

Shark Information

Unprovoked shark attacks on humans are rare. According to George Burgess, Director of the Program for Shark Research at the University of Florida, "Shark attack is a potential danger that must be acknowledged by anyone that frequents marine waters, but it should be kept in perspective. Bees, wasps and snakes are responsible for far more fatalities each year. In the United States deaths occur up to 30 more times from lightning strikes per year, than from shark attacks per year." -

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/sharks/attacks/perspect.htm>

- There has not been a fatality from a shark bite in North Carolina for more than a decade. There have only been three fatalities in the state since record-keeping began in 1935. All figures are from the International Shark Attack File. <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/sharks/isaf/isaf.htm>
- In 2014, more than 6.5 million of people visited the beach in North Carolina. The state has averaged 2.4 shark bite incidents per year for the last 15 years. The number of visitors to North Carolina beaches have increased by 18 percent since 2010 alone.
- To put it in perspective, in the United States, a person is 75 times more likely to die from a lightning strike than to be killed by a shark (193 times more likely in North Carolina). Bees, wasps and snakes are responsible for far more fatalities in the United States each year. <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/sharks/attacks/2004lightning.html>
- Drowning is a much more serious risk as the United States averages about 10 fatalities a day. <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/Sharks/Statistics/beachattacks.htm>
- No North Carolina beaches are closed due to sharks.

Experts suggest taking the following precautions to avoid shark-related injury:

Precautionary Measures to Reduce Risk:

- Avoid being in the water during darkness or twilight hours when sharks are most active.
- Children should always swim with adult supervision.
- Swim in groups when possible.
- Do not enter the ocean with an open wound or if bleeding in any way.
- Do not wear dangly or shiny jewelry as the reflected light resembles the sheen of fish scales.
- Avoid waters being used by sport or commercial fisherman, especially if there are signs of bait fishes or feeding activity. Diving seabirds are good indicators of such action.

- Do not enter the water if sharks are known to be present and evacuate the water if sharks are seen while there.

For more tips, go to <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/education/questions/Attack.html>

More from George Burgess, Director of the Program for Shark Research at the University of Florida:

“For most people, any shark-human interaction is likely to occur while swimming or surfing in nearshore waters. From a statistical standpoint the chances of dying in this area are markedly higher from many other causes (such as drowning and cardiac arrest) than from shark attack. Many more people are injured and killed on land while driving to and from the beach than by sharks in the water. Shark attack trauma is also less common than such beach-related injuries as spinal damage, dehydration, jellyfish and stingray stings and sunburn.” - <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/sharks/attacks/perspect.htm>

For more info on shark encounters: <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/sharks/ISAF/ISAF.htm>