



**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2015.11.10](#)

**DATE:** Tuesday November 10, 2015

**LOCATION:** The attack took place at the North Wall of Lighthouse Beach, East Ballina, New South Wales, Australia. 28°52'S, 153°35'E

**NAME:** Sam Morgan

**DESCRIPTION:** A 20-year-old male, a popular local surfer and a member of the Le-Ba Boardriders Club. He was a regular at surfing events between the Gold Coast and Sydney, and competed in the World Surf League junior qualifying series event at Maroubra earlier this year.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At Ballina, the sky was clear and the air temperature was 70F. At 18h00, YLIS (the airport nearest Ballina) recorded 6.2-mile visibility. The air temperature was 73.4°F, dew point 59°F, humidity 61%, sea level pressure 29.92 inches (rising) and wind direction was NE at 16.1 mph.

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Crescent, 3% of the Moon was illuminated. New Moon, November 12, 2015.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** Heavy rain on the state's north coast had left creek and river mouths dirty, providing ideal conditions for sharks. Mean high tide at Ballina occurred at 20h15 (8:15 pm)

**ENVIRONMENT:** Lighthouse Beach, a popular go-to spot for surfers in northern New South Wales, is approximately 18 miles south of Byron Bay. The Ballina area is a swell magnet, North Wall offers some protection from southerly winds and can get good in small to medium



*Sam Morgan*

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east to southerly swells, but it becomes a bit of a wild washing machine when the swell's up. Two DPI (NSW Department of Industries) experts had been tagging sharks in the area for several previous days, and there were three shark sightings in the area on the day of the attack according to Shark Reports, a community-run shark alerts service. The DPI was in a helicopter when a bull shark was spotted in the river mouth, at 12h45, a bull shark was spotted in the Richmond River at the entrance to north creek in Ballina, and an hour earlier a white shark was spotted off Lennox Point.

**TIME:** 18h15 (6:15 pm)

**NARRATIVE:** Sam Morgan made his own way back to shore, where he was assisted by beachgoers. "The surfer was out in the water all by himself," said 12-year-old Cooper Ivey who was on the beach and witnessed the attack. When emergency services arrived, Ivey retrieved the man's surfboard and carried it over to police. The shark's teeth marks are clearly visible around one of the board's fins.

**INJURY:** Bite to left thigh. "He was so lucky that the shark's bottom jaw went into the board — bit over the top of the fin — so, the amount of pressure on his leg is still a serious injury, but if it hadn't bitten the board he would really be in strife," said Ballina Mayor David Wright.

**TREATMENT:** Emergency services were called to the scene. The patient was taken to Lismore Base Hospital before being flown to Gold Coast University Hospital by a rescue chopper. The patient underwent surgery and is in a stable condition although remains in an induced coma, according to a NSW Police statement.

**SPECIES:** Bull shark. A shark biologist from DPI was already in Ballina and identified the type of shark involved in the attack almost immediately. The bull shark was approximately 2.8 to 3.1 metres in length, according to the Department of Primary Industries.

**SOURCES:** Daily Telegraph, November 10, 2015

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/technology/science/shark-attack-surfer-sam-morgan-seriously-injured-at-lighthouse-beach-east-ballina/story-fnjwk719-1227603838464?sv=8cc9c0c1ccab999f293b9edcbda3f979>

The Australian, November 10, 2015

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/shark-attack-man-injured-at-ballina-nsw/story-e6frg6nf-1227603791076>

ABC News, November 10, 2015

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-10/shark-attack-ballina-surfer-bitten-on-thigh/6928984>

Northern Star, November 10, 2015

<http://www.northernstar.com.au/news/man-rushed-hospital-after-shark-attack-ballina/2836873/>

The Sydney Morning Herald, November 11, 2015

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/man-attacked-by-shark-at-east-ballina-northern-nsw-20151110-gkvn4.html>



Sam Morgan

