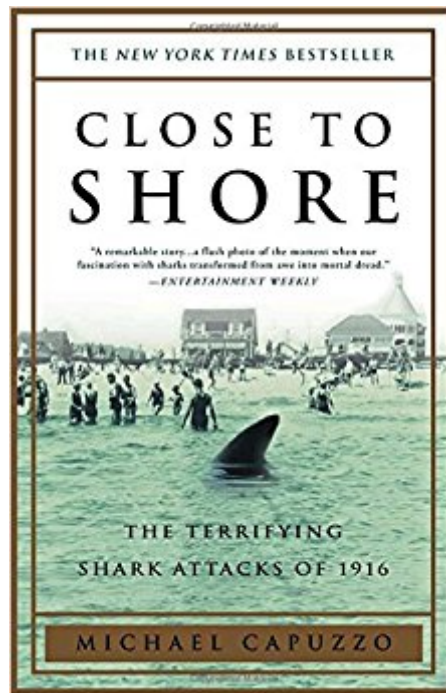




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# Close To Shore: The Terrifying Shark Attacks Of 1916



## Synopsis

Combining rich historical detail and a harrowing, pulse-pounding narrative, *Close to Shore* brilliantly re-creates the summer of 1916, when a rogue Great White shark attacked swimmers along the New Jersey shore, triggering mass hysteria and launching the most extensive shark hunt in history. In July 1916 a lone Great White left its usual deep-ocean habitat and headed in the direction of the New Jersey shoreline. There, near the towns of Beach Haven and Spring Lake--and, incredibly, a farming community eleven miles inland--the most ferocious and unpredictable of predators began a deadly rampage: the first shark attacks on swimmers in U.S. history. Capuzzo interweaves a vivid portrait of the era and meticulously drawn characters with chilling accounts of the shark's five attacks and the frenzied hunt that ensued. From the unnerving inevitability of the first attack on the esteemed son of a prosperous Philadelphia physician to the spine-tingling moment when a farm boy swimming in Matawan Creek feels the sandpaper-like skin of the passing shark, *Close to Shore* is an undeniably gripping saga. Heightening the drama are stories of the resulting panic in the citizenry, press and politicians, and of colorful personalities such as Herman Oelrichs, a flamboyant millionaire who made a bet that a shark was no match for a man (and set out to prove it); Museum of Natural History ichthyologist John Treadwell Nichols, faced with the challenge of stopping a mythic sea creature about which little was known; and, most memorable, the rogue Great White itself moving through a world that couldn't conceive of either its destructive power or its moral right to destroy. Scrupulously researched and superbly written, *Close to Shore* brings to life a breathtaking, pivotal moment in American history. Masterfully written and suffused with fascinating period detail and insights into the science and behavior of sharks, *Close to Shore* recounts a breathtaking, pivotal moment in American history with startling immediacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 6-10-An adaptation of Capuzzo's adult book, *Close to Shore: A True Story of Terror in an Age of Innocence* (Broadway, 2001). During the summer of 1916, just as railroad travel enabled city dwellers to make day-trips to the seashore and swimming in the ocean became popular, bathers along the East Coast were frightened away by a series of vicious attacks in the water. During a one-month period, three men and one boy were killed. Initial opinions of the attacker ranged from sea turtles to killer whales or swordfish, before it was determined to be the work of a rogue white shark. Capuzzo describes the shark's quest to satiate his hunger with the flesh of humans, sometimes verging close to anthropomorphism as he builds an atmosphere of suspense about the creature, its wanderings and its means of attack. The menacing cover of a gaping shark's mouth, the addition of black-and-white photos and newspaper clippings, and the suspenseful writing add to the accessibility of this work for young people. There are no footnotes, but an explanation of the sources used to compile this account is offered along with a sampling of books consulted. Peter Benchley's *Shark Trouble* (Random, 2002) and Thomas B. Allen's *Shark Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance* (Lyons, 2001) offer wider-ranging examples of shark attacks, along with ways to avoid them. Pam Spencer Holley, Young Adult Literature Specialist, Virginia Beach, VA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Gr. 7-12. The jacket photo, a gruesome close-up of an open-mouthed shark, sets the tone for this riveting adaptation of Capuzzo's similarly titled adult book about what occurred when, in 1916, a rogue shark traveled inland along a New Jersey creek, terrorizing residents of nearby towns. Extensive trimming has eliminated much about the individuals most involved in what happened, which occasionally makes for some confusion. But this book has a rich assortment of photos and news clippings not in the original, and the vividness and sheer physicality of Capuzzo's writing remains intact. In many ways this is a new book. Capuzzo reconstructs events with a novelist's flair and a scientist's attention to detail, and his pacing is relentless as the story moves from cultural history and shark physiology to close-ups of the crazed, disoriented beast slicing through the water. When the shark dies at the hands of two astounded fishermen, readers will experience relief as well as a sense of tragedy. As with the adult book, there are no notes--only a list of further readings that

kids can use to find out more. Stephanie Zvirin Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Absolutely amazing tale of one of the fiercest creatures of the sea. Expertly written and historically accurate. I found it especially fascinating being a former New Jersey resident, and a lover of early 20th century history. New Jersey holds a lot of interesting tales for those who wish to reach back in time. Peter Benchley took much of his Jaws theme from this true account. Loved it!

I enjoyed Close to Shore by Michael Capuzzo. I liked the information M Capuzzo gave about sharks, water currents, thoughts & ideas about sharks and the individuals. I would recommend this book to readers who like non-fiction, sharks and information about life in 1916.

Very interesting accounting of the incidents of 1916 presented within a detailed framework of the social, political cultural environment of the era. While there are definitely tense, thrilling sections in the book but if you are looking for a quick-read shark thriller, this is probably not for you. There were many times when I could smell, hear, visualize and almost feel what it was like at a given moment there on the Jersey coast in 1916, and I even got a glimpse into what the shark might have been experiencing.

I really enjoyed this book. The research was evident, the background rich and descriptive. Told both of the people and the shark. Excellent read!

I have enjoyed this book and having seen the story on National geographic channel, have a much better understanding of the East coast in 1916. I love to know the people I am reading about all of the research done for me riding this book is greatly appreciated. Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts and feelings experiences with us. Nora Moore

This is a very interesting review of the shark attacks that took place off the Jersey Shore at a time when many people thought they would not attack or would never come so close to the populated beach areas.

The book--about a series of East Coast shark attacks that inspired the writing of JAWS-- held my interest and provided a glimpse into the social life of a period (early 20th century) that I didn't know

much about. There were memorable real-life characters, plus some a few blood-in-the-water thrills. If you want to understand sharks in a way that goes deeper than headlines and more scientific than JAWS, this book will likely please you. It quotes a number of world-class shark experts. And it treats sharks with respect. But ultimately I felt that "Close to Shore" was a shaggy shark story. The climax was underwhelming. Perhaps this was because the author was determined to tell the truth. I admire him for taking that position. But somehow the earlier parts of the book created an expectation that there'd be a dramatic conclusion. And that expectation wasn't met.

I found this book fascinating - more as a study of an era before technology started really taking off, before information became more and more accessible and mysteries fewer and fewer. Very nicely written, occasionally a bit draggy when going off on a tangent about a particular person somewhat relevant to the overall story. But I have been a Jersey shore fan and have hung out during summers on LBI for many years and reading about what it was like in 1916 was fascinating. I am not much of a swimmer in the ocean, and after reading this, I am FINE with that. :) I'll stick to the shallow surf.

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