Beat: Health

Shark rips off German tourist`s arm near Hawaiian beach

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USPA News - A German tourist lost her arm Wednesday when she was attacked by a shark while snorkeling near a beach in the U.S. state of Hawaii, state and emergency officials said Thursday. She was rushed to a local hospital and remained in a critical condition.

The incident happened at around 4:40 p.m. local time on Wednesday when a 20-year-old woman from Germany was snorkeling with several friends approximately 50 yards (45 meters) offshore at Palauea Beach, which is also known as "White Rock" and is located on the state`s second-largest island of Maui. Maui County Fire Services Chief Lee Mainaga said first responders found the victim on the beach after she was taken out of the water by two friends and a kayaker. He said the young woman, whose right arm had been ripped off by the shark, was transported to Maui Memorial Hospital in a critical condition after CPR was administered at the beach. "We heard screaming from the water and it was this unbelievable scream like I`ve never heard before. The only time anybody would scream like that is if they are being attacked by a shark," witness Andree Conley-Kapoi told the local Maui Now news website. "The amount of time from when we heard the initial screams to them pulling her out of the water was probably about 10 minutes." Conley-Kapoi said she could see at least one person attempting to help the victim to shore while a second person grabbed a kayak and went out to assist. "I could see that she had a bite on her foot, and I could also see that she lost a limb," the witness, who called 911 after hearing the screams, told Maui Now. Following shark attack protocols, county officials closed beaches for one mile (1.6 kilometer) in either direction from the Makena Beach Resort to the Mana Kai Resort. "We are asking everyone to stay out of the waters for at least the next 24 hours," Mainaga explained, adding that a decision will be made on Thursday whether to reopen the beaches. According to statistics from the International Shark Attack File (ISAF) at the University of Florida, sharks killed at least seven people worldwide last year, following 13 fatalities in 2011 that represented the highest number in nearly two decades. Surfers were the most affected group, accounting for about 60 percent of unprovoked attacks.

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