

# Male 55+

In 2021, Māori, Asian and NZ European drowning deaths of males aged 55+ were the highest numbers on record.

The current 55+ males cohort is one that appears to be risk takers (shown through drowning fatality numbers) throughout their adult lives.

The proportion of incidents over time for the males 55+ has also increased, possibly indicating that boomers remain more active in their older years than earlier generations.

Older males fatalities and incidents occur largely when boating. It is more likely to be powered boating than sail, oar or paddlecraft. The people involved are more likely to be NZ European and live in the upper North Island.

In the majority of boating fatalities, the boat sank or capsized, or the person fell overboard and could not get back on board. Many incidents were also the person involuntarily entering the water but also included injuries on board the boat.

It is not particularly an alcohol problem, it is a lifejacket problem. 77% of 55+ boating fatalities were not wearing a lifejacket correctly.

# Rivers

There are a high number of river incidents during the summer and Waitangi Day is the day of the year that the most incidents occurs.

River deaths and incidents are widely spread throughout New Zealand. They mostly occur when people have gone to the river for recreation – entering the water deliberately or moving near the river with insufficient caution and falling in.

Swimming in rivers is the most common activity.

River fatalities are commonly 15-34 years of age, but incidents show a large amount between 9-14 years (there is a big peak at 14).

One quarter of New Zealanders swam in a river in the past year.

New Zealanders (on average) believe rivers to be less dangerous than the coast. 25% of young New Zealanders think that rivers are “not very hazardous” or “not at all hazardous”.

This indicates a need for New Zealanders to be educated around safe swimming and recreating around rivers.

# Kai Gathering

The top kai gathering activities are:

- Fishing from a boat
- Angling from land
- Diving to take kai moana

Fishing from a boat – is typically an older male, fishing in the sea from a powered boat, often off the upper North Island. Commonly, either the boat sinks, the boat capsizes or the person falls into the water.

Angling from land - usually male, often Asian, average age 45, and often living in Auckland or the Waikato. Typically they are at the beach (salt water), fishing from rocks, often as part of a group. Then they are swept away by a wave or fall off a rock into the water, cannot get back to land, and drown. Often they are not competent swimmers. Almost inevitably they do not have a life jacket.

Diving to take kai moana - usually are Māori, always male, with an average age about 40. Can be anywhere around the coast of NZ. Typically they are free diving or snorkelling (SCUBA is relatively uncommon).