

The Australian Shark Incident Database (ASID) investigated 28 reported incidents of shark-human interaction in 2023. Of these, 22 incidents were confirmed cases of unprovoked shark bites, while five incidents were provoked (four spearfishing and one collecting museum specimens), while one incident had no information available concerning the activity of the victim.

Activities and injuries to victims

There were 10 incidents involving surfers: three which occurred in South Australia were fatal, while five resulted in injuries. There was also a single incident involving a person on a wing-foil who was injured, and a paddleboarder who was uninjured. Four cases were swimming, and all were injured, while one fatality occurred after the victim had jumped into the water from a jet ski and was swimming. Two incidents were snorkellers, both injured, and one was wading, also injured. In two cases, the victims were on surf-skis, and both were uninjured. Four incidents involved spearfishing (two injured), and one was collecting specimens (injured).

Most incidents were reported from Western Australia (15 incidents with one fatality and eight injuries), South Australia (five incidents with three fatalities and two injuries), New South Wales (five incidents, three injuries) and Queensland (three incidents, two injuries) (Table 1).

Incidents occurred in all months. Four incidents occurred in November and December, three occurred in March, April, May and July, two occurred in February and October while single incidents occurred in each of January, June, August and September.

Table 1. Number of shark incidents reported in Australia in 2023 by state and outcome.

State	Cases recorded	Fatal	Injured	Uninjured
NSW	5	0	3	2
QLD	3	0	2	0
SA	5	3	2	0
WA	15	1	8	6
VIC	0	0	0	0
TAS	0	0	0	0
NT	0	0	0	0
Total unprovoked	22	4	13	5
Total provoked	5	0	2	2
Total cases	28	4	15	8

Species of sharks

White sharks were responsible for eight incidents in 2023 including two fatalities, while tiger sharks and wobbegongs accounted for three incidents. Bull sharks (one fatality), and other whalers (one fatality) were responsible for two incidents each. Bronze whalers, black tips, lemon, sandbar and Galapagos sharks accounted for one incident each. In two cases the species of shark was unknown, and for two other cases the type of shark remains unidentified.

Decadal trends in shark incidents

The total of 28 incidents reported for 2023 was higher than the decadal mean for all cases (see Table 2). The total of 22 unprovoked incidents for 2023 was slightly above the decadal mean for unprovoked incidents.

Table 2. Mean, maximum and minimum cases per year for (a) unprovoked and provoked shark incidents and (b) unprovoked shark incidents for each decade since 1950. Note that 2020s includes cases up to April 2025.

(a) Annual cases by decade			
	Mean	Max	Min
1950s	6.6	11	4
1960s	5.2	11	2
1970s	3.6	8	0
1980s	6.5	14	3
1990s	8.2	13	5
2000s	16.4	28	10
2010s	23.3	33	14
2020s	25.5	37	15

(b) Annual unprovoked cases by decade			
	Mean	Max	Min
1950s	3.1	5	2
1960s	2.1	6	0
1970s	2.4	6	0
1980s	4.4	10	1
1990s	6.1	13	3
2000s	12	21	6
2010s	15.9	22	9
2020s	19.3	28	13