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PHOTOS & VIDEO: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GE2iMMgKzUrCYhhEEjFBNYQkk-pM0xN8?usp=sharing>

Dreyer: ‘Lake Michigan Landed a Flurry of Punches’



Jim Dreyer examines the damage to the floor of his supply dinghy following his attempt to pull it in a self-sufficient swim across Lake Michigan. *Photo: Gianna Morano – September 8, 2023*

(Grand Haven, Michigan) “It was a 25-hour beatdown, but I did not call for rescue,” [Jim “The Shark” Dreyer](#) said. “Lake Michigan landed a flurry of punches, but I can take a punch and I was still in the fight.”

A water rescue was the result though when Dreyer's team sent a boat out nearly 30 miles from Milwaukee in 8-foot waves to check on his condition and to provide him with important information.

"My team was constantly vigilant while working tirelessly with each other on both sides of the lake, and with Coast Guard Station Milwaukee. The consensus was that these were the roughest conditions any of my team's boats could endure, and conditions would get worse, as 10-12 foot waves were forecasted for the next two days. I was informed that if I turned down this rescue and needed rescue later, it would be left to the U.S. Coast Guard."

Once on site, the boat crew discovered that Dreyer's supply dinghy also had about as much as it could endure and was coming apart at the seams.

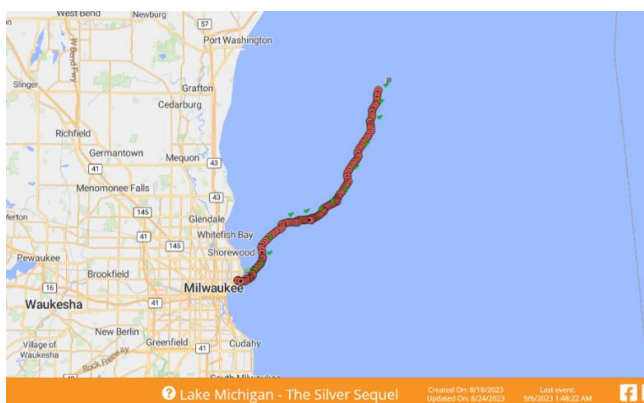
"I am swimming to [support](#) the Coast Guard's [Chief Petty Officers' Association](#), not lean on them for rescue and spend taxpayer's money. That is the last thing I wanted to do. My supply dinghy was on borrowed time, and with worsening conditions for a prolonged period, I was in real danger of losing my supplies. A Coast Guard rescue is likely what it would have come down to and I couldn't let that happen."

Dreyer, the only person to swim the width of Lake Michigan between Wisconsin and Michigan, was attempting to also become the first to [complete a mid-lake crossing self-sufficiently](#). In this quest, entitled [Lake Michigan – The Silver Sequel](#), he would pull a 225-pound supply dinghy non-stop while self-navigating for 82.5 miles between Milwaukee, Wisconsin to his hometown of Grand Haven, Michigan. Dreyer, now 60, is attempting to swim approximately 25 miles further self-sufficiently than he did in his first escorted crossing 25 years ago.

The swim started just before 5:00 p.m. CDT on Labor Day (Monday) with Dreyer hitting 3-5 foot waves head on until he was about 5 miles offshore. Then he encountered 6-8 footers out of the southeast for the remainder of the swim.

"I could not make much progress when trying to stay on course by swimming directly east. The best I could do was swim northeast. Even then, I was making much more progress getting off course to the north than progressing east toward Michigan. I wanted to persevere long enough for conditions to change so I could begin heading directly east."

That did not happen. Dreyer was pulled from the water at around 6:30 pm CDT. He was 14.2 miles off the coast and 18.5 off course to the north. He had logged 26.7 miles in 25 hours, 38 minutes.



“Tuesday afternoon, I noticed my dinghy was taking on a lot of water and discovered the keel and floor was being torn away by the force of the waves,” Dreyer said. I dove under the pitching dinghy and wrapped bungee cords around the craft, cinching them up the best I could. This was just a band aide, and I was pulling a significant amount of additional weight from the incoming water. The rips kept getting larger, and I was racing time to keep from losing my supplies.”

Another challenge arose when one of Dreyer’s three battery packs powering his [Vuzix Smart Swim](#) technology shorted out. This left him with a suspect amount of battery power, needed to continue viewing the course on his goggles throughout the large portion of the swim where no land is in sight.

Before going it alone on Labor Day, Dreyer had made an [attempt to cross Lake Michigan from Milwaukee with an escort boat on August 1st](#), but weather curtailed that effort also.

So, will there be a 3rd attempt?

“Physically I was just fine after this significant challenge,” Dreyer said. “While I am very disappointed this swim ended as it did, I am more confident than ever that I can do this. I really wanted to get it done this year, but am out of time. I have other plans for 2024, but somehow, I believe I will find a way to juggle everything and get it done.”

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