



Drowning Prevention Report 2019



Summary

The 2019 Drowning Report relies on information from 285 preventable drowning incidents gathered from coronial findings, police and DHB incident reports and news stories from across the country.

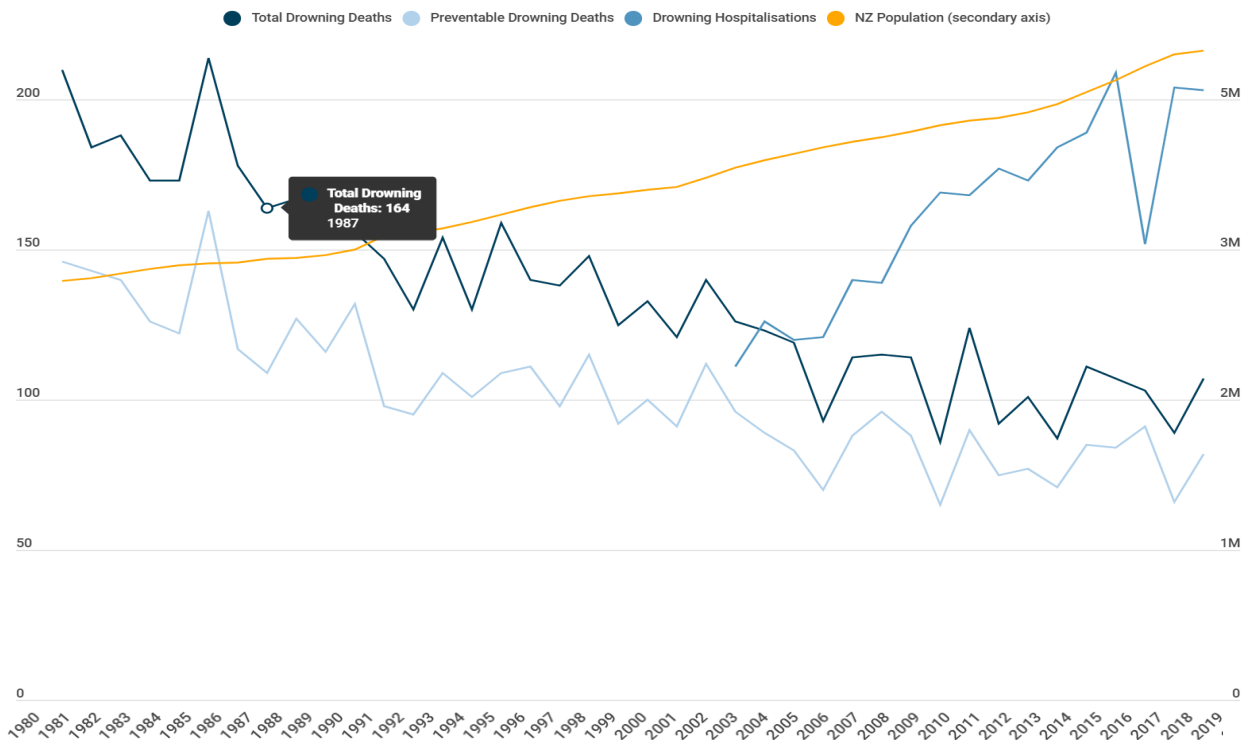
We categorised each case according to the nature of the incident; preventable fatality, or hospitalization, age, gender and ethnicity of the victim and nature and cause of the incident, including activity and environment and a host of other factors.

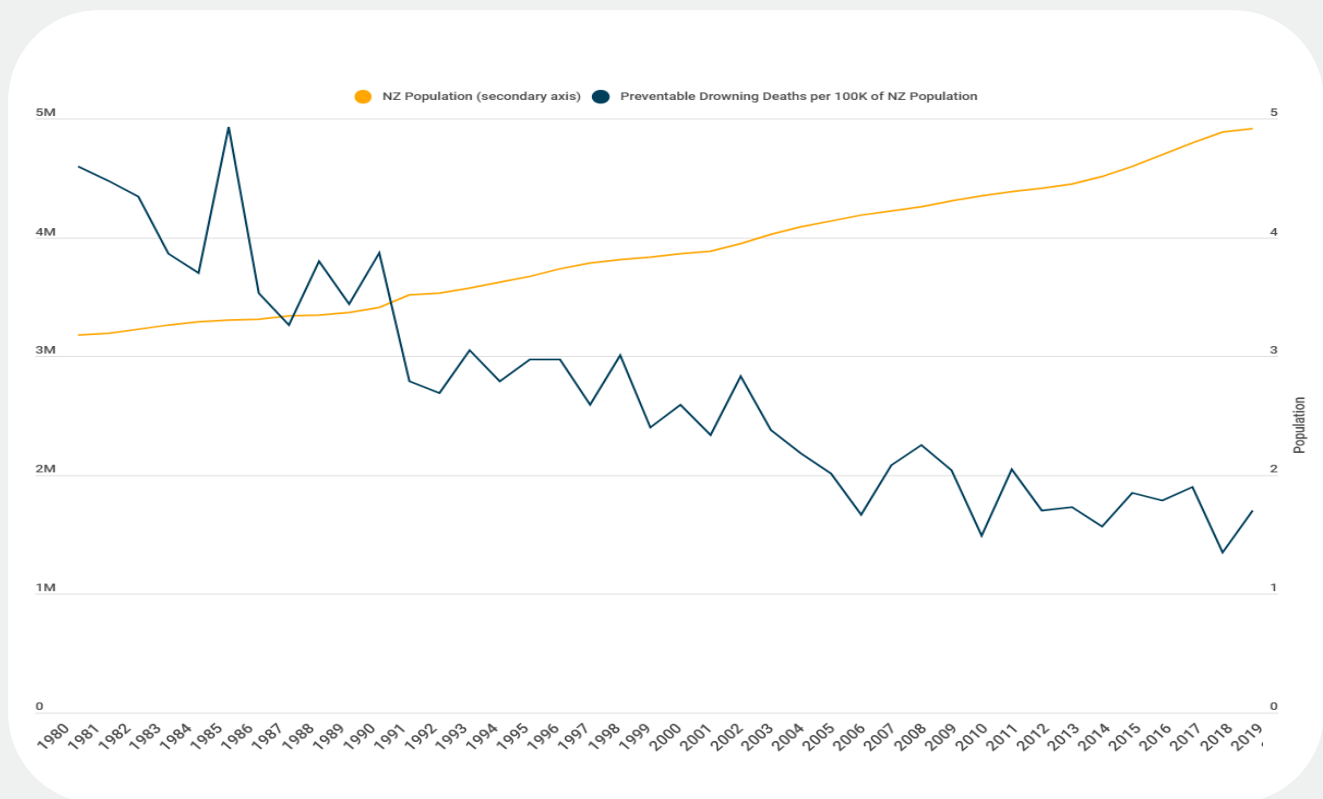
Behind the scenes we analyse the data to look for significant groupings of incidents with similar characteristics that might reveal some underlying cause to the incident.

In 2019 there were 82 recreational (intending to be in the water) and non-recreational (no intention of being in the water) preventable drowning fatalities. This annual drowning report provides statistics and insights based on the 82 incidents in 2019.

2019 saw an increase of 16, or 24 percent, compared to the 66 preventable drowning fatalities in 2018. The 2019 total is more than the 2014 – 2018 Five Year Average of 79 and less than the 2017 total of 91

1980 - 2019 Overview





Key Findings



In 2019, Preventable Drowning Fatalities at Beaches saw a 50% increase on the 2013-2017 average of 18, with 27 Fatalities.



With 7 Preventable Drowning Fatalities in the Under 5's Age Group, 2019 had a higher toll than the 2013-2017 average of 5.



The highest risk Regions were the West Coast, Northland and Southland; with 15.3, 8.5, and 5.9 Preventable Drowning Fatalities per 100,000 population respectively.



In 2019 Land Based Fishing saw a 140% increase in Preventable Drowning Fatalities compared to the 2013-2017 average.



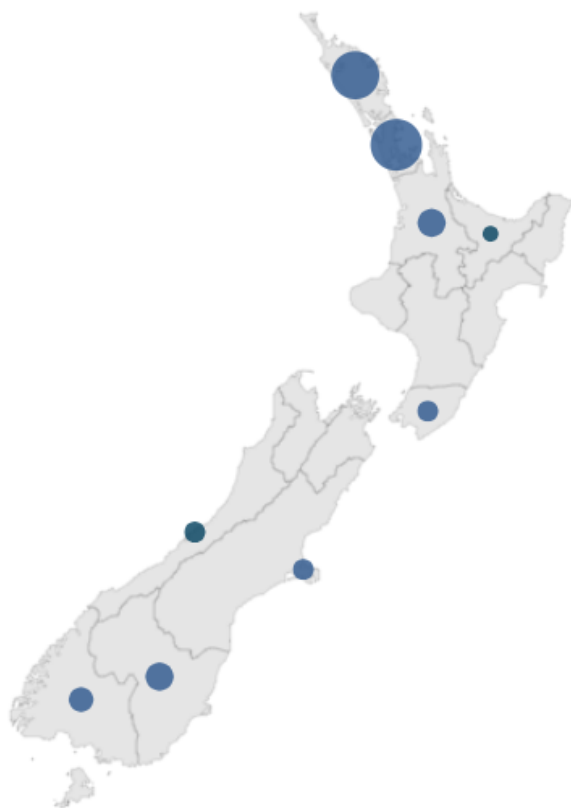
Asian Preventable Drowning Fatalities saw the largest increase across Ethnicity groups, up 40% on the 2013-2017 average.



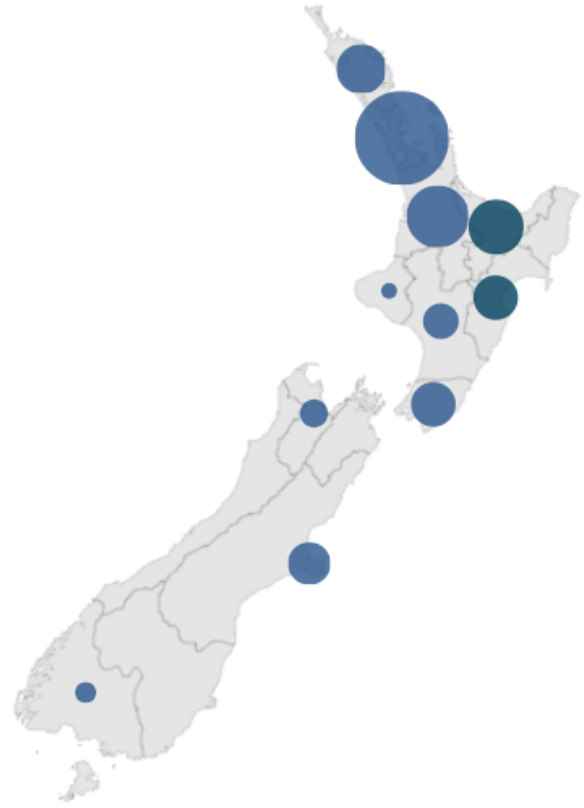
There were 41 Hospitalisations involving Streams in 2019; a large increase compared to the 2013-2017 average of 21.

Regions

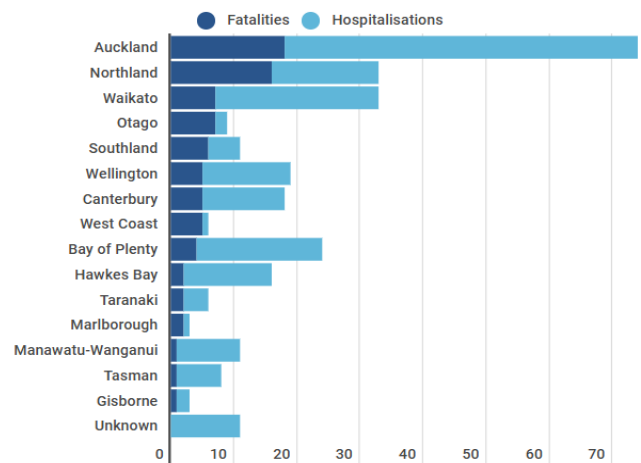
Fatalities



Hospitalisations



	Fatalities	Hospitalisations
Auckland	18	56
Northland	16	17
Waikato	7	26
Otago	7	2
Southland	6	5
Wellington	5	14
Canterbury	5	13
West Coast	5	1
Bay of Plenty	4	20
Hawkes Bay	2	14
Taranaki	2	4
Marlborough	2	1
Manawatu-Wanganui	1	10
Tasman	1	7
Gisborne	1	2
Unknown		11



Findings

Fatalities

Although Auckland saw the highest total Drowning Fatalities with 18, the West Coast saw the highest per capita rate with 15.3 Drowning Fatalities per 100k population in the region.

Northland saw a significant increase in Preventable Drowning Fatalities going from 8 in 2018 to 16 in 2019.

Bay of Plenty dropped over 50%, going from 10 Fatalities in 2018, to 4 in 2019.

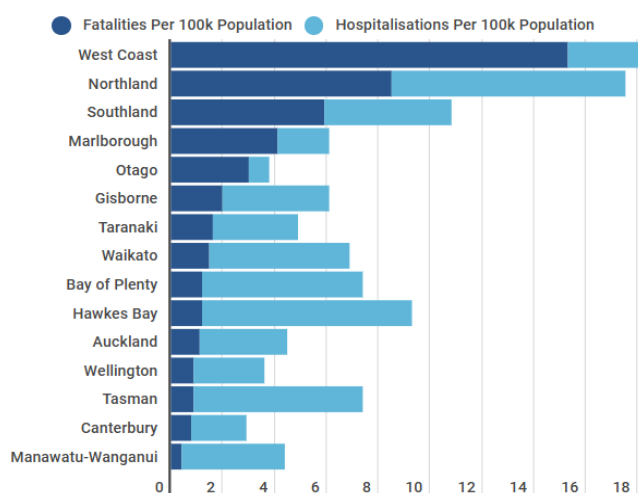
Hospitalisations

Hawke's Bay saw an increase in Drowning Hospitalisations in 2019 with 14. This was above 2018's figure (9) and the 2013-2017 average (6).

Tasman had 7 Hospitalisations in 2019, up from both the 2013-2017 average and the 2018 figure (2).

2019 Regions Per Capita

	Fatalities Per 100k Population	Hospitalisations Per 100k Population	Population
West Coast	15.3	3.1	32,600
Northland	8.5	9.0	188,700
Southland	5.9	4.9	101,200
Marlborough	4.1	2	49,200
Otago	3.0	0.8	236,200
Gisborne	2	4.1	49,300
Taranaki	1.6	3.3	122,700
Waikato	1.5	5.4	482,100
Bay of Plenty	1.2	6.2	324,200
Hawkes Bay	1.2	8.1	173,700
Auckland	1.1	3.4	1,642,800
Wellington	0.9	2.7	527,800
Tasman	0.9	6.5	107,700
Canterbury	0.8	2.1	628,600
Manawatu-Wanganui	0.4	4	249,700



An increase in 3 Preventable Drowning Fatalities in 2019 saw the West Coast maintain the highest drowning rate in the country. The West Coast saw an increase from 6.1 in 2018, to 15.3 Preventable Drowning Fatalities per 100k of it's population in 2019.

Northland have the highest per-capita rate in the country at 9.0 Hospitalisations per 100k of it's population. Second is Hawkes Bay at 8.1 and third is Tasman at 6.5.

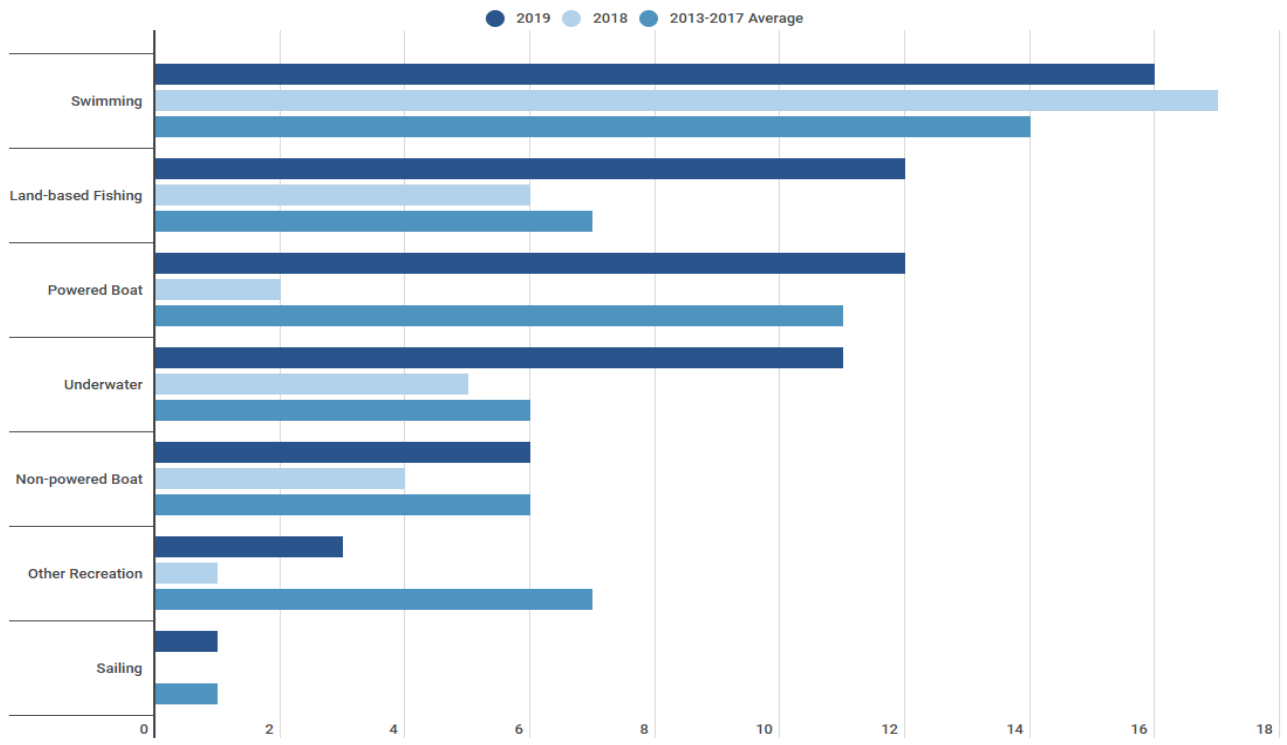
Activity

Fatalities

In 2019 Land based fishing had 12 Preventable Drowning Fatalities, a significant increase on 2018 (6) and the 2013-2017 average (5).

After 2018's low of 2, Powered Boating PDFs regressed back to the 2013-17 average (11) with 12 in 2019.

Underwater activities increased from 5 Preventable Drowning Fatalities in 2018 to 11 in 2019, well above the 2013-2017 average (6).

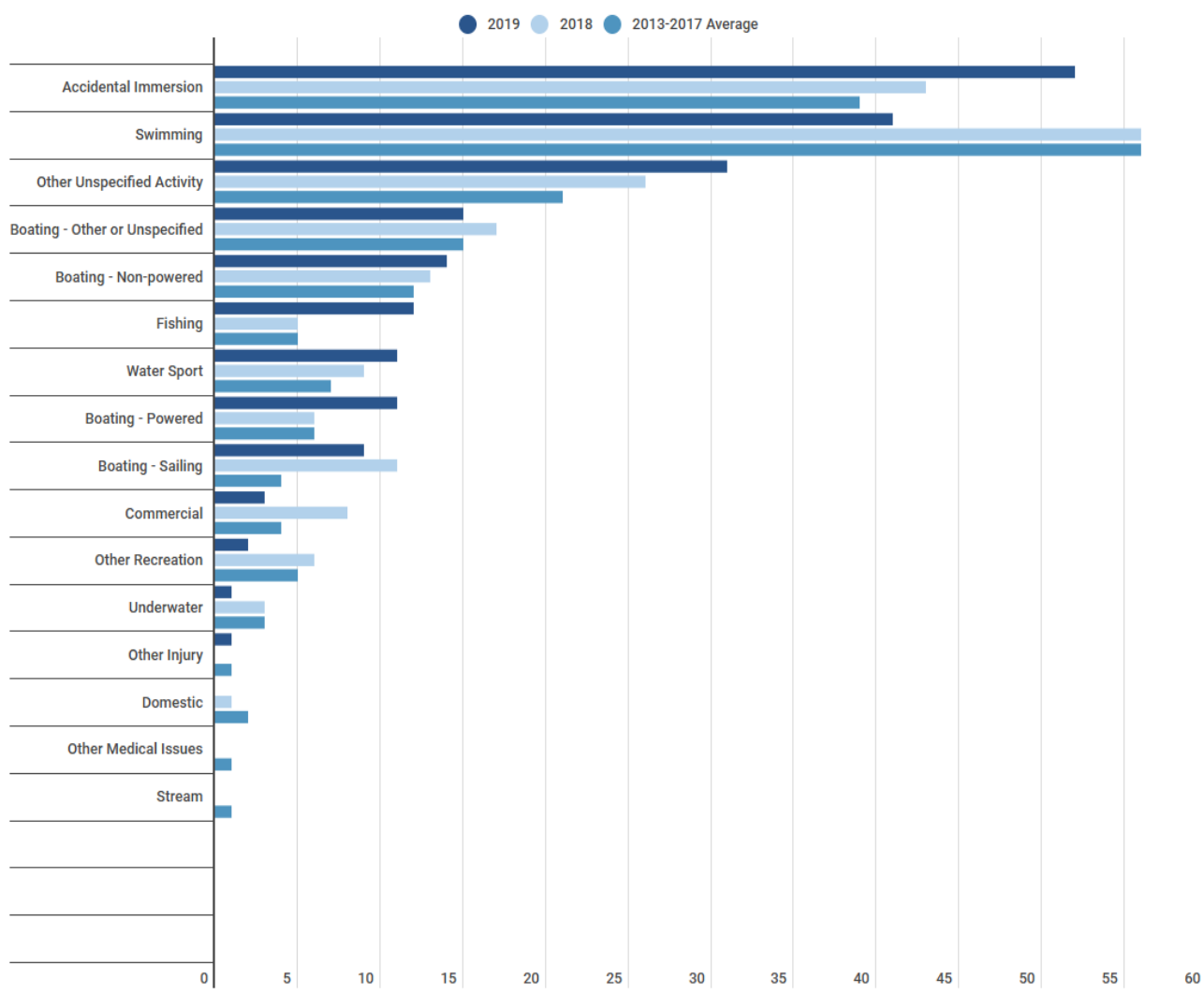


Hospitalisations

There were 52 Accidental Immersion Hospitalisations in 2019, a significant increase on the 2013-2017 average (39).

Powered Boating and Fishing Hospitalisations also saw a significant jump in comparison to their 2013-2017 averages.

Swimming Hospitalisations saw a drop with 41, much lower than the 2013-2017 average and the 2018 figure (56).



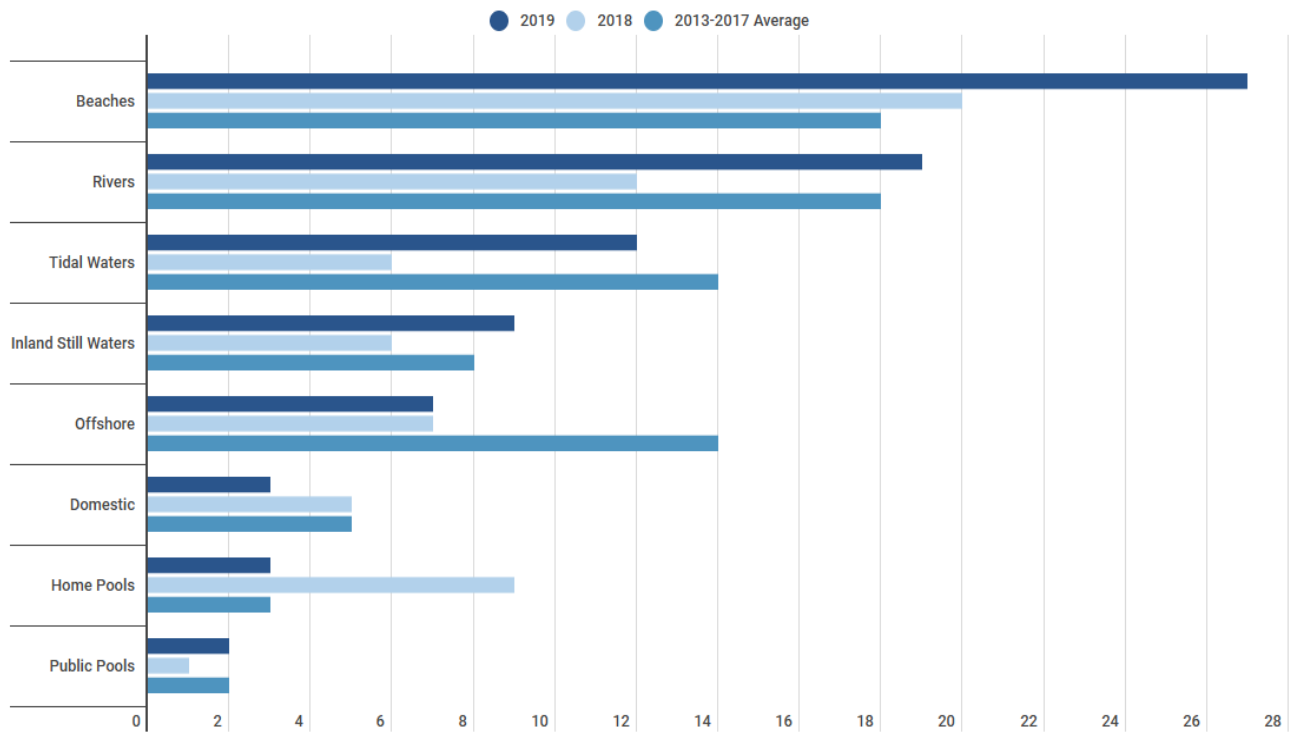
Environment

Fatalities

In 2019 Beaches had 27 Preventable Drowning Fatalities, an increase on 2018 (20) and the 2013-2017 average (18).

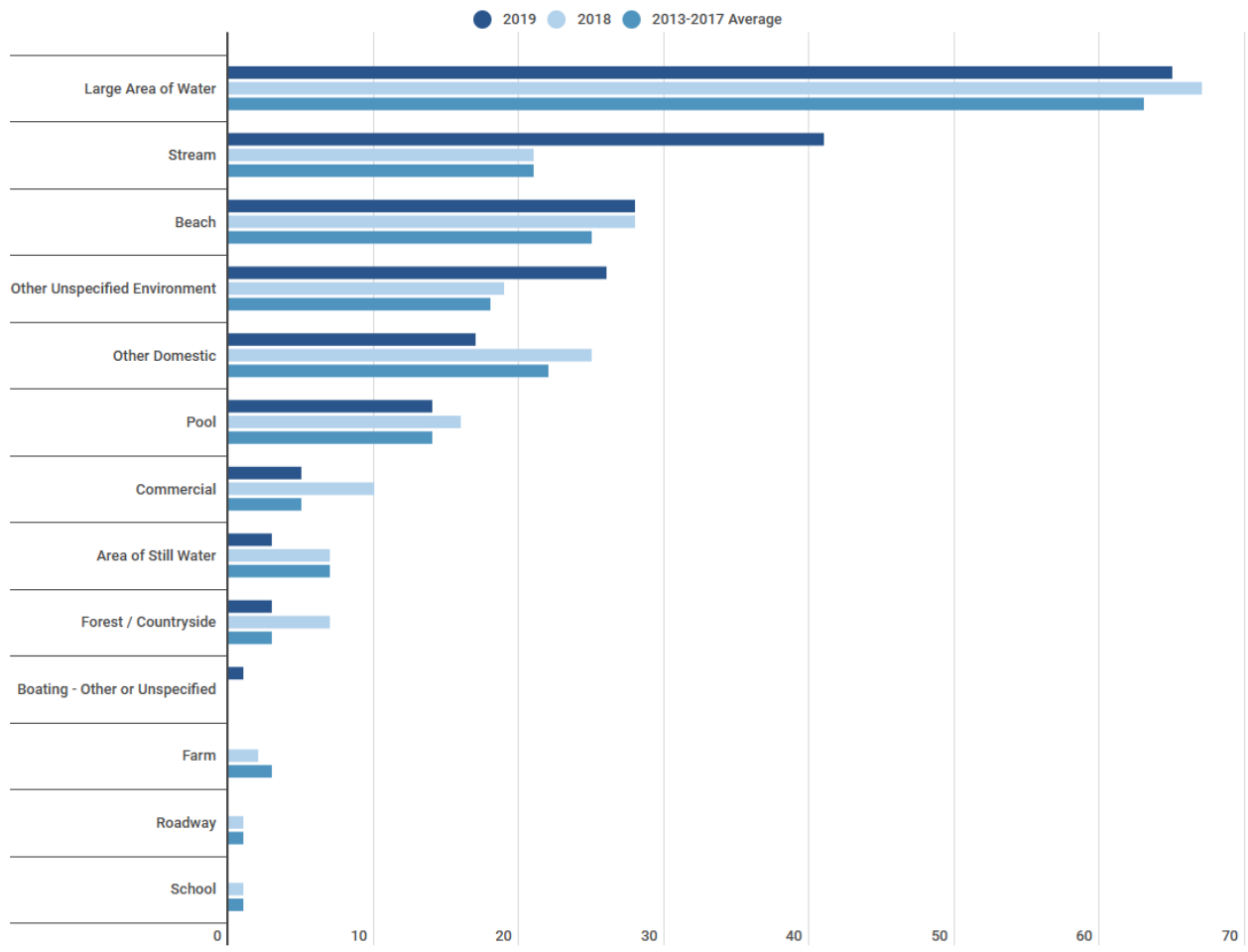
Offshore Fatalities stayed the same, with 7 Preventable Drowning Fatalities in 2018 and 2019. This is an improvement on the 2013-17 average which has double the Preventable Drowning Fatalities (14).

Home Pools had 3 Preventable Drowning Fatalities in 2019, matching the 2013-2017 average. This category did see a decrease compared to the 2018 figure (9).



Hospitalisations

Stream Hospitalisations increased significantly with 41 in 2019, up from 21 in both the 2013-2017 average and the 2018 figure.

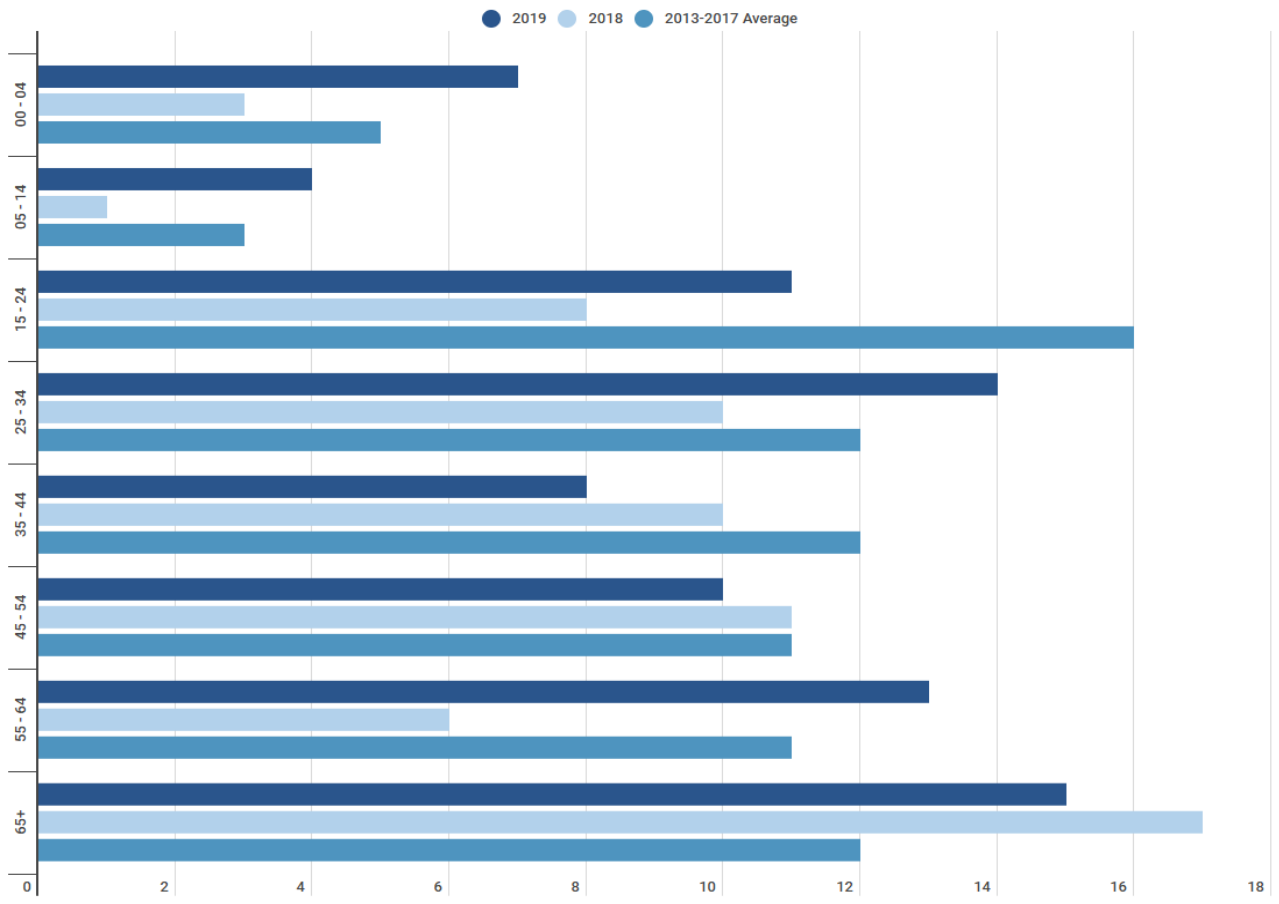


Age

Fatalities

In 2019, Under 5's had 7 Preventable Drowning Fatalities, an increase on 2018 (3), This figure was also an increase on the 2013-2017 average (5).

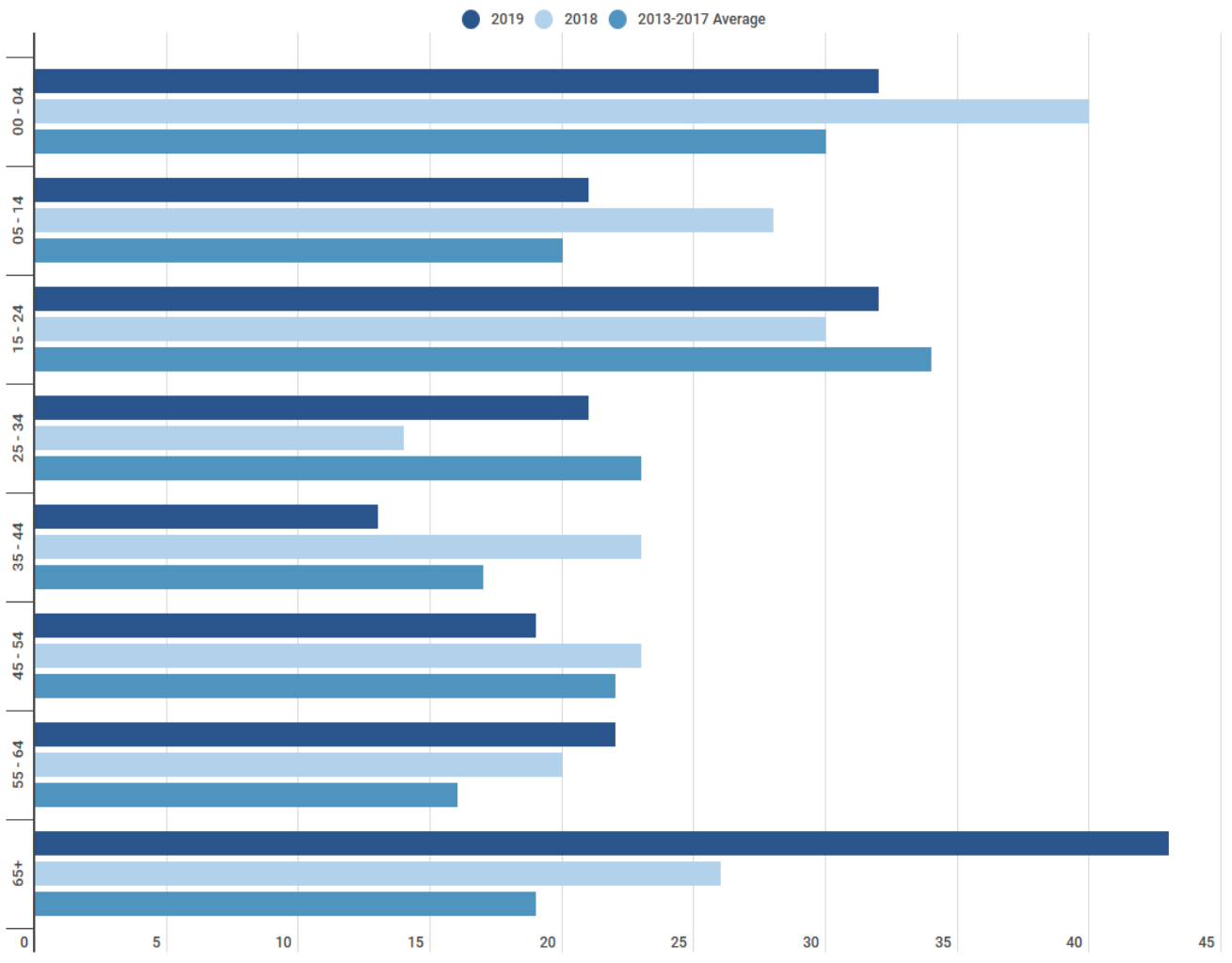
With 11 Preventable Drowning Fatalities in 2019, the 15-24 age group again remains below the 2013-2017 average (16).



Hospitalisations

The 65+ Age Group had 43 Hospitalisations in 2019, a significant increase on the 2013-2017 average (19).

The 55-64 Age Group had 22 Hospitalisations, an increase on the 2013-2017 average (16).

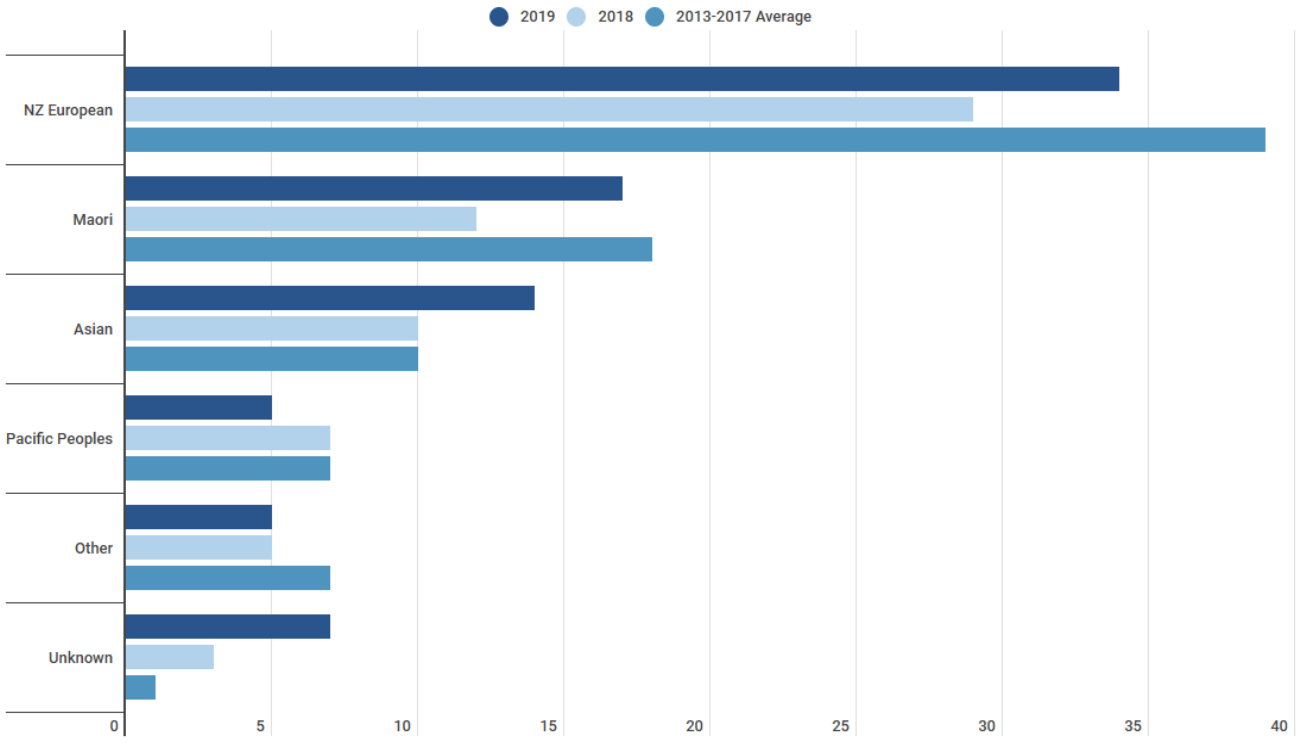


Ethnicity

Fatalities

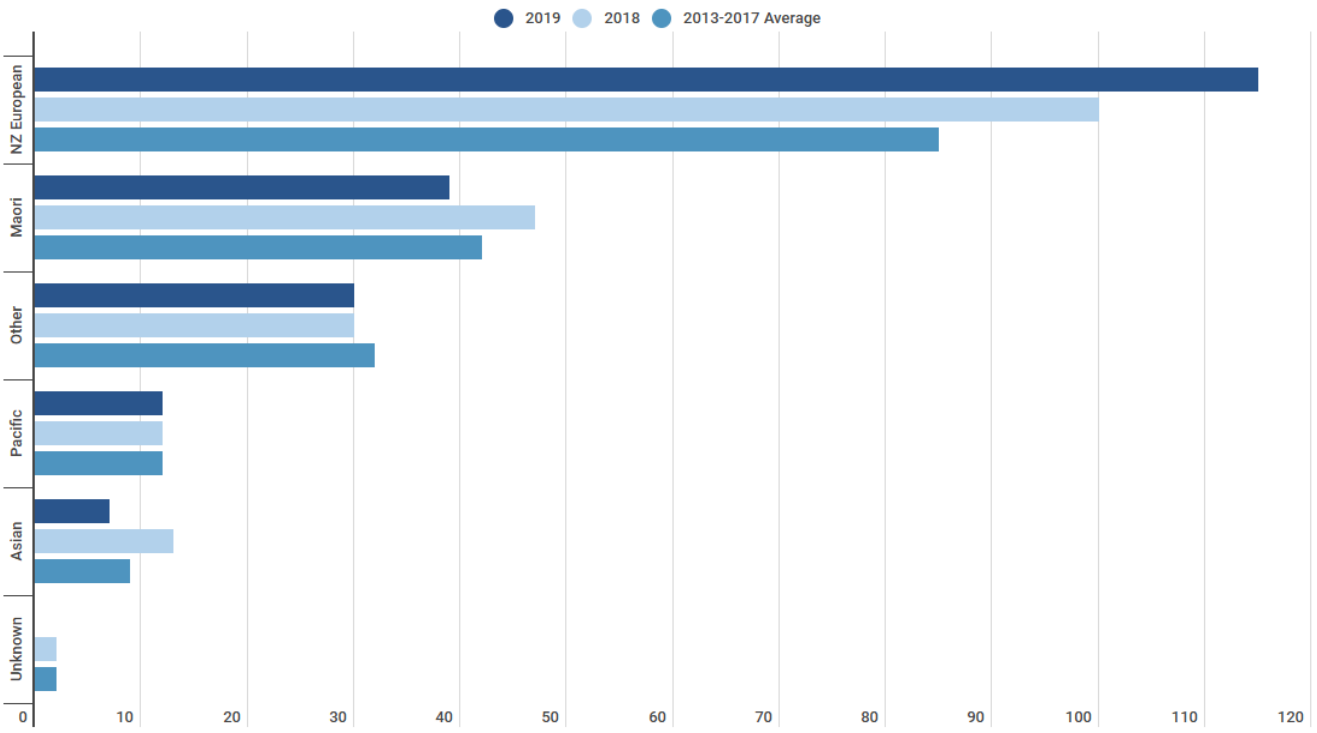
In 2019 there were 14 Asian Preventable Drowning Fatalities, above both the 2018 figure, and the 2013-2017 average (10).

In 2019, Both Maori and NZ European groups saw an increase in Preventable Drowning Fatalities on 2018, but both remain below the 2013-2017 average.



Hospitalisations

In 2019, NZ European was the only Ethnicity to have a significant increase in Hospitalisations with 115, up on the 2013-2017 average of 85.



Gender

Fatalities

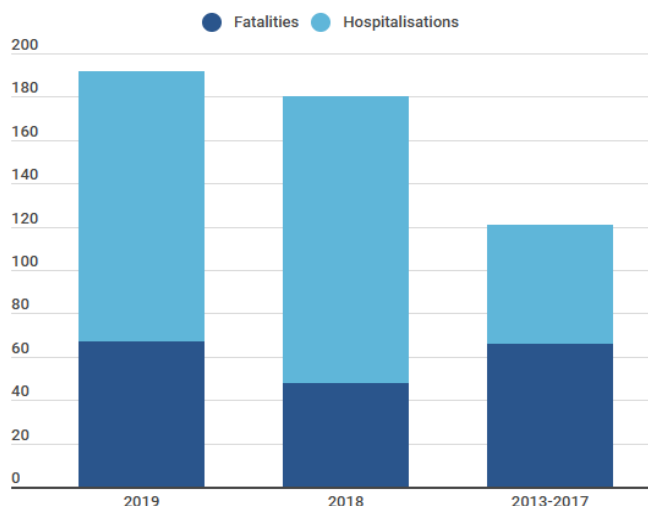
Male Preventable Drowning Fatalities increased from 48 in 2018 to 67 in 2019, sitting close to the 2013-2017 average (66).

There were 15 Female Preventable Drowning Fatalities in 2019, the same as the 2013-2017 average, and an improvement on the 2018 figure (18).

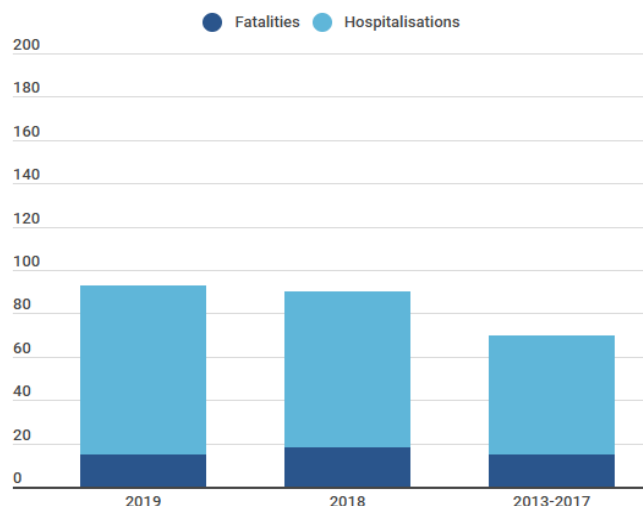
Hospitalisations

There were 78 Female Hospitalisations in 2019, an increase on the 2013-2017 average (55).

Male



Female



Disclaimer

Drowning is defined as “the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid; outcomes are classified as death (fatal) or morbidity (non-fatal)”*.

The Drowning Report uses statistics on Preventable Drownings only. Preventable Drownings are defined as all drowning deaths other than those that result from suicides, homicides and vehicle accidents. *

In this report non-fatal drownings that result in a stay in hospital of 24 hours or longer are classified as ‘Hospitalisations’. Preventable Drownings are classified as “Fatalities”.

*International Life Saving Federation, 2016

More detailed information is available on request or at www.watersafety.org.nz.

Data sourced from Water Safety New Zealand’s DrownBase™ and the figures provided are provisional.

Total Fatalities

Preventable and Non-preventable

Ethnicity	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Asian	14	10	10
Maori	17	12	18
NZ European	34	29	39
Other	5	5	7
Pacific Peoples	5	7	7
Unknown	7	3	1
Total	82	66	82

Activity	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Land-based Fishing	12	6	5
Non-powered Boat	6	4	4
Powered Boat	12	2	11
Sailing	1	0	3
Swimming	16	17	18
Underwater	11	5	6
Other Recreation	3	1	3
Total	61	35	50

Gender	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Female	15	18	15
Male	67	48	66
Total	82	66	82

Age Group	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
00 - 04	7	3	5
05 - 14	4	1	3
15 - 24	11	8	16
25 - 34	14	10	12
35 - 44	8	10	12
45 - 54	10	11	11
55 - 64	13	6	11
65+	15	17	12
Total	82	66	82

Environment	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Beaches	27	20	18
Domestic	3	5	5
Home Pools	3	9	3
Inland Still Waters	9	6	8
Offshore	7	7	14
Public Pools	2	1	2
Rivers	19	12	18
Tidal Waters	12	6	14
Total	82	66	81.6

Total Hospitalisations

Ethnicity	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Asian	7	13	9
Maori	39	47	42
NZ European	115	100	85
Other	30	30	32
Pacific Peoples	12	12	12
Unknown	0	2	2
Total	203	204	181.4

Activity	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Accidental Immersion	52	43	39
Boating - Non-powered	14	13	12
Boating - Other or Unspecified	15	17	15
Boating - Powered	11	6	6
Boating - Sailing	9	11	4
Commercial	3	8	4
Domestic	0	1	2
Fishing	12	5	5
Other Injury	1	0	1
Other Medical Issues	0	0	1
Other Recreation	2	6	5
Other Unspecified Activity	31	26	21
Road Transport	0	0	0
Pool	0	0	0
Stream	0	0	1
Swimming	41	56	56
Transport	0	0	0
Underwater	1	3	3
Water Sport	11	9	7
Total	203	204	181.4

Gender	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Female	78	72	55
Male	125	132	126
Total	203	204	181

Age Group	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
00 - 04	32	40	30
05 - 14	21	28	20
15 - 24	32	30	34
25 - 34	21	14	23
35 - 44	13	23	17
45 - 54	19	23	22
55 - 64	22	20	16
65+	43	26	19
Total	203	204	181

Environment	2019	2018	2013-2017 Average
Area of Still Water	3	7	7
Beach	28	28	25
Boating - Other or Unspecified	1	10	
Commercial	5	2	5
Farm	0	7	3
Forest / Countryside	3	67	3
Large Area of Water	65	25	63
Other Domestic	17	19	22
Other Unspecified Environment	26	16	18
Pool	14	1	14
Roadway	0	1	1
School	0	0	1
Sports & athletics area	0		0
Stream	41	21	21
Total	203	204	181.4



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