

# George shark man denies landing great white

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Environment Writer

THE man who caught a protected great white shark in Mossel Bay says he did not know the animal was a great white when he hooked it while sport fishing.

He also says he did not haul

it onto the rocks to pose with it for photographs - insisting that the shark had been washed onto the rocks by waves.

Through tip-offs from the public, the Cape Times traced the angler, Leon Bekker, who lives in George.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Bekker said: "The

water washed it up. I'm not that strong."

Asked why he had not cut it loose after he had hooked it, as required by law, he said: "I'm a beginner at this (sport fishing). I didn't know it was a great white. I've been doing this for a year only. I normally do take hooks out."

The Cape Times was sent a sequence of photographs which show Bekker, with another man, hauling the great white onto the rocks.

One of them shows Bekker being handed a tape measure to measure the shark's length.

Bekker denies that he was trophy hunting or that he was

giving a thumbs up sign while posing next to the great white, which was still alive.

"That was not thumbs up. That was to show a greeting: 'hos, my broer' (howzit my brother.) That's how we greet in the Western Cape. There were seven anglers on the rocks and

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