

ON ALERT

State: No ban on shark fishing

By Adam Wagner
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OAK ISLAND — A state agency will not enforce a shark fishing ban, even a temporary one, at Oak Island.

After two teens were maimed in shark attacks Sunday evening off of Oak Island, Tim

Holloman, the town's manager, asked the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries to ban shark fishing through the Fourth of July weekend along the town's beaches.

Louis Daniel, the director of the division, said Thursday his office will not pursue a ban, questioning whether it would have prevented either one of Sunday's attacks or if his agency could enforce it.

"In order for me to do something like this at Oak Island, technically I would have to do it for the entire state," Daniel said. "So I would be focusing all of my efforts and all of my resources to trying to enforce a no-shark-fishing

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Shark attack victim Hunter Treschl, 16, was released Thursday from New Hanover Regional Medical Center. **A9**

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ban.”

One of the difficulties of a shark-fishing ban, Daniel added, is whether his agents would be able to determine if someone fishing with a baited hook was shark fishing or trying to catch something else.

Sunday's first victim, 12-year-old Kiersten Yow, was attacked near Ocean Crest Pier, a popular fishing destination. Sunday evening, many fishermen along the pier could be spotted catching baby sharks and, for the most part, throwing them back into the water. Earlier in the week, Wally Trayah, an Oak Island fisherman, admitted that the amount of bait in the water could have a similar effect to chumming, or purposely throwing fish guts into the ocean in an effort to attract sharks.

“The problem is the amount of bait and the

amount of people in the water — where the sharks live — and I don't know how to fix that,” Daniel said.

Daniel's office issued a press release Thursday with tips anglers could use to avoid drawing sharks into swimming areas. Among the tips was to avoid using fish guts to attract sharks at a swimming beach, because that could increase the chances the sharks will enter the area seeking food. Marine Fisheries also advised the anglers to avoid fishing among swimmers and to schedule beach fishing early in the morning or at night.

The release also asked swimmers to avoid water where people are fishing, stay out of the water if they are bleeding to avoid attracting sharks and avoid wearing shiny jewelry that sharks could mistake for a fish.

Beyond the education step, though, the Division of Marine Fisheries will not pursue any more action.

“We've done pretty much

what we feel we can do at this time,” Daniel said.

Holloman said Thursday afternoon he would like Daniel to come to Southeastern North Carolina to discuss options with Oak Island and other towns even if a shark fishing ban isn't possible.

“I'm not planning to come down and meet with anybody right now,” Daniel said.

Instead of a fishing ban, Daniel said, people monitoring the beaches should help educate fishermen and swimmers about where it is safe to partake in either activity. Daniel outlined a scenario in which a fisherman is spotted around many swimmers and an official approaches him to ask if that is really the best spot for him to be casting his lines.

“That's really what it is,” Daniel said, “is conflict resolution.”

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