

## Beaches deserted

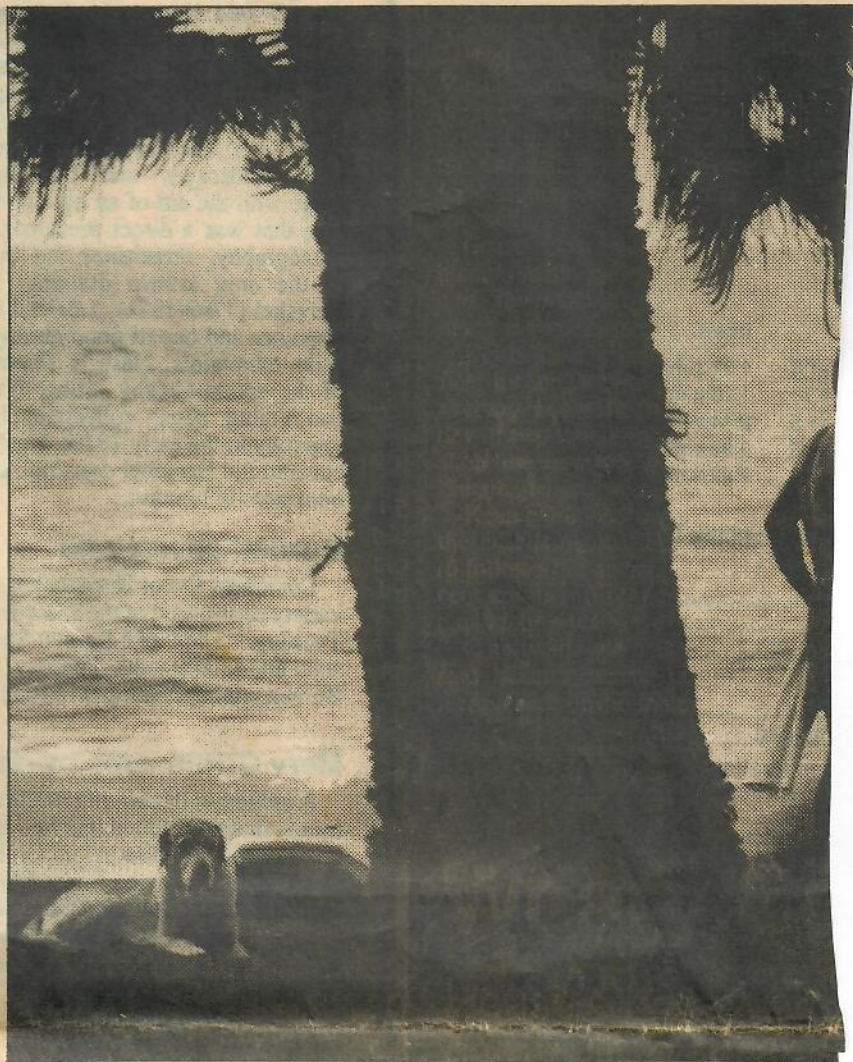
### On coast, in town, caution and sorrow

By LIZ JANES  
Staff Writer

OLOWALU — Beaches from Lahaina to the pali were almost deserted Tuesday even though the water was glassy and the skies clear. A fatal shark attack in shallow water near Hekili Point in Olowalu sent authorities to warn beach-goers of possible danger lurking beneath the calm of the ocean's surface.

Martha Joy Morrell, 41, was swimming with a friend in the ocean fronting her Olowalu home when she was killed by what was reported to be a 15-foot tiger shark.

Morrell, the wife of Pioneer Mill manager Dave Morrell, was the mother of three children — Marc, a student at Columbia University, and Malia and Keoni, both students at Lahainaluna High School. A neighbor said Mrs. Morrell had been going for a daily swim in the area since the family moved to Maui in August 1988.



# in wake of attack

## Divers say shark problem worst ever

By **DONNE DAWSON**  
For The Maui News

While Tuesday's fatal shark attack off Hekili Point in Olowalu won't keep experienced divers out of the water, several expressed concern about the unusual number of close encounters with aggressive sharks off Maui's coast in recent months.

Shawn Conners, a carpenter from Kihei who has dived for fish every weekend for the past eight years, said the shark problem in waters all around Maui County is the worst he has experienced. And it's not just in Olowalu.

As recently as Friday, he and his diving partners were chased out of the water by a shark at the black sand beach near Puu Olai in Makena. About a month ago, Conners and a diving companion were chased by what he says was a 12-foot tiger shark off the west end of Kahoolawe. A few weeks before that, he ran into a school of "aggressive" hammerhead sharks near Moku Hooniki off Molokai's East End.

Another diver, Roy Tempo, who has been spearfishing since he was 12 years old, agreed that incidents with bold sharks have been more prevalent of late.

"I've seen more sharks this year than any other year I've been fishing," he said.

Last Saturday, an 8-foot shark off the Olowalu coast forced him back to shore, he said. He wasn't sure what kind of shark it was because the water in the area was murky.

Another diver, who asked not to be identified because he was a friend of the woman killed in Tuesday's shark attack, said run-ins with aggressive sharks definitely have increased since Labor Day weekend. A sporting goods store employee and a diver for some 15 years, the man said there has been an increase in the number of customers asking for powerheads, a device used to discharge a bullet underwater to scare sharks away.

Divers speculated about several possible causes for the apparent increase in sharks in Hawaiian waters. One longtime diver suggested the culprit could be El Nino — a warm ocean current that develops in the winter along the coast of Ecuador and Peru that may cause catastrophic weather conditions.

Another diver said it could be an overpopulation of certain sharks in the open ocean forcing sharks into shallower water in search of food. A longtime fisherman on Molokai suggested that sharks breed during this time of year and that makes them

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Capt. Conrad Ventura of the Maui Fire Department's fire/rescue team was among personnel responding to the scene. He said Mrs. Morrell and a woman friend visiting from Vancouver B.C. went for a swim shortly before 9 a.m. When the attack occurred, the women had been in the water about 10 minutes, swimming about 15 feet apart about 80 to 100 feet offshore in water 6 to 8 feet deep just at the edge of the reef. Both women were wearing face masks.

The friend was aware of a large gray shadow passing between the two swimmers and then saw Mrs. Morrell begin splashing about in the water. The next thing she knew, the shark had attacked her companion in the midsection.

Realizing she was powerless to stop the predator, the woman swam back to shore and began calling for help as soon as she was in earshot of beach-goers.

A worker at the Morrell house who witnessed the attack grabbed a boogie board and began to swim out to aid his employer, but was forced to turn back when he saw the size of the shark.

Lahaina police Sgt. Waldo Fujie said at least two or three other sharks were spotted in the area, but none as large as the animal that mounted the initial attack.

When authorities arrived about 20 minutes after the fatal strike, personnel from the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Lahaina Fire Station went with a neighbor in a small boat to recover the body. By then the body was about 150 feet from shore. Ventura said the large shark remained in the area circling its victim until the boat scared it off.

An autopsy scheduled for this

Nathan Kamisato (left), Herbert Kinross and firefighter David Thyne stood at the ocean's edge and talked about the shark attack that killed an Olowalu woman earlier in the day. Kamisato, who

### ALSO SEE . . .

■ Nothing is "for sure" when it comes to shark behavior, according to a Bishop Museum marine biologist who is the author of a book on sharks.

■ A federal zoologist discusses shark attacks and fatalities, and the characteristics of the tiger shark.

■ The state has hired a commercial fisherman and experienced collector of sharks for cancer research to hunt for the shark.

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morning should provide some documentation as to the jaw size of the shark and subsequently its length.

The news of Mrs. Morrell's death shocked members of the Lahaina community, many of whom described her as a "wonderful person."

The Rev. Rudy Zachry, pastor of Lahaina Baptist Church, said Mrs. Morrell was an active member of the Wailoa Church and much loved by her fellow parishioners.

He said the Morrell home was a place where friends of the parents and the teen-agers still at home were often invited, that the family radiates a real sense of ohana.

"She was very soft-spoken, very

gracious with people," Zachry said.

A Waiola church member told him Mrs. Morrell had invited the church choir to come Christmas caroling in the small Olowalu neighborhood next month and planned to serve them a meal afterwards.

Once the shark attack was confirmed, authorities began to warn beach-goers in the area of the possible danger. At first the problem was one of jurisdiction. Police officers and fire department personnel began the initial warnings.

The U.S. Coast Guard launched its 22-foot Boston Whaler from Maalaea and notified local boaters in the area, warning them about sharks. Coast Guardsman Tony Leiato noted the Olowalu area is a favorite spot for commercial boats to take visitors snorkeling.

Coast Guard broadcasts alerted boaters with radios aboard. By 11 a.m., the waters from the pali to Lahaina were deserted.

Keith Keau, chief enforcement officer for the DLNR, said he would be keeping two officers on duty for a day or two to talk to people along the shoreline from the scenic lookout to Lahaina wharf.

Keau explained there is nothing in the DLNR manual about procedures to follow after a shark attack, so officers are just using common sense to handle the situation.

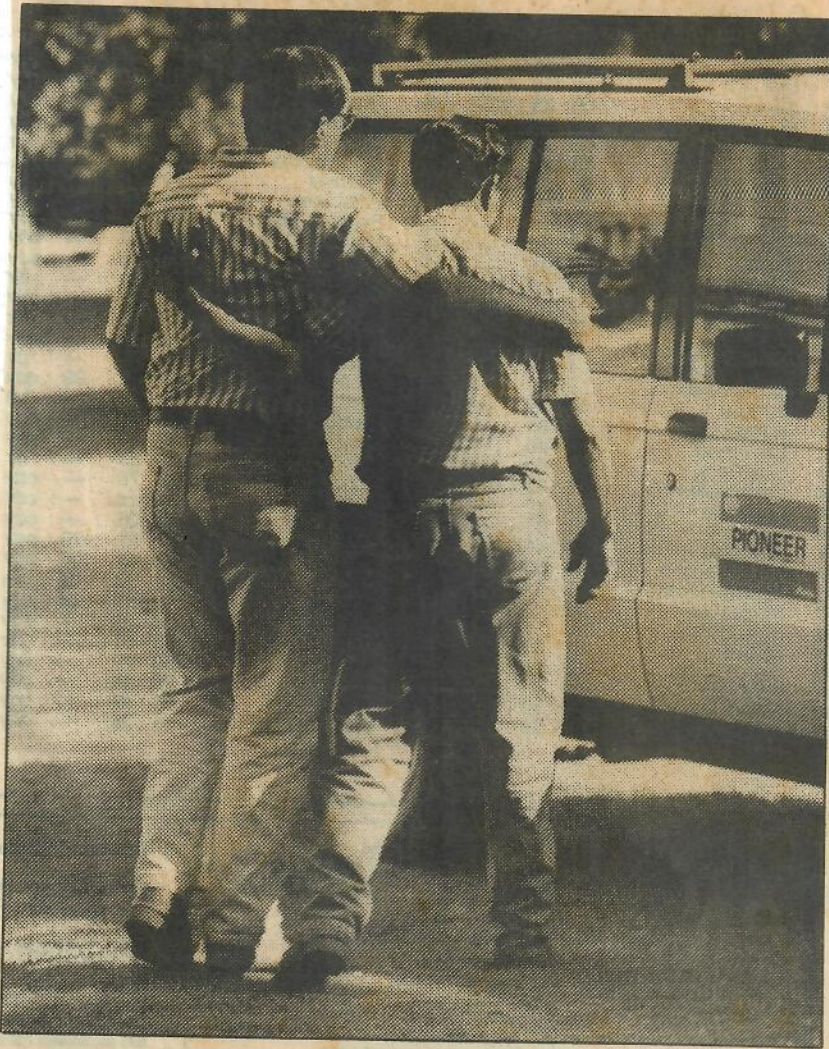
County lifeguard Peter Rodrigues said county water safety officers were aware of the incident and were

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The Maui News / MATTHEW THAYER photos

works for the victim's family, attempted to rescue her by swimming out on a boogie board but the shark surfaced and sent him back to shore. Kinores is a neighbor.



**Pioneer Mill manager Dave Morrell (left) walks to a company truck Tuesday morning with neighbor Herbert Kinores after his wife Martha was killed by 15-foot shark about an hour earlier.**

# Nothing certain

## Victim was doing a lot of the right things to avoid attack

By TIMOTHY HURLEY  
Staff Writer

WAILUKU — This was a shark attack that shouldn't have happened, if the conventional wisdom means anything.

Nothing is "for sure" when it comes to shark behavior, experts say, but the beast that brutally mauled and killed Martha Joy Morrell in waters off Olowalu Tuesday certainly didn't follow the general pattern for such attacks.

Morrell was in fact doing a lot of things right — the kinds of things shark experts tell you to do to avoid attacks:

She was swimming in familiar waters. She was swimming during sunny, daylight hours. She was not swimming alone. She was swimming close to shore.

"This only goes to show you the conventional wisdom can be wrong," says Arnold Suzumoto, a Bishop Museum marine biologist who is the author of a book on sharks.

Suzumoto says that while sharks do indeed exist in Hawaiian waters, they aren't considered to be common here, especially in comparison to the western South Pacific, where warm waters and abundant fish attract great numbers of these large predatory fish.

"That's not to say they aren't here in good numbers," he says, "but Hawaii is isolated and we don't see as many sharks."

One of the sharks we do see here is the tiger shark, common to Hawaii's reef faces and inshore areas.

Sharks are generally fish eaters that vary their diet by eating other sharks. The tiger shark, however, enjoys a large diet that includes dolphins, porpoises, lobsters, turtles, seals and birds. They are even known to prey on small whales.

Humans are not on the shark diet and usually are left alone. Shark attacks are rare in Hawaii, Suzumoto says, averaging about 1.5 attacks per year for the last three or four decades.

Suzumoto says a shark usually attacks its prey by taking one powerful bite, enough to cause serious puncture wounds. The shark then pauses to see if its victim bleeds to death.

This behavior has allowed many a victim to swim ashore and live to tell

about their encounters — about 60 percent of those attacked, he says.

"The shark, however, is an opportunistic killer who will attack anything that looks like food," he says.

The tiger shark, which can grow as long as 18 feet, is indeed known to come very close to shore, but it hunts mostly at night and at dawn and dusk.

These are some of the "conventional" rules for avoiding contact with a shark:

- Never swim alone, and keep your eyes open. Sharks are more likely to attack a lone victim.

- Remain calm and leave the water as quickly and quietly as possible after seeing a shark. Splashing, thrashing about and yelling may send out signals that you are a creature in trouble — easy prey.

- Don't swim at night or in murky waters. Sharks don't have the best eyesight and may mistake you for something else.

- Don't wear shiny jewelry or brightly colored bathing suits. International orange is known as "yum-yum yellow" to shark researchers.

- Swim in waters with which you are familiar and generally know dangerous sharks don't frequent.

Here's another interesting item from Maui biologist Frederic Martini: Men are 10 times more likely to be victims than are women, even after adjusting the data for exposure, position in groups and so on.

The statistics can make Tuesday's attack quite puzzling.

"The more and more they do research, the more you realize they don't have a clue (about shark behavior)," says Ann Fielding, a professional diver whose Maui company, Island Explorations, takes people on diving adventures.

Fielding, a diving veteran of 30 years, says the only place in Hawaiian waters she regularly sees sharks is Kahoolawe, with its absence of people.

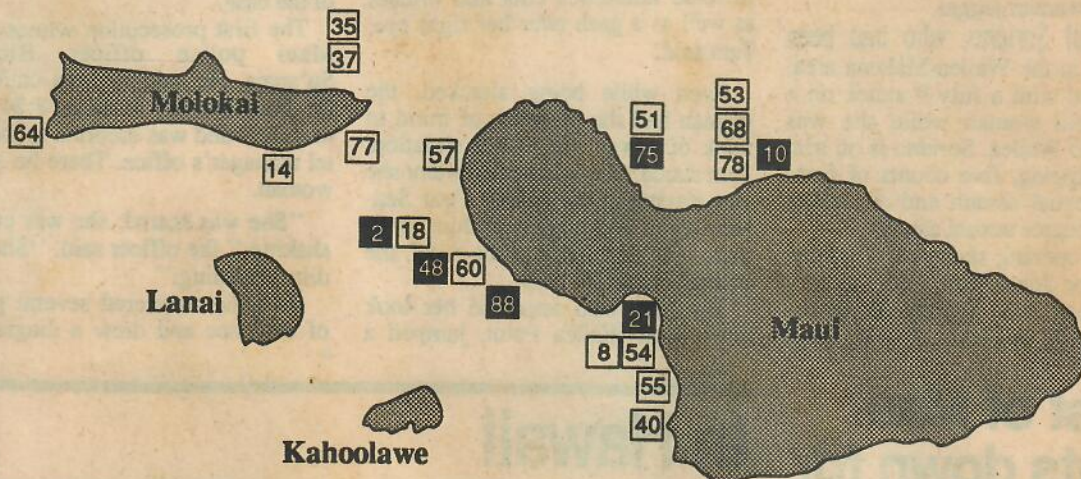
Elsewhere, millions frolick in the Hawaiian surf every year, yet the incident of shark encounters is amazingly minute.

There's less of a chance of getting attacked by a shark than being hit by a bolt of lightning, Fielding insists.

"But there's a danger of living by statistics. You can lose your life by statistics. Life itself is dangerous and unpredictable," Suzumoto says.

# with shark behavior

## SHARK ATTACKS IN MAUI COUNTY



- 2** 1828, Lahaina: Surfer killed by a shark; attack witnessed by a number of Hawaiian chiefs.
- 8** Oct. 8, 1907, Kalepolepo, Kihel: Man's arm amputated as he was retrieving fish caught in a net.
- 10** April 10, 1909, Pauwela: Woman reported to have been swept away while gathering opihi; searchers saw a shark devour what appeared to be a body.
- 14** Sept. 28, 1922, Keawanui, Kamalo: Male bitten while inspecting wharf.
- 18** Feb. 18, 1932, Lahaina: Sailor from the Navy vessel Saratoga bitten while swimming about 1 mile off Mala Wharf.
- 21** June 1943 (?), Maalaea: Soldier's shorts and an arm recovered from a shark caught at Maalaea.
- 35** 1954, Molokai: Unprovoked attack; unable to determine circumstances.
- 37** Sept. 30, 1955, East Molokai: Man bitten on arm while swimming.
- 40** Feb. 27, 1960, Makena: Man attacked while spearfishing.
- 48** 1960s (?), off Lahaina: Scuba diver passed out at 180 feet; about 30 large sharks seen near remains of body.
- 51** March 16, 1972, Waihee: Man bitten on leg while spearfishing.
- 53** Jan. 9, 1973, Hookipa: Surfer bitten on leg while close to shore; 4- to 6-foot shark observed in area.
- 54** Dec. 18, 1973, Kalama Beach: Man bitten on leg while swimming close to shore.
- 55** June 10, 1976, Kamaole Beach 1: Man bitten on foot and leg by 3- to 5-foot shark.
- 57** April 21, 1977, Kaanapali: Man bitten on arm by 4-foot shark while swimming close to shore.
- 60** Aug. 4, 1980, Puamana: Man bitten on left side of body while resting on boogie board 40 feet from shore; 14-foot tiger shark identified.
- 64** Nov. 9, 1981, Laau Point: Man bitten on hand while untangling crab trap from propeller.
- 68** June 13, 1982, Hookipa: Man bitten three times on the thigh after falling into water while sailboarding.
- 75** April 15, 1988, Waihee: Remains believed to be those of man lost at sea found along shoreline.
- 77** Jan. 20, 1989, Waialua Beach: Boy bitten by 6- to 8-foot hammerhead while riding boogie board 200 feet from shore.
- 78** April 3, 1989, Hookipa: Man bitten on calf while paddling surfboard in white water 50 yards from shore.
- 88** Nov. 26, 1991, Olowalu: Woman killed while swimming near Hekili Point.

**THE INFORMATION IN THIS CHART** was obtained from a list compiled by National Marine Fisheries Service zoologist George Balazs. The numbers in boxes indicate the order of occurrence in the Hawaiian Islands based on records beginning in 1779. Black boxes (■) indicate fatalities but do not necessarily mean the shark killed the victim. The victim may have died of other causes before the shark attacked. Question marks in parentheses mean the exact date of occurrence is not known.

# Along the coast and in town, caution, sorrow

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being watchful, but had not closed any beaches. There are no county parks in the Olowalu area.

Employees of Olowalu General Store were asked by police to warn any customers who looked as if they might be planning a swim.

One person hearing the news on a car radio stopped his truck to warn a man who had just launched an air mattress and was floating with his arm dangling in the water.

Sandi Vaars of Puyallup, Wash., was also floating on an air mattress when the shark warning blared over a police bullhorn. Her reaction was so violent she lost her prescription glasses in the surf.

Vaars hoped her glasses might wash in to shore, but wasn't about to go out and look for them.

"I was just saying how nice the beach was," she said. "But I'm not

stupid."

About an hour after the incident, a couple visiting from Northern California were snorkeling not far from the scene. No one had warned them to stay out of the water, but when they noticed how deserted the beach was, Darwin Christ said he commented to his wife that "there must be a great white shark out there that chased everybody out."

Two visitors from Anchorage, Alaska, considered going back into the ocean about an hour after the attack. They speculated the waters were probably safer once the shark had its fill.

Stephanie Rhoades and Craig Stowers, a former ranger at Alaska's Denali National Park, said they were more familiar with other kinds of dangers, namely grizzly bears.

Said Rhoades, "I prefer dealing with animals on the land."

## DLNR hires experienced hunter to find attacker

WAILUKU — The state Department of Land and Natural Resources has hired commercial fisherman James StegmueLLer of Lahaina to hunt down the shark that attacked and killed an Olowalu woman.

StegmueLLer, an experienced collector of sharks for cancer research, plans to set out this afternoon, using four hooks on a line to catch the shark, said Linda McCrerey, DLNR spokesperson.

McCrerey said the fisherman will spend the next three days searching for the shark. If it is caught, an autopsy will be performed by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

DLNR Chairman William Paty reportedly authorized the hunt Tuesday, and a secretary of Maui's DLNR enforcement officer, Keith Keau, said he was coordinating an effort this morning.

While state officials may be eager to hunt the underwater killer, at least one prominent Hawaii marine biologist believes it isn't the best course of action.

Arnold Suzumoto, collections manager of the Bishop Museum Zoology Department, said he would rather see officials launch a research program instead of the hunt. Little is known about the shark, its behavior

and its habitat, he said.

"It's wise to remember the tiger shark occupies this part of the ocean and sometimes accidents happen. There's no justifications for such emotionalism. We should mount a research program instead, find out why," Suzumoto said.

Marine biologist John Naughton of the National Marine Fisheries Service said he is concerned about reports the shark that killed Martha Joy Morrell is a gray reef shark. He said the agency is almost certain the killer is a tiger shark, and any hunt — should there be one — should target the larger tiger sharks, not small gray reef sharks.

Naughton said NMFS surveys in the Olowalu area also have found a school of small black-tip reef sharks, "quite an unusual shark here in Hawaii," which he'd hate to see wiped out.

Naughton said the problem with setting up a hunt will be finding a fisherman who has the equipment and know-how to target the tigers, rather than "totally innocent bystander" sharks. He said he hopes to be able to talk to whoever is chosen to share recommendations based on NMFS experience in shark research and control.



# Cause of death in shark attacks rarely as clear as Olowalu fatality

By JILL ENGLEADOW  
Staff Writer

WAILUKU — Though there have been 36 documented fatalities from shark attacks in the past couple of centuries in Hawaii, it is rare to be able to pinpoint the attack as the actual cause of death.

In most cases, said a zoologist who has compiled a list of known shark attacks since 1779, "no one this side of God knows which came first" in the majority of attacks. Many cases begin with someone being swept off shore, or falling off a boat. Did the person drown first, or did a shark cause the death? If a diver loses the mouthpiece of his breathing apparatus because a shark has grabbed his arm, and then drowns, is that a shark fatality?

These are the kinds of questions zoologist George H. Balazs faces as he continues to collect information about shark attacks as part of his job at the National Marine Fisheries Service.

He doesn't argue the point, but

simply gathers and lists any information he can find. The list now has 88 cases, with the death Tuesday of Martha Joy Morrell in an attack that, for once, appears to have been the clear cause of fatality.

The list shows that, with Mrs. Morrell's death, there have been 17 shark attacks on Maui and five on Molokai since the first recorded attack in 1779, against a Hawaiian surfer from the Big Island.

Of the total of 88 cases, 38 have involved a fatality, Balazs' list says. On Maui, six attacks have involved fatalities. Worldwide, there are fewer than 100 shark attacks per year, with a fatality rate of about one-third. Balazs found 37.5 percent of the cases he recorded involved a fatality.

Tiger sharks, suspected in the Olowalu attack, account for around 10 percent of those attacks where species identification was possible, according to marine biologist Frederic Martini. In his book, "Exploring Tropical Isles and Seas," Martini describes the tiger

shark as "the most unpleasant" of shark species.

In an interview after a boogie boarder was bitten off Puamana in 1980, Martini said the tiger shark is "the second most dangerous shark in terms of attacks on humans. Tigers are particularly prone to take things off the top of the water." (The most dangerous is the great white shark, which is rarely seen in Hawaiian waters.)

Balazs wrote a letter printed in The Honolulu Advertiser June 13, 1990, agreeing with an earlier writer who said there seem to be more tiger sharks being seen close to shore. He said the most plausible explanation of this possibility is that "near-shore species of sharks in Hawaii, like tigers, haven't been fished for commercial or other purposes for a good 13 years or more.

"Tiger sharks are top-level carnivores, with very few natural enemies," Balazs wrote. "In the absence of fishing pressures, the population would be expected to build up."

## Divers and fishers say shark problem worst it's ever been

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very aggressive, especially the females.

Not every diver has noticed a recent increase in sharks. During a Pacific Whale Foundation survey of waters just south of Olowalu in October, divers didn't see any sharks at all, said senior research associate Eric Brown.

Many commercial divers called Tuesday's tragedy a "freak accident" and that the chances of being attacked by a shark are "one-in-a-million." Although they will take normal precautions on their diving trips, it will be business as usual.

Joyce Dempsey, general manager of Hawaiian Reef Divers out of Lahaina, said she was shocked when she heard news of the attack. "Someone walked in off the street to tell us," Dempsey said.

It set her back a little because just Monday, her crews had dropped a load of 16 divers and snorkelers off Olowalu, south of where the Tuesday's attack occurred. Waters off Olowalu are often an alternative for commercial diving and snorkeling

charters when currents and wind patterns aren't conducive for travel to other locations. Dempsey's group originally was scheduled to go to Lanai.

All the dive companies contacted Tuesday said they would avoid the area where the fatal shark attack occurred.

To avoid shark attacks, divers should always take precautions before they enter the water, Dempsey said. Divers and swimmers should take notice if a beach is deserted. "If it's a nice beach and it's vacant, something must be going on in the water. Watch for locals, if they're not in the water, there's a reason," Dempsey said. "Never carry game bags (with speared fish), because they could attract sharks."

Jeff Strahn, general manager of Maui Dive Shop, agreed that swimmers and divers should stay away from unpopulated areas. He also noted that his commercial trips focus on scuba instruction and "sightseeing" of fish.

"When you're spearfishing, you increase the likelihood of a (shark) attack," Strahn said.

Shawn Connors agreed that he and his diving partners definitely take a risk when they're in the water spearing fish, but he reiterated that they've been doing it for years and it's just been recently that sharks have been bothering them with greater frequency.

He said divers and swimmers should always remember to stay out of murky water, always wear a mask or goggles, and if you're spearing fish, keep them on a long line, don't carry them with you.

If a swimmer or diver encounters an aggressive shark, it's important "not to freak out," Connors said. "I know it sounds crazy, but turn and face the shark. I even scream at them underwater. The shark will go away if you're aggressive right back."

Also, he said, never feed them your fish. "Once the shark starts eating, it won't want to stop."

# The Honolulu Advertiser

WEDNESDAY, November 27, 1991

Final Edition

## Shark kills Maui woman

### Plantation manager's wife attacked in shallow waters

By Edwin Tanji

Advertiser Maui County Bureau

LOWALU, Maui — An Olowalu woman swimming in front of her beachfront home near Hekili Point was killed yesterday by a shark, believed to be a tiger shark about 15 feet long.

The death of Martha "Martie" Morrell, wife of Pioneer Mill manager David Morrell, shocked friends and neighbors in West Maui, where large sharks near shore are rare.

Morrell, 41, was swimming at about 9 a.m. with a friend who was visiting from Canada, police said. The attack occurred about 100 yards offshore, and about 50 yards from the end of an old pier next to the plantation manager's home.

The two women were wearing goggles or face masks and apparently saw the shark in the somewhat clouded water but did not realize immediately what it was, a rescue official said. A small swell had churned up silt in the water

and caused poor visibility underwater.

The shark got between the two women and grabbed Mrs. Morrell. Her companion first tried to fend off the shark, suffering abrasions from the shark's rough skin, but then fled to shallower water to call for help, officials said.

A neighbor heard the cries for help and jumped into the water with a boogie board. But he retreated when he saw the large shark attacking the woman. The incident occurred just

outside the breakline for waves in about eight feet of water.

Maui police Sgt. Waldo Fujie said witnesses reported other sharks attacked Mrs. Morrell's body after the attack by the first shark, described as a large one with a dorsal fin that protruded about a foot and a half out of the water.

After the attack, Maui County, state and Coast Guard officials warned swimmers and boat operators to stay out of the water along a nine-mile stretch of the West Maui coast-

line from Puamana to Ukumehame.

It was not clear how long the warnings would stand.

William Paty, director of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, said he has authorized the conservation and enforcement division to hire a shark hunter to go after the sharks at Olowalu today.

"This isn't 'jaws,' but I did tell our people to put a shark hunt on and see if we can

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Advertiser photo by Edwin Tanji

Martha "Martie" Morrell was killed while swimming in these waters in front of her beachfront home near Hekili Point.

# Attack: Tiger

## FROM PAGE ONE

catch this one," he said. "From what little I know about them, they are supposed to be somewhat territorial."

If a large shark is frequenting the relatively shallow in-shore waters, it can be a hazard to other people in the area, he said.

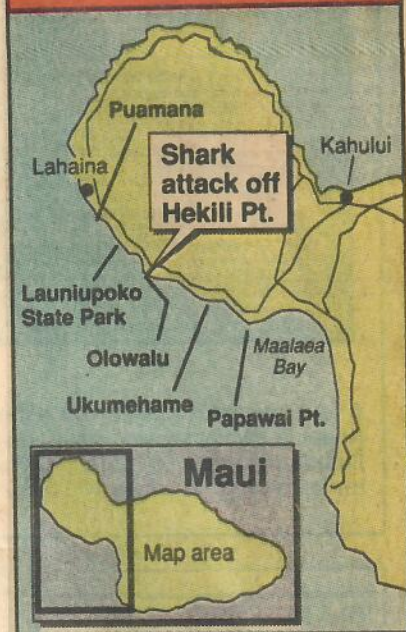
Rescue Capt. Conrad Ventura said the shark was apparently a tiger shark, based on the teeth marks left on Mrs. Morrell's body.

Tiger sharks, which can grow up to 30 feet long, have teeth that are serrated and curved, leaving distinctive bite marks, according to shark specialists.

Ventura, who fishes commercially and has had his catches taken by sharks, estimated the shark weighed about 1,000 pounds judging from the size of its teeth. A 1,000-pound shark would be about 15 feet long.

ition On Oahu 35c

## Maui shark attack



Advertiser graphic by Greg Taylor

# shark kills woman off Maui

The warm waters off West Maui are known to be frequented by sharks, but it is rare for such a large shark to come in close to shore. Divers familiar with the area say there are mostly smaller sharks sighted in the relatively shallow waters.

There have been sightings of sharks within 100 feet of shore near the Launiupoko State Park. In 1980, a California man boogie boarding off Puamana was attacked by a shark, also believed to have been a tiger shark.

Mrs. Morrell was well known in the Lahaina community, although she and her family had been on Maui only a few years. David Morrell had been manager at the Oahu Sugar Co. for many years before coming to Maui in 1989.

"She was so nice. She was so good to everyone," said Dorothy Kinores, a neighbor on the Olowalu peninsula. "She loved to swim. She would go swimming out there in front of the home almost every day."

"She was sincerely involved in the community," said Amfac properties manager David Gleason. "This is a tremendous loss to the company, the community and everybody."

"You'll hear a lot of good things about her if you talk to people in Lahaina," said the Rev. Rudy Zachary of Lahaina Baptist Church.

A friend from the Waiola Congregational Church, Barbara Kukahiko, said Mrs. Morrell was "a very caring, likable person, a down-to-earth person." She said she knew Mrs. Morrell frequently went swimming and was shocked at the attack.

"She was a loving person. And she was just starting to teach us locals here how to make Hawaiian quilts," Kukahiko said. "We all loved her very much."

In addition to her husband, Mrs. Morrell is survived by three children, Mark, attending Columbia University, and Julia and Keoni, both students at Lahainaluna High School.

# Sharks usually won't bother humans, but...

**By Stu Glaberman**  
Advertiser Staff Writer

When humans encounter sharks, the outcome is usually uneventful.

While sharks have the capacity to inflict harm on humans, they seldom do.

Shark experts and lifeguards say the best thing for humans to do when they see a shark is to remain calm and swim like a human.

"Try very hard not to panic," advises Arnold Suzumoto, a Bishop Museum shark specialist. "Be calm and deliberate and just swim calmly to shore."

Jerky or wobbly movements might confuse sharks into thinking that human forms are turtles or seals, he said.

"Don't make thrashing movements or move in any way that makes vibrations that attract sharks."

Most sharks are fish eaters, who vary their diet by eating other sharks.

An exception is the tiger shark — common to Hawaii's reef faces and inshore areas — which enjoys a varied diet that includes lobsters, turtles, seabirds, monk seals, dolphins and animal remains.

"People are not really on the diet of sharks," said Suzumoto.

However, when aroused, sharks will attack.

George Balazs of the National Marine Fisheries Service, who tries to keep track of every shark attack that occurs in the Islands, has documented 88 incidents since 1779.

He said yesterday's attack on Maui was the third this year, and the only one of the past five that did not occur on Oahu:

■ May 26, 1991, off Maili — Scott Betz, 24, was bitten on

his right leg while surfing. He said he saw an 8-foot tiger shark.

■ April 3, 1991, Oneula Beach, Ewa — A 34-year-old surfer was sitting on his board when bitten on the left leg by a shark he estimated to be 6 to 10 feet long.

■ Feb. 18, 1990, Makapuu Point — Shark-mutilated remains of fisherman Roy T. Tanaka, 47, were found. Tanaka had been fishing from a 22-foot boat that capsized.

■ Oct. 14, 1989, Kahe Point — Ray Mehl, 32, was scuba diving with friends when he disappeared. Searchers found a headless body they could not recover before it was eaten by a 12-to-15-foot tiger shark.

Suzumoto says that considering how many humans enter Hawaiian waters, the incidence of attacks is small, averaging 1.5 a year over the past 40 years. About four in 10 attacks are fatal, he said.

Lifeguards say shark encounters and sightings are more common in summer months when sharks mate.

All sightings are noted and monitored. Whenever lifeguards observe unusual shark activity, they take steps to close the beach.

Earlier this month, the sighting of two sharks close to shore prompted closure of Waianae Army Rest Camp Beach for a day.

"As lifeguards, what we tell people is, if you see a shark in the water, get out of the water," said Lifeguard Lt. Paul Merino.

Those who are curious about sharks or shark attacks can visit the Bishop Museum's exhibit, Sharks: Fact and Fantasy, which is on through Oct. 10.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1991

THE PULSE OF PARADISE

## UPDATE

### Holiday skiers take to the slopes



Associated Press

Two skiers enjoy a run at the Sugarbush ski area yesterday at Warren, Vt. Weather forecast for the Thanksgiving holiday weekend includes more snow.

### Astronauts snap Pearl Harbor, Midway

SPACE CENTER, Houston — An Atlantis crewman photographed military sites at Pearl Harbor and on Midway in a Pentagon experiment to test astronauts' powers of observation from space.

Using special cameras, Mario Runco Jr. sighted runways, buildings and storage tanks as the shuttle zoomed 224 miles above the Pacific last night.

The experiment and a similar one also being conducted aboard Atlantis are part of an effort to learn if astronauts can be used in wartime.

Runco's first target last night was Pearl Harbor, code-named "Long Shot."

The next one was Midway, or "Driftwood."

### Cruiser leaked nuclear water at Pearl

# Warnings up where killer sharks stalk

□ An Olowalu woman was killed by a tiger shark yesterday while swimming with a friend

■ First killing by shark here in 33 years A-8

By Lila Fujimoto  
Maui Correspondent

LOWALU, Maui — Signs warned people to stay out of the ocean off this West Maui community today after tiger sharks attacked and killed a 41-year-old woman yesterday while she was swimming in waters off her beachfront house.

The warning to boat captains and others to steer clear of the area around Hekili Point was issued shortly after the 9:05 a.m. attack that killed Marti Morrell.

Morell's husband, David, is manager of Pioneer Mill.

At the Teen Challenge camp in Olowalu across Honoapiilani Highway from where the attack occurred, students and counselors were heeding the advice.

"We go in the water all the time, but we won't for the next few days," said Melanie Buttles, a Teen Challenge counselor.

The death was the state's first confirmed killing by a shark in 33 years, George Balazs, a National Marine Fisheries Service zoologist, said yesterday.

News of the attack stunned West Maui residents, who said they often see smaller reef sharks that breed around the six-mile Olowalu beach that includes popular snorkeling and surfing spots.

But residents said they hadn't been bothered by the animals and hadn't seen any sharks as large as the 15-foot shark described yesterday.

"All of us are very, very upset and distraught about what happened," said Joan McKelvey, a longtime Lahaina merchant who knew Morrell.

"She was quite involved in the community for the short time she was here. She was an artistic person and a very nice person," McKelvey said.

Officials said Morrell was on a regular morning swim with a friend visiting from Vancouver when the shark attacked.

One shark passed the swimmers and scraped the Vancouver woman's upper leg

See SHARK, Page A-8



Tiger shark attacks swimmer 100 yards from shore.

By Kevin Hand, Star-Bulletin

# Cambodians try to kill hated leader

## SHARK: Officials say the attack in shallow waters is an unusual occurrence

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before attacking Morrell, said Lahaina Fire Capt. Charles Ledward.

Her friend began screaming for help and swam toward shore, he said, attracting the attention of Nathan Kamisato, who was working at the Morrell's oceanfront house.

Kamisato said he told the friend to call for help, then strapped on fins and rode a bodyboard to try to reach Morrell. But he turned back to shore after seeing a shark still attacking Morrell.

He said the water was murky and churning with a 1- to 2-foot surf — prime conditions for shark attacks on humans because sharks cannot see clearly enough to avoid humans.

"I do a lot of diving and surfing and seen a lot of sharks in my days, but nothing like this to humble you with the ocean," Kamisato said. "It happened so quick, so fast."

By the time Maui County Fire Department workers arrived at 9:14 a.m., Morrell was dead and two tiger sharks were near her body about 100 yards from shore, Ledward said.

As the sharks' assault continued, Ledward said he could see the animals' fins.

"It was like they were playing with the body," he said. "It was gruesome."

He said sharks bit off both Morrell's legs, an arm, a hand and part of her bottom before a neighbor launched his boat to recover her body. Officials also found bite marks on her chest, he said.

The attack in 10- to 15-foot-deep water was unusual because tiger sharks usually swim in deeper waters, venturing closer to shore mainly at night and feeding on animals such as turtles, Ledward said.

Maalaea boat captain Tom Stone said an arriving southern swell yesterday caused waters around Olowalu to churn and become cloudy.

"There are more shark attacks in dirty water than in fresh," said Stone, who bypassed Olowalu and took a boatload of snorkelers to Molokini yesterday morning. "Where sharks have good visibility, they avoid human beings."

Maui Police Sgt. Waldo Fujie said people were being advised not to go in the water off Olowalu.

Meanwhile, friends mourned the death of Morrell, whose interests included decorating the family's 3,400-square-foot house and growing flowers and shrubs on the acre of grounds.

"It's just unthinkable. Our minds and our conversations practically stopped with the thought of this," said Marion Wright, a Lahaina resident who used to live in the Olowalu house where the Morrells live.

She remembered Marti Morrell's generosity in offering to let her and her husband, Harlow, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary at the house with a couple of hundred guests.

"Everyone who knew here, anyone who worked with her is just crushed," she said. "She was such a beautiful lady."

*Star-Bulletin* writer David Oshiro contributed to this story.

# Shark attack death first in 33 years

By David Oshiro

Star-Bulletin

Yesterday's death of Marti Morrell off Maui was the first one directly attributable in Hawaii to a shark in 33 years, said George Balazs, a zoologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Balazs, a sea turtle biologist who keeps records of shark attacks as part of his job, said this is the 88th attack since 1779.

Yesterday's was the third attack this year. Two other people, both surfers, were bitten but both survived. A 34-year-old man was attacked in April off Oneula Beach Park in Ewa, while a 24-year-old man was bitten while in waters off Maili Point in May.

In February 1990, the shark-mutilated remains of Roy Tanaka, 47, were found off Manana Island, also called Rabbit Island. Tanaka was one of four men who had been fishing in the area when their boat capsized at night. Officials don't know if he drowned and was then eaten by sharks, or died in a shark attack.

The last positive shark-attack death was in December 1958 when a shark bit off 15-year-old Billy Weaver's right leg while he was surfing near the Mokulua Islands off Lanikai. Weaver's death sparked a brief shark-hunting campaign in the area.

Balazs said shark attacks often renew debate between those calling for a resumption of shark-control fishing and those who feel sharks are a natural part of the ocean environment.

He'd like to see shark-hunting decisions made on a case-by-case basis. However, when a human is attacked, he said the creature should be killed because it may strike again. And, he said, every effort should be made to recover the remains of a victim.

Tiger sharks, such as the one that reportedly attacked Morrell, are scavengers with the most varied diet among members of the shark family, Balazs said.

They'll eat nearly anything, including fish, lobsters, sea turtles, seabirds, por-

## Swim quickly and calmly from a shark; don't panic

Star-Bulletin staff

If you ever come face-to-face with a shark, experts say you should swim quickly but deliberately and calmly away from the creature and toward shore.

Don't panic or thrash about in the water. To lower your risk of a shark attack:

- Don't swim in open water at night, early morning or evening.

- Avoid areas with sudden drop-offs, such as reef edges.

- Don't swim in murky water, especially water clouded by debris after heavy rains.

- If you're fishing, don't carry strings of bleeding fish or lobster near you in the water.

- Don't go into the water if you have cuts or are bleeding.

poises, whale carcasses and other sharks. Balazs said some have been found with goats, cats, dogs — even a woman's handbag — in their stomachs.

So are our waters safe? Balazs thinks so: "But what I think is safe may not be what other people think. . . . That's in the eyes of the beholder.

"Obviously, there's a lot more traffic deaths than there are deaths from sharks in Hawaii," Balazs said.

He added yesterday that he was going to drive home, and hoped he would make it back safely.

"I'll accept that level of risk. On the other hand, if I was on Maui right now, you wouldn't catch me snorkeling at that spot. It's all in what you will accept as your level of risk. . . . What one person may accept as his risk, other people won't.

"When cases like this happen, it tends to highlight the fact that no matter how safe certain waters may be and how few attacks there may be, there is a risk when we go out (into the water)," Balazs said.

“  
*If I was on Maui right now, you wouldn't catch me snorkeling at that spot.*  
”

George Balazs

Zoologist, National Marine Fisheries Service



# Honolulu Advertiser

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On Oahu 35¢

## Threats end shark hunt Fisherman warned to stop Maui search, quits

By Jon Yoshishige  
Advertiser Staff Writer

A hunt for a killer shark off West Maui was suspended yesterday after the fisherman hired to catch the shark quit because he was threatened "by a group of men," the state Department of Land and Natural Resources said.

James StegmueLLer, a Lahaina-based commercial fisherman, said the men threatened him and the man who owns the fishing boat they used "with bodily harm" because sharks were gods to ancient Hawaiians, said department director William Paty.

StegmueLLer, in a KHON-TV interview, said yesterday that "there's strong opposition, heavy opposition from the Hawaiian community regarding this effort.... I am no longer involved in this project."

Paty authorized the conservation and enforcement division to hire a hunter to kill the shark that attacked Martha "Martie" Morrell Tuesday morning while she was swimming about 100 yards off Olowalu, Maui.

The men who threatened the hunter apparently were opposed to the shark-fishing expedition because sharks were *aumakua* — personal or family gods — to ancient Hawaiians,

Paty said.

A Maui disc jockey, whose radio show recently featured opponents to the shark hunt, said he does not condone the threats against the fishermen, but is still against killing sharks.

"How can anyone say that's the shark that killed the lady without killing five, 10 or a dozen sharks and gutting them and looking at their stomach contents?" KNUI Radio's Charles K. Maxwell Sr. said from his Pukalani home yesterday. "That's indiscriminate killing."

While not all sharks are *aumakua*, many are, said Maxwell, who is vice

chairman of the state Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

"In ancient times, and up to now, these animals have been special to the Hawaiian people," he said.

In a press release issued yesterday, Paty said: "While I understand that sharks were sacred *aumakua* to some Hawaiians, there are records that ancient Hawaiian *alii* (royalty) actively hunted sharks, and for pure sport, not food."

But, countered Maxwell, when sharks were killed in old Hawaii,

See Shark, Page A4

# Shark: Maui hunt is halted after threats

## FROM PAGE ONE

"there was ritual to it."

"Offerings were made; it was a spiritual thing," he said. "Everything that was taken, whether it be a bird or a tree, it was ritually done because Hawaiians were part of the ecosystem. They didn't wantonly destroy anything."

Stegmueller and Steve Thompson, who owns the 28-foot vessel they used, said they were threatened at Lahaina Boat Harbor Wednesday night after returning from setting baited hooks in 85 feet of water off Olowalu, Paty said.

When they returned to their hooks yesterday morning, there were two live 12-foot tiger sharks on the hooks and a 15- to 16-foot tiger shark swimming nearby, he said. Stegmueller cut the lines and let the hooked sharks swim away.

The shark that killed Morrell is believed to be a 15-foot tiger shark.

"The good news is that this shows that selective fishing for tiger sharks works," Paty said. "The bad news is that there are still three large tiger sharks swimming around the area ..."

Tiger sharks are territorial fish that usually stay in the dark depths during the day and come in close to shore at night to feed, said John Naughton, a fishery biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Naughton, who is advising the state on the shark hunt,

said the type of fishing gear as well as the type and size of bait being used would enable the fishermen to selectively catch tiger sharks.

"We want to control the taking of smaller species of reef sharks, which otherwise would result in an ecological travesty," he said.

The hunting expedition was not an "eradication program," but one that targeted large sharks and would avoid smaller reef sharks, said state aquatics resource specialist Skippy Hau.

Paty said he would look into other options today, including the possibility of having a discussion with the community groups involved.

Meanwhile, Pokai Bay on Oahu's Waianae Coast was closed to swimmers yesterday after sharks were seen in the area — two weeks after a similar sighting prompted the closure of part of the same area, a city Parks and Recreation Department official said.

Beachgoers spotted a 4- to 5-foot shark of undetermined type at 9 a.m., and later two sharks about that size were seen by city lifeguards, said Capt. Paul Shidaki of the Water Safety Division.

The bay, including Pokai Bay Beach Park and Waianae Army Recreation Center, was closed to swimmers at 1:30 p.m. until further notice. Lifeguards were continuing to monitor the area.

The waters fronting the recreation center were closed Nov. 13 after a 4-foot and a 6-foot shark were seen cruising the shoreline about 9 a.m.

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