feeling a bite on his foot, he sat up on his board. He turned around, saw a head and didn't think it was a very large shark, but since it was a shark he paddled in.

**INJURY:** Lacerations and/or puncture wounds to foot.

**FIRST AID TREATMENT:** The patient was treated at the scene by Paramedics from St John Ambulance before being taken to Peel Health Campus. He underwent surgery at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

**SPECIES:** A tooth was recovered from the patient's foot. Tony Cappelluti from the Department of Fisheries identified the tooth as belonging to a grey nurse shark, a species that is protected in states throughout Australia, including WA. “Grey nurse are very, very placid sharks, one of the most placid, it's very rare for one of them to be involved in a shark bite or an attack,” Cappelluti said. “It's probably likely that there's been some mistaken interaction, so either the shark has run into the surfer or the surfer has run into the shark, that's normally how grey nurse get involved in shark bite incidents.”

**SOURCES:** 9 News, October 7, 2015

<http://www.9news.com.au/national/2015/10/07/21/22/man-bitten-by-shark-off-wa-coast>

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<http://www.mandurahmail.com.au/story/3408711/teenager-attacked-by-shark-in-dawesville/?cs=299>

The Guardian, October 7, 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/08/shark-tooth-left-in-victims-foot-after-attack-in-western-australia-to-be-studied>

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<https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/29763305/surfers-recall-eerie-ocean-before-shark-bite/>