

La'aloa Beach Park



Photo by W. Nowicki

ACTIVITY: Stand-up Paddleboarding

CASE: [GSAF 2015.12.22](#)

DATE: Tuesday December 22, 2015

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean off La'aloa Beach Park on the Big Island of Hawaii, USA.

NAME: Robert F. Ford

DESCRIPTION: A 71-year-old male.

BOARD: An 11-foot white, blue and black paddleboard.



Photo by Graham Mildrum day

Standing at Honokohau Harbor, Robert Ford talks with Officer Joseph Hing about the shark that bit his paddleboard off La'aloa Beach Park.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 97% of the Moon was illuminated. Full Moon, December 25, 2015.

ENVIRONMENT: La'aloa Beach Park is also known as “Magic Sands” or “White Sands Beach: because it is one of the only fine white sandy beaches in the Kailua-Kona area. On the day of the incident “hundreds of dolphins” were seen offshore. After the dolphins moved on some whales were seen to the south, their arrival marked by waterspouts.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 600 yards

TIME: 08h30

NARRATIVE: Robert Ford was heading out to the whales and was kneeling on his board when the rear of the board was struck with force, causing him to lurch forward but he was able to remain on his board. Then he saw a “big gray fin” off his left side and began shouting and trying to fend off the shark with his paddle. “I think I was yelling, ‘Go away,’ like it’d understand me,” he said. Ford doesn’t think any of his thrusts with the paddle even reached the shark. Apparently unconcerned, the shark moved to the right side of the board. Still kneeling on his board, he tried repeatedly to hit the animal. Then the shark turned and swam off. Not missing a chance, Ford headed to shore as fast as he could.

When Ford reported the incident several hours later, the state Department of Land and

Natural Resources and the Hawaii County Fire Department closed Laaloa and Kahaluu beach parks in Kailua-Kona. A fire department helicopter flew the shoreline but did not spot the shark .

INJURY: No injury

DAMAGE TO BOARD: When he got ashore, Ford had the chance to inspect the damage. Tooth marks ran through the paint on the board's rear, in places cracking through to the fiberglass body. The underside had the clear imprint of six of the shark's right teeth, while the left side of the board was marked with scars on the paint.

SPECIES: Ford estimated the shark was about nine feet long. Although uncertain as to the species, Ford suspects that it was a "young, dumb ... tiger shark who's not sure what he's supposed to attack or not," he said.

SOURCE: Graham Milldrum, West Hawaii Today, December 23, 2015
<http://westhawaii.com/news/local-news/go-away-board-biting-shark-closes-kailua-kona-beaches>

