

Anecdote about dolphins



Rob Howes, a British-born lifeguard, had gone swimming with his daughter, Niccy, and two of her friends off Ocean beach near Whangarei on the North Island of New Zealand, when a group of dolphins suddenly appeared. The dolphins started to herd the humans; they pushed all four of them together by circling around them. Howes tried to drift away from the group, but two of the bigger dolphins herded him back – just as he spotted a 10ft great white shark heading towards him. “I just recoiled,” he said. “It was only about two metres away from me, the water was crystal clear and it was as clear as the nose on my face. They had corralled us up to protect us.”

The dolphins kept this up for 40 minutes until the shark lost interest, and the group could swim the 100m back to shore. Another lifeguard, Matt Fleet, on patrol in a lifeboat, saw the dolphins circling the swimmers and slapping their tails on the water to keep them in place. He told the Northern Advocate newspaper that he also had a clear sighting of the shark. “Some of the people later on the beach tried to tell me it was just another dolphin; but I knew what I saw,” he said. Ingrid Visser, of Orca Research, an environmental group, said the dolphins’ behavior was understandable, as they attack sharks to protect themselves and their young, similar incidents had been reported round the world. “They could have sensed the danger to the swimmers, and taken action to protect them,” she said.