

Man reports Paia shark attack

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A 61-year-old man reported that he was bitten by a gray 6- to 8-foot shark Wednesday afternoon in waters off Paia, Fire Services Chief Lee Mainaga said.

Paia firefighters responded to a 5:27 p.m. call at the Paia Youth & Cultural Center that a man had possibly been bitten by a shark, he said. The man told firefighters he had been swimming about 200 yards offshore when he was bitten on his left foot.

The man swam to shore on his own and walked to the front of the youth center, Mainaga said.

Firefighters reported that the

man had five or six lacerations to his left foot, with the longest being about 6 inches. They provided first aid to the man's wounds, and he was taken to Maui Memorial Medical Center in stable, nonlife-threatening condition, Mainaga said.

Police and officials with the state Department of Land and Natural Resources remained at the scene of the reported shark attack to secure the area, he said.

The usual procedure in shark attacks is to close offshore waters for a mile in either direction of the incident.

Wednesday's report of a shark attack marks the first such

incident this year in Maui County. According to a state DLNR website on Hawaii sharks, there were six shark attacks involving injuries in Maui waters last year, most happening in the latter half of the year.

The last shark attack in the state was Dec. 11 on the Big Island, when a 29-year-old Captain Cook man was bitten by a shark while bodyboarding south of Punaluu Beach Park.

The last Maui attack was fatal. Patrick Briney, 57, of Washington died Dec. 2 after his right leg was bitten by a shark while he was fishing from his kayak off South Maui.

Fencing meant to protect dunes and turtles

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Kealia Pond National Wildlife Area Park Ranger Courtney Brown (right) and Cheryl King, vice president and Maui research coordinator for the Hawaii Wildlife Fund, bolt a section of fencing together along North Kihei Road on Tuesday morning. The fence made from recycled plastic is designed to keep nesting sea turtles from cresting the dunes and stepping into traffic. In separate incidents in the 1990s, a pair of endangered hawksbill turtles were killed when struck by cars. It is estimated that there are fewer than 100 adult female hawksbills that nest in Hawaii. King said the fencing is also a way to protect the dunes, which see a lot of activity being so close to both the road and the beach. The project also involves removing the old wood and wire sand fencing that formerly protected the turtles and fragile dunes.

Workers from the Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps Kupu program dig holes and place posts on Tuesday while helping with the project to install nearly 1 mile of recycled plastic fencing. Shown (from right) are Inanna Carter, Travis Sabatino, Pualalea Barrows, Keoni Frampton and Mikiala Taylor.

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