

Swimmers Worry about Shark Attacks, Experts Say They Are Rare

今回は、夏のレジャーとサメにまつわる話題です。アメリカ東部やフロリダ州では、サメにかまれる事故がニュースになり、海辺では注意喚起が行われています。とはいえ、専門家によると、こうしたケースの多くは、サメに何もしていないのに起きた突発的な事故であり、実際の件数は減少傾向にあるそうです。ちなみに、文中の **unprovoked** は「挑発されていない」「理由のない」という意味で、**an unprovoked attack**（無差別の攻撃）のように使われます。サメは本来、人間を好んで襲う生き物ではないそうですが、自然との境界が近い場所では注意が必要ですね。あなたは、海や川でヒヤッとした経験はありますか？



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Recent shark bites in Florida and Hawaii and a suspected case in New Jersey have raised an age-old summer question for beachgoers — is it safe to go in the water?

Scientists and researchers who study sharks said the answer to that question is yes, it is safe. Dangerous **interactions** between humans and sharks are uncommon, and serious injuries and deaths from the bites are rare and growing rarer, scientists said.

Still, the extraordinary nature of shark bites and the stories of survivors capture the imagination. In April, the story of a Hawaii surfer fighting off a shark got widespread public attention, for example. But, it is a good idea to remember just how rare shark bites truly are, scientists said.

How often do shark bites occur?

There have been around 70 to 80 [unprovoked](#) shark bites yearly, worldwide, over the past 10 years. And not only are shark bites rare, they have been especially rare recently.

There were only 57 unprovoked bites last year, and just five of them were deadly, reports the University of Florida's International Shark Attack File. There had been nine such deaths in 2021.

The shark attack file reported a year ago that one reason for the drop in bites might be the decrease of shark populations around the world.

It is too early in the warm season to get an idea of how active this year will be for interactions between humans and sharks, said Greg Skomal. He is a shark expert with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.

"If we get lots of bait fish and forage fish species close to shore, we have a super hot summer that draws people to beaches, more people in the water, then we can [determine](#) the risk," Skomal said.

What are the most prone areas for shark encounters?

The United States and Australia are the sites of the most reported shark bites. The state of Florida led the world last year with 16 unprovoked bites, the shark attack file said.

This month, two Florida fishermen were bitten by sharks in separate incidents less than 36 hours apart.

The rate of shark bites has stayed steady in recent years. But, people may think attacks are more common because of new technology to report shark [sightings](#), said Nick Whitney, a lead scientist at the New England Aquarium in Boston. Recently developed smartphone apps permit users to report shark sightings in real time.

What kind of sharks are cause for concern?

White sharks, bull sharks and tiger sharks are the sharks most [cited](#) by the International Shark Attack File for unprovoked bites. They are large sharks that also cause the most deaths.

However, remember that many interactions with sharks are with smaller species that are unlikely to cause serious injuries, said James Sulikowski, director of the Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station at Oregon State University. Those sharks might bite a human, realize we are not their desired prey and move on, he said.

Is it safe to swim?

You are at much greater risk of getting hurt in a car accident on the way to the ocean than you are to get seriously injured by a shark bite when you are there.

Millions of people go to the ocean in the summer as the weather heats up, and that raises the possibility of interacting with a shark. But by taking simple steps, visitors can reduce any chance of a dangerous interaction with a shark, Sulikowski said. Such steps include avoiding the water early and late in the day when most sharks hunt for food. You should also not carry anything shiny into the water.

“We are intruders in their environment. What we can do is be logical and safe about that and avoid areas where sharks are going to be feeding,” Sulikowski said. “When an interaction occurs, it's mistaken identity — we are in an area where a shark is looking to eat.”

I'm Caty Weaver.

The Associated Press reported this story. Caty Weaver adapted it for Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

- 1. interaction (n.)** the situation in which two or more people do something together or communicate

Face-to-face interaction is one of the most powerful ways to learn a language.

- 2. unprovoked (adj., from “provoke,” v.)** without any clear cause

The attack by the mountain lion was unprovoked.

- 3. determine (v.)** to figure out; to learn by collecting information and analyzing it

The police still have not determined the cause of the boat accident.

- 4. sighting (n.)** a case in which someone briefly sees something

Please report all tornado sightings to the weather service.

- 5. intruder (n.)** a person who enters an area without an invitation or permission

Late last night, an intruder broke the lock on the front door and entered the apartment.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How common are shark attacks? Include examples and numbers.
2. What conditions and situations make the chances of a shark attack higher?
3. What do shark experts recommend doing to avoid attacks?
4. Are shark interactions common in Japan?
5. What other safety rules do you follow when you go to the beach?