

ACTIVITY: Snorkeling

CASE: [GSAF 2021.06.25](#)

DATE: Saturday June 26, 2021

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean at Gray Whale Beach Cove State Beach, San Mateo County, California, USA.

NAME: Nemanja Spasojevic

DESCRIPTION: A 38-year-old male from San Francisco. He is a surfer, marathon swimmer, diver and a member of San Francisco's South End Rowing Club. He weighs 200 lbs and he was wearing a wetsuit.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, the Moon was 90% illuminated.

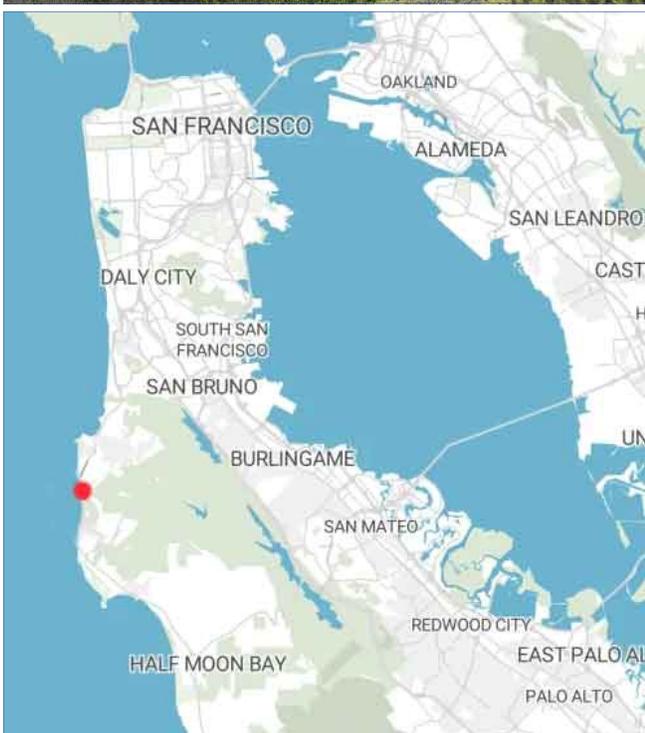
SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 61°F. Mean low tide occurred at 06h36, mean high tide at 13h43 and there was a two-foot swell. Underwater visibility four to six feet.

ENVIRONMENT: Whale Beach Cove is located 15 to 20 miles southwest of San Francisco.

TIME: 09h15

NARRATIVE: Nemanja Spasojevic entered the water on the north end of the beach at 08h35. and spent almost a half-hour free-diving for crabs, putting a few in his yellow dive bag. He swam straight out from the beach on a route following a rocky point with steep cliffs that juts out from the north end of the beach. Just when he was about to turn around and swim back to the beach, he came upon an area with about five crabs below him and dove down to grab one. He assessed its size and decided while it was at the legal limit, he'd rather leave it behind and try again for a larger one.

After he put the crab back and began to surface to get some air, he said he felt the pain in his leg and then saw the face of the shark. "At that point I just started kicking with my back turned towards rocks frantically."



Nemanja Spasojevic

Spasojevic wrote. "Hoping if it strikes again it will hit the fins. But the shark made only a single bite, quickly released the diver and swam away.

"I reached white water area where water was bashing on the rocks." The swim back to shore wasn't a problem, he said, because the surf was small and he felt no pain and had no awareness of the severity. "I did think it's minor, but I could feel that the wet suit was ripped and cold water was coming in," he wrote. "... At this point I was out and walking on the sand, the leg of the wet suit was bulged/filled with blood. ... I was aware that it may not be just a small bite, and I might need to drive to the emergency."

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: On shore, Spasojevic took his rubber dive belt and wrapped it around his leg with the bite, and created an improvised version of a tourniquet. His wet suit filling back up with blood, he walked from the north side of the beach to the stairs to exit the beach. Spotting a man on the beach, he yelled for help. The fisherman, Thomas Masotta, called 911 and sprang into action. "When he [Masotta] noticed me I just dropped on the sand to position my body head downwards, as the beach was sloped, to help keep blood in the brain and slow blood loss," he wrote. "Rubber dive belt tourniquet may have helped but did not stop flow."

Paramedics from the fire station in Montara arrived and provided additional life-saving medical care. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office reported that medical aid arrived at 09h15. A helicopter was called to land on the beach and transport the patient to the hospital but was canceled because of foggy conditions on the coast. Paramedics and state park employees carried Spasojevic up the stairs and into a transport vehicle. He was taken to Stanford Trauma Center and later Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, where he was quickly stabilized. The beach was ordered closed.

INJURY: The patient sustained about 10 lacerations to the posterior right thigh.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Firefighters/paramedics provided advanced life support measures. The patient was transported in stable condition to Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto where he was treated for serious injury to the leg and released late Saturday afternoon.

SPECIES: Juvenile white shark, six to eight feet in length.

SOURCES: The Mercury News, June 26, 2021
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/06/26/beachgoer-seriously-injured-by-shark-attack-in-san-mateo-county/>

Los Angeles Times, June 26, 2021
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-06-26/great-white-shark-bites-swimmer-off-california-coast>

SFgate, June 26, 2021
<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Great-white-shark-bite-man-swimming-California-16276525.php>

CBS Local, June 27, 2021

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2021/06/27/surfer-injured-in-shark-attack-at-gray-whale-cove-on-san-mateo-coast/>

SFgate, June 28, 2021

<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/shark-attack-Gray-Whale-Cove-California-Nemanja-16279556.php>

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