

2003 CALIFORNIA BOATING SAFETY REPORT

DETAILS STATEWIDE BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS AND ENHANCED BOATING SAFETY MEASURES



(SACRAMENTO, CA) – To highlight **NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK** (May 22-28, 2004), the California Department of Boating and Waterways has released the 2003 update of its annual *California Boating Safety Report (BSR)*, which contains statewide statistics and analysis of non-commercial boating accidents, injuries, fatalities, and property damage. Copies of the 2003 *BSR* are currently available directly from the Department. A PDF version is available on the Department’s website (<http://www.dbw.ca.gov/SafetyReports.htm>).

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■ Northern California	1,3
■ Personal watercraft (PWC)	5,6
■ Southern California	1,3

The 2003 *BSR* contains detailed analysis of boating accidents by county, vessel type, location, age of primary operator, and life jacket usage statistics, as well as current information on Department-sponsored boating law enforcement programs, boating safety education programs, and program enhancements, initiatives, and new laws affecting boating safety enacted during the past year.

Some statewide highlights identified in the 2003 *BSR*:

In 2003, **963 accidents** were reported to the Department, **the highest total on record**. These accidents involved **502 injuries** (*up from 468 injuries in 2002*) and **61 fatalities** (*up from 53 fatalities in 2002*). ■ **Open motorboats** were involved in **51% of all accidents**. ■ **PWC** were involved in **27% of all accidents**. ■ **Water skiing accidents increased 38%**, accounting for 17% of all accidents, 28% of all injuries, and 10% of all fatalities. ■ **Alcohol** was involved in **21% of boating fatalities**. In several cases, **intoxicated passengers caused or contributed to fatalities** due to careless behavior aboard vessels.

see “Statewide Boating Accident Statistics” on page 2

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HIGHLIGHTS

Napa County had the **most accidents (60)** of any Northern county. ■ **67% of all fatalities** occurred in Northern California. ■ **36% of all fatalities** occurred on **Northern lakes**. ■ **20%** of all Northern boating accidents occurred on **holiday weekends**. ■ The **31-40 age group** was involved in the most accidents in Northern California. ■ Of all Northern accidents, **21%** involved **water skiing**, **59%** involved **open motorboats**, and **24%** involved **PWC**.

see “Northern California Boating Accident Statistics” on page 3

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HIGHLIGHTS

San Diego County had **more accidents (80)** than any Southern county. ■ **33% of all fatalities** occurred in Southern California. ■ The largest number of Southern fatalities occurred in **coastal waters**. ■ **16%** of Southern accidents occurred on **holiday weekends**. ■ The **21-30 age group** was involved in the most accidents in Southern California. ■ Of all Southern accidents, **40%** involved **collisions with other vessels**, **41%** involved **open motorboats**, and **31%** involved **PWC**.

see “Southern California Boating Accident Statistics” on page 3

STATEWIDE BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS

**1980-2003 CALIFORNIA
BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS**

Year	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities	Amount of Property Damage
1980	657	270	112	\$2,039,800
1981	728	319	87	\$3,655,630
1982	696	323	103	\$2,497,000
1983	648	333	95	\$3,713,100
1984	791	341	93	\$2,491,700
1985	869	403	76	\$4,246,400
1986	741	319	68	\$2,645,500
1987	905	325	54	\$3,381,600
1988	745	333	51	\$2,396,100
1989	632	371	43	\$3,669,800
1990	761	416	50	\$3,131,200
1991	750	421	58	\$2,653,800
1992	689	447	59	\$4,360,100
1993	743	434	67	\$2,052,800
1994	709	386	40	\$1,740,300
1995	833	490	52	\$2,536,500
1996	850	537	56	\$2,241,700
1997	925	526	43	\$3,266,800
1998	772	413	58	\$2,299,600
1999	907	491	42	\$2,864,000
2000	906	524	51	\$3,038,400
2001	907	502	48	\$2,841,900
2002	911	468	53	\$3,732,850
2003	963	502	61	\$3,820,000

(continued from page 1)

35% of PWC operators involved in accidents were **between the ages of 11-20**. This age group was involved in **more accidents than any other age group**. ■ **One-third of all vessels** involved in accidents were being operated by **someone other than the registered owner**. **70% of PWC** involved in accidents were operated by **someone other than the registered owner**.

**2003 CALIFORNIA
BOATING ACCIDENTS BY COUNTY**

County	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities	Amount of Property Damage
Alameda	10	2	2	\$22,600
Amador	6	3	0	\$16,300
Butte	18	12	2	\$24,800
Calaveras	10	6	1	\$6,600
Contra Costa	33	20	0	\$335,450
Del Norte	1	0	0	\$2,000
El Dorado	16	8	2	\$38,700
Fresno	25	15	5	\$150,000
Humboldt	4	0	1	\$9,500
Imperial	3	4	0	\$13,400
Kern	23	17	0	\$34,700
Lake	14	12	1	\$63,350
Lassen	2	0	1	\$2,000
Los Angeles	51	27	4	\$389,200
Madera	8	6	0	\$14,500
Marin	13	4	2	\$54,550
Mariposa	10	8	0	\$13,100
Mendocino	6	3	2	\$15,000
Merced	7	2	1	\$18,500
Monterey	20	3	0	\$147,600
Napa	60	33	2	\$66,100
Nevada	8	8	1	\$9,000
Orange	71	3	0	\$376,350
Placer	34	16	4	\$50,250
Plumas	5	2	1	\$3,800
Riverside	42	18	1	\$104,450
Sacramento	20	6	1	\$133,800
San Bernardino	61	44	3	\$257,000
San Diego	80	43	3	\$328,250
San Francisco	20	10	0	\$189,600
San Joaquin	48	22	0	\$319,200
San Luis Obispo	32	28	0	\$21,800
San Mateo	5	2	1	\$6,900
Santa Barbara	7	1	0	\$23,500
Santa Clara	8	7	1	\$9,000
Santa Cruz	7	1	1	\$9,500
Shasta	53	39	2	\$130,100
Sierra	1	1	0	\$5,000
Siskiyou	3	1	2	\$0
Solano	14	4	3	\$95,150
Sonoma	6	1	0	\$14,200
Stanislaus	12	11	0	\$18,000
Sutter	1	3	0	\$22,500
Tehama	1	0	0	\$1,300
Trinity	6	7	0	\$1,000
Tulare	11	7	1	\$38,600
Tuolumne	31	22	2	\$70,300
Ventura	18	4	3	\$71,350
Yolo	12	2	3	\$59,650
Yuba	6	4	2	\$12,500
Total	963	502	61	\$3,820,000

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS

2003 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ACCIDENTS BY TYPE OF WATER BODY

Type of Water Body	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities
Northern Lakes	312	206	22
Northern Coast	29	4	5
Northern Rivers	34	10	7
San Francisco Bay	48	18	4
Delta	95	44	3
Total	518	282	41

2003 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ACCIDENTS BY TOP COUNTIES

County	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities
Napa	60	33	2
Shasta	53	39	2
San Joaquin	48	22	0
Placer	34	16	4
Contra Costa	33	20	0
Tuolumne	31	22	2

2003 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ACCIDENTS BY TOP AREAS

County	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities
Delta	95	44	3
Lake Berryessa	60	33	2
Lake Shasta	51	32	2
San Francisco Bay	48	18	4
Folsom Lake	25	13	2

For our analysis, Northern California (including Monterey Bay) is comprised of the following counties:

Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehema, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS

2003 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ACCIDENTS BY TYPE OF WATER BODY

Type of Water Body	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities
Southern Coast	203	57	7
Southern Lakes	176	119	6
Colorado River	55	40	2
Southern Rivers	11	4	5
Total	445	220	20

2003 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ACCIDENTS BY TOP COUNTIES

County	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities
San Diego	80	43	3
Orange	71	3	0
San Bernardino	61	44	3
Los Angeles	51	27	4
Riverside	42	18	1
San Luis Obispo	32	28	0

2003 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ACCIDENTS BY TOP AREAS

County	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities
Colorado River	55	40	2
Newport Harbor	32	1	0
San Diego Bay	28	6	1
Lake Nacimiento	28	24	0
Lake Perris	27	10	1
Mission Bay	24	23	0

For our analysis, Southern California is comprised of the following counties:

Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, Ventura.

- There were **61 boating fatalities** in **2003**, up from 53 in 2002.
- The most common type of fatal accident was **capsizing (30%)**, followed by **falls overboard (23%)**.

ALCOHOL-RELATED FATALITIES

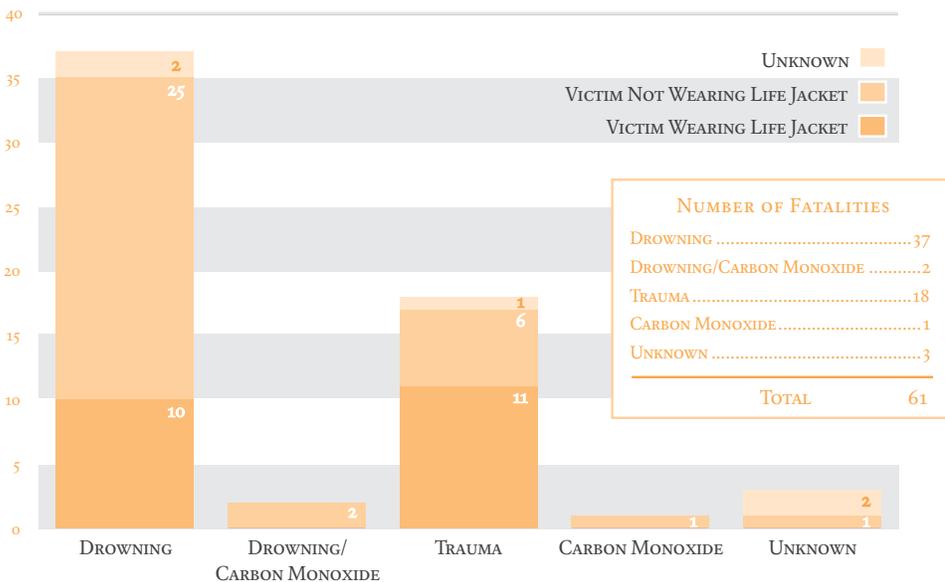
- **21%** of fatal boating accidents involved **alcohol**. One-third of the victims were passengers, all of whom contributed to their deaths due to poor judgment related to alcohol consumption. Furthermore, the **actions of one intoxicated passenger resulted in the death of a sober passenger**.

FISHING FATALITIES

- **31%** of fatalities were **fishing-related**.
- **58%** of the victims **fell overboard**.
- **21%** involved **alcohol**.
- **89%** of victims **drowned**. Of that group, **only 1 victim was wearing a life jacket**.

CARBON MONOXIDE

- The inhalation of carbon monoxide resulted in 3 fatalities in 2003.



DANGEROUS BEHAVIORS INCLUDE:

- Leaning over the stern of the vessel while the engine is engaged
- Teak surfing (body surfing while holding onto the swim step of a vessel that is underway)
- Improper ventilation in an enclosed cabin
- Swimming near the stern a vessel whose engine is engaged

In 2003, there were **261 accidents**, **200 injuries**, and **12 fatalities** involving PWC in California.

Of all California accidents, PWC were involved in **27% of accidents**, **40% of injuries**, and **20% of fatalities**.

2003 PWC-RELATED ACCIDENTS BY TOP REGIONS

Region	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities
Northern Lakes	102	73	8
Southern Lakes	87	65	3
Southern Coast	26	26	0
Colorado River	21	20	1
Delta	17	10	0
Southern Rivers	5	2	0
Northern Rivers	3	4	0

2003 CALIFORNIA PWC-RELATED ACCIDENT STATISTICS BY COUNTY

County	Number of Accidents	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatalities	Amount of Property Damage
Amador	4	2	0	\$2,300
Butte	3	5	0	\$8,700
Calaveras	5	2	1	\$3,600
Contra Costa	7	6	0	\$34,500
El Dorado	3	3	0	\$4,600
Fresno	10	8	0	\$14,400
Imperial	2	4	0	\$8,400
Kern	15	14	0	\$24,600
Lake	6	7	0	\$9,950
Los Angeles	12	13	2	\$16,000
Madera	6	5	0	\$12,350
Mariposa	4	1	0	\$3,000
Mendocino	1	2	0	\$3,000
Merced	2	1	1	\$9,500
Monterey	3	0	0	\$8,700
Napa	21	14	1	\$18,250
Nevada	1	1	0	\$0
Orange	3	2	0	\$1,200
Placer	15	8	2	\$25,700
Plumas	2	0	0	\$3,800
Riverside	30	14	1	\$83,700
Sacramento	6	3	0	\$12,600
San Bernardino	20	18	1	\$24,100
San Diego	22	23	0	\$24,150
San Joaquin	7	3	0	\$23,300
San Luis Obispo	8	7	0	\$5,800
Santa Clara	1	1	1	\$3,000
Shasta	13	9	1	\$26,200
Solano	1	1	0	\$0
Stanislaus	7	7	0	\$11,300
Trinity	1	2	0	\$1,000
Tulare	8	5	0	\$32,100
Tuolumne	9	7	1	\$11,200
Yolo	1	1	0	\$0
Yuba	2	1	0	\$12,500
Total	261	200	12	\$483,500

Of these PWC accidents:

- **66%** involved a **collision with another vessel** compared to **35%** for all vessels.
- **66%** involved **inexperience** as a primary factor compared with **33%** for all accidents.
- **70%** of the PWC involved in boating accidents were **borrowed** or **rented** compared with **34%** for all vessels.
- **Over half (53%)** of PWC-related collisions involved **two operators who were riding together**. Operators riding together tend to:
 - Follow at an unsafe distance
 - Engage in horseplay – spraying each other, jumping wakes, etc.
 - Approach the other vessel at too great a speed in order to talk or pull along side another operator.

PWC-RELATED FATALITIES

- **Fatal accidents involving PWC increased** from 7 in 2002 to **12** in 2003, **the highest number on record**, although the overall number of PWC accidents continued to remain significantly lower than years prior to 1998.
- **50%** of fatal accidents involved **collisions with other vessels**. The majority of these accidents involved **operators who were riding together** and were not keeping a proper distance between vessels, and **some were engaged in horseplay activities**. Collisions were followed by **accidents involving falls overboard (17%)** and **PWC operators striking persons in the water (17%)**.
- **33%** of all PWC fatalities in 2003 **involved horseplay** activities, the majority of which resulted in collisions with the other PWC riding with them.
- The largest number of operators involved in fatal PWC-related accidents were in the **11-20 age group**. All occurred between May and September and **58% occurred on the weekends**.



2003 CALIFORNIA PWC REGISTRATIONS BY COUNTY

County	Number of PWCs	Total Number of Vessels (including PWC)
Alameda	4,301	30,816
Alpine	6	149
Amador	179	3,215
Butte	1,233	17,003
Calaveras	448	5,867
Colusa	118	1,445
Contra Costa	6,171	40,615
Del Norte	62	1,631
El Dorado	1,181	14,906
Fresno	2,856	23,206
Glenn	147	1,998
Humboldt	476	7,996
Imperial	639	2,742
Inyo	207	1,278
Kern	3,312	17,129
Kings	598	2,894
Lake	1,119	11,064
Lassen	251	3,360
Los Angeles	40,214	131,436
Madera	635	6,024
Marin	625	10,185
Mariposa	90	1,529
Mendocino	415	5,402
Merced	872	6,981
Modoc	29	781
Mono	177	1,708
Monterey	1,208	9,901
Napa	634	7,443
Nevada	486	9,960
Orange	22,781	70,426
Placer	2,274	20,989
Plumas	215	3,896
Riverside	18,239	52,338
Sacramento	5,354	48,911
San Benito	341	2,029
San Bernardino	18,169	53,482
San Diego	14,321	70,521
San Francisco	424	4,504
San Joaquin	2,988	26,749
San Luis Obispo	1,645	13,700
San Mateo	2,046	13,886
Santa Barbara	1,364	11,086
Santa Clara	5,361	31,200
Santa Cruz	673	8,501
Shasta	1,357	19,452
Sierra	11	357
Siskiyou	145	4,336
Solano	1,970	16,907
Sonoma	2,275	20,927
Stanislaus	2,634	19,711
Sutter	601	5,763
Tehama	312	4,554
Trinity	87	2,235
Tulare	1,484	9,596
Tuolumne	398	6,417
Ventura	6,268	28,033
Yolo	502	6,411
Yuba	338	4,268
Out of State	839	3,530
TOTAL	184,105	963,379