



PRESS RELEASE
CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
JAMES MAKSHANOFF, CITY MANAGER

Contact: Bill Humphreys, Marine Safety Chief
(949) 361-8260
Laura Ferguson, Public Information Officer
(949) 361-8254

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHARK SIGHTINGS SERVE AS A REMINDER TO BE CAUTIOUS IN THE OCEAN

April 19, 2017....San Clemente, California...With warm days ahead, more people will be heading to the beach to swim, boogie board or surf. Recent shark sightings this past weekend are a reminder that the ocean is a vast wilderness, home to marine animals, such as sharks, stingrays, dolphin, whales, jelly fish, seals and more that are swimming in the same ocean with us. While the majority of ocean animals are harmless to people, some can occasionally injure humans. In our area, stingrays probably injure more people than any other form of marine life, with their very painful sting. However, in terms of severity of potential injury, sharks are at the top of the marine food chain.

“Although there has been a slight increase in the number of shark sightings in recent weeks, it is still statistically safe to swim in the ocean, although it is important to remember that there is always an element of danger. However, the number one danger in the ocean is drowning,” said Marine Safety Chief Bill Humphreys. “For example, in 2016 there were 53 unprovoked shark attacks in the United States and zero fatalities, according to the International Shark Attack File. Currently, over 3,500 people on average drown each

-more-

year in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control. This isn't meant to negate the danger of sharks, it's simply to put it into perspective. Everyone needs to exercise caution to prevent drownings and reduce their risk of being injured by any marine animal."

City lifeguards follow a county-wide protocol and will close the beaches if there is a danger to the public. It is the number one goal of the City to keep people safe at the beach, and we wish to remind residents and visitors to be mindful that the ocean is a vast marine habitat. It is also helpful when members of the public report shark sightings or any other threat to lifeguards at the Marine Safety Headquarters building just north of the Pier or to the Pier lifeguard tower which is manned seven days a week. Marine Safety can be reached at (949) 361-8219 and Sheriff's Dispatch at (949) 770-6011 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shark attacks are rare, though when they do happen, they are most likely to occur near shore, typically inshore of a sandbar or between sandbars, where sharks can become trapped by low tide, and near steep drop offs where shark's prey gather. The relative risk of a shark attack is very small, but should always be minimized whenever possible. To reduce your risk, NOAA has these tips:

- Don't swim too far from shore
- Stay in groups – sharks are more likely to attack a solitary individual
- Avoid being in the water during darkness or twilight when sharks are most active
- Don't go in the water if bleeding from a wound -- sharks have an acute sense of smell
- Leave the shiny jewelry at home – the reflected light resembles fish scales
- Avoid brightly-colored swimwear – sharks see contrast particularly well

#