

## The ISAF 2023 shark attack report

The Florida Museum of Natural History's [International Shark Attack File](#) investigated 120 alleged shark-human interactions worldwide in 2023. ISAF confirmed 69 unprovoked shark bites on humans and 22 provoked bites.

Classification	Total
Unprovoked bites	69
Provoked bites	22
Air/sea disaster	0
Boat bites	9
Scavenge	2
Public Aquaria	1
Doubtful	0
No assignment could be made	1
Not Confirmed	16
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>120</b>

*“Unprovoked bites” are defined as incidents in which a bite on a live human occurs in the shark’s natural habitat with no human provocation of the shark.*

*“Provoked bites” occur when a human initiates interaction with a shark in some way. These include instances when divers are bitten after harassing or trying to touch sharks, bites on spearfisherman, bites on people attempting to feed sharks, bites occurring while unhooking or removing a shark from a fishing net and so forth.*

Read about the other classifications on our [website](#).

Of the remaining 29 cases, nine involved bites to motorized or non-motorized marine vessels (“boat bites”), and two involved shark-inflicted post-mortem bites (“scavenge”). One case was classified as “no assignment could be made.” Sixteen cases were classified as unconfirmed. These include cases where injuries could not be unambiguously attributed to a shark bite. These collectively include bites from other predatory fishes such as blue fish, cuts from sharp items in the water and cases where the victim’s body is not recovered, as in some drowning cases.

ISAF will continue to investigate these cases as data become available.

## 2023 at a glance

### Global total of unprovoked shark bites slightly higher than average

The 2023 worldwide total of 69 confirmed unprovoked cases is in line with the most recent five-year (2018-2022) average of 63 incidents annually. There were 14 confirmed shark-related fatalities this year, ten of which are assigned as unprovoked. This number is higher than the [five-year](#) annual global average of six unprovoked fatalities per year. Three of the unprovoked fatalities were due to bites from white sharks on surfers in Australia.

Annual fluctuations in shark-human interactions are expected. While the number of fatalities in 2023 was considerably higher than in 2022, there have been years in the past (2011) in which fatalities were also higher. The 2023 uptick in fatalities due to white sharks may reflect stochastic year-to-year variation, but it might also be the consequence of the increasing number of white sharks seen at aggregation sites near beaches that are popular with surfers (particularly in Australia). Year-to-year variability in oceanographic conditions influences the local abundance of sharks in the water, while weather patterns and economic conditions impact human activities along coastlines.

### U.S. leads world (again) in number of unprovoked bites

Country	Total	Fatal
USA	36	2
Australia	15	4
New Caledonia	3	1
Brazil	3	0
Egypt	2	1
Bahamas	1	1
Mexico	1	1
South Africa	2	0
Costa Rica	1	0
Colombia	1	0
New Zealand	1	0
Seychelles	1	0
Galapagos	1	0
Turks and Caicos	1	0

Consistent with long-term trends, the [United States](#) recorded the most unprovoked shark bites in 2023, with 36 confirmed cases. This is slightly lower than the 41 incidents recorded in 2022. The 36 cases represent 52% of the worldwide total.

[Australia](#)'s total of 15 unprovoked incidents is in line with the five-year annual average of 15 incidents for the region. Seven of these occurred in western Australia, one of which was fatal (bull shark), and five bites occurred in South Australia, three of which were fatal (all white sharks). One bite was recorded for Queensland, for New South Wales and for Tasmania over the year.

New Caledonia reported three unprovoked bites, one of which was fatal. Egypt reported two unprovoked bites, including one fatality. The Bahamas and Mexico each reported one fatal unprovoked bite for 2023. [Brazil](#) reported three bites, none of which were fatal. South Africa reported two bites, neither of which were fatal. Costa Rica, Colombia, [New Zealand](#), Seychelles, the Galapagos Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands each reported single non-fatal incidents for 2023.

**Florida had most unprovoked bites in U.S.**

U.S. State	Total	Fatal
Florida	16	0
Hawaii	8	1
New York	4	0
California	2	1
North Carolina	3	0
South Carolina	2	0
New Jersey	1	0
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>

[Florida](#) has long topped global charts for the number of shark bites, and 2023 was no different. Florida’s 16 cases represent 44% of the U.S. total and 23% of unprovoked bites worldwide. This is lower than Florida’s most recent five-year annual average of 19 incidents. Hawaii recorded eight bites, one of which was fatal in 2023. This represents a slight uptick from the average, but shark bites in Hawaii vary considerably from year to year. Going forward, we will be closely monitoring the statistics for Hawaii.

There were two unprovoked bites in California, one of which was fatal, four in New York, three in North Carolina, two in South Carolina and one in New Jersey.

In Florida, Volusia County had the most shark bites (8), representing 50% of the state’s total. This is in line with the five-year annual average of 9 incidents in the area. Of the eight remaining bites, two were in Brevard County, two in St. Lucie County and one each occurred in Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Escambia and Pinellas counties.

**Most bites are associated with surfing and board sports**

Victim Activity at Time of incident	
Surfing/board sports	42%
Swimming/wading	39%

Snorkeling/free-diving	13%
Other	6%

Surfers [and those participating in board sports](#) accounted for 42% of incidents. Swimmers and waders accounted for 39%. Snorkelers/free divers accounted for 13%.

### **Risk of being bitten by a shark remains extremely low**

The total number of unprovoked shark bites worldwide remains extremely low. Fatalities saw an increase over the past year. Most of the fatalities in 2023 were due to white shark bites (three in Australia, one in California).

ISAF offers resources for [reducing your risk of a shark bite](#) and instructions for what to do if you encounter a shark.