

Australia to tag sharks but rules out cull

August 14 2015



The New South Wales government is undertaking a review of new shark control technologies, with a report to be completed by September

Australia's most populous state said Friday it will boost the monitoring and tagging of sharks off its beaches but ruled out culling great whites after a spate of attacks left one surfer dead and two seriously hurt.

Locals from the tourist hub of Ballina, some 750 kilometres (450 miles) north of Sydney, have pleaded with the New South Wales government

for help, saying visitor numbers to the coastal region have plunged after three attacks this year.

The most recent encounter in late July left a 52-year-old surfer with serious arm and leg injuries, while earlier in the month, a 32-year-old bodyboarder was mauled on both legs. In February, a 41-year-old Japanese surfer died after his legs were torn off by a shark.

The state's Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair said Aus\$250,000 (US\$185,000) would be invested in observing, tagging and tracking [sharks](#) in the area, with world-renowned experts temporarily based in the region to lead the project ahead of the busy summer season.

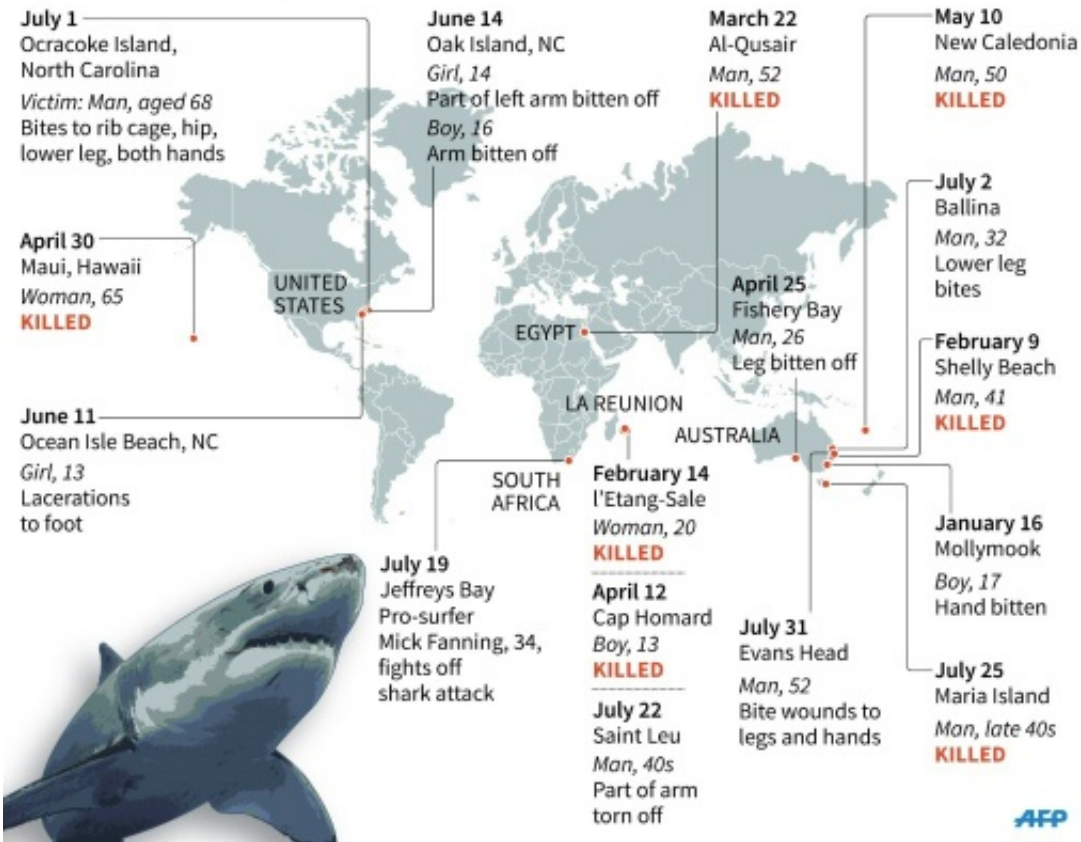
"Let's not forget the ocean is the domain of the shark," Blair said in a statement.

"However, this government is taking action to gain a better understanding of the local risks and how they can be reduced to help inform and protect the public."

The state has ruled out culling sharks, with a spokeswoman for Blair telling AFP officials were exploring non-lethal methods for lowering risks including barriers preventing sharks from getting near swimmers.

Shark attacks 2015

Major incidents so far this year



Graphic showing major shark attacks worldwide in 2015

Great white sharks are a protected species due to their declining population.

The presence of the sharks off Ballina, which has seen beaches along the coast repeatedly closed in recent weeks, have been blamed on schools of baitfish.

But the head of the primary industries department's shark research centre Vic Peddemors said it was not known why there had been a sudden increase in shark numbers.

"We have no idea and nowhere in the world does anyone have any idea what causes these sudden appearances of groups of sharks along the coast," Peddemors told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"If we are able to determine that then hopefully the aim would then be to be able to be pre-emptive in the years ahead."

The state government is also undertaking a review of new shark control technologies, with a report to be completed by September.

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