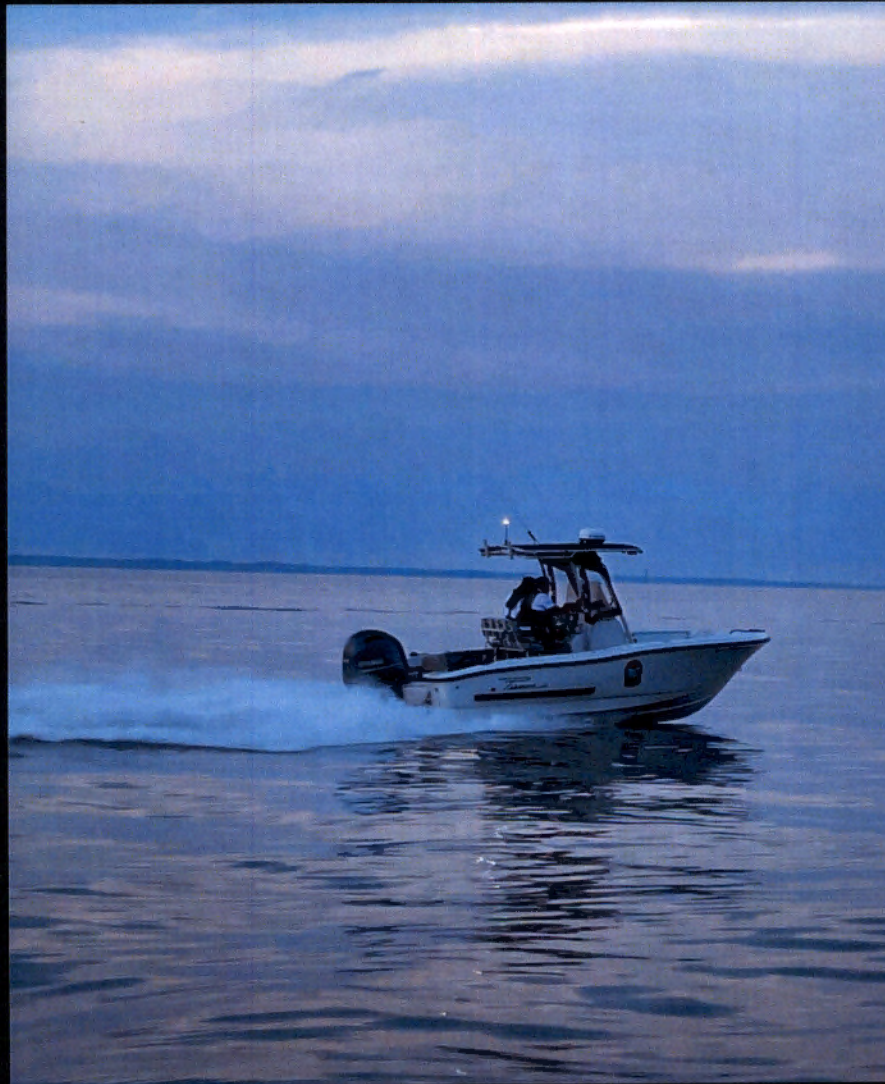
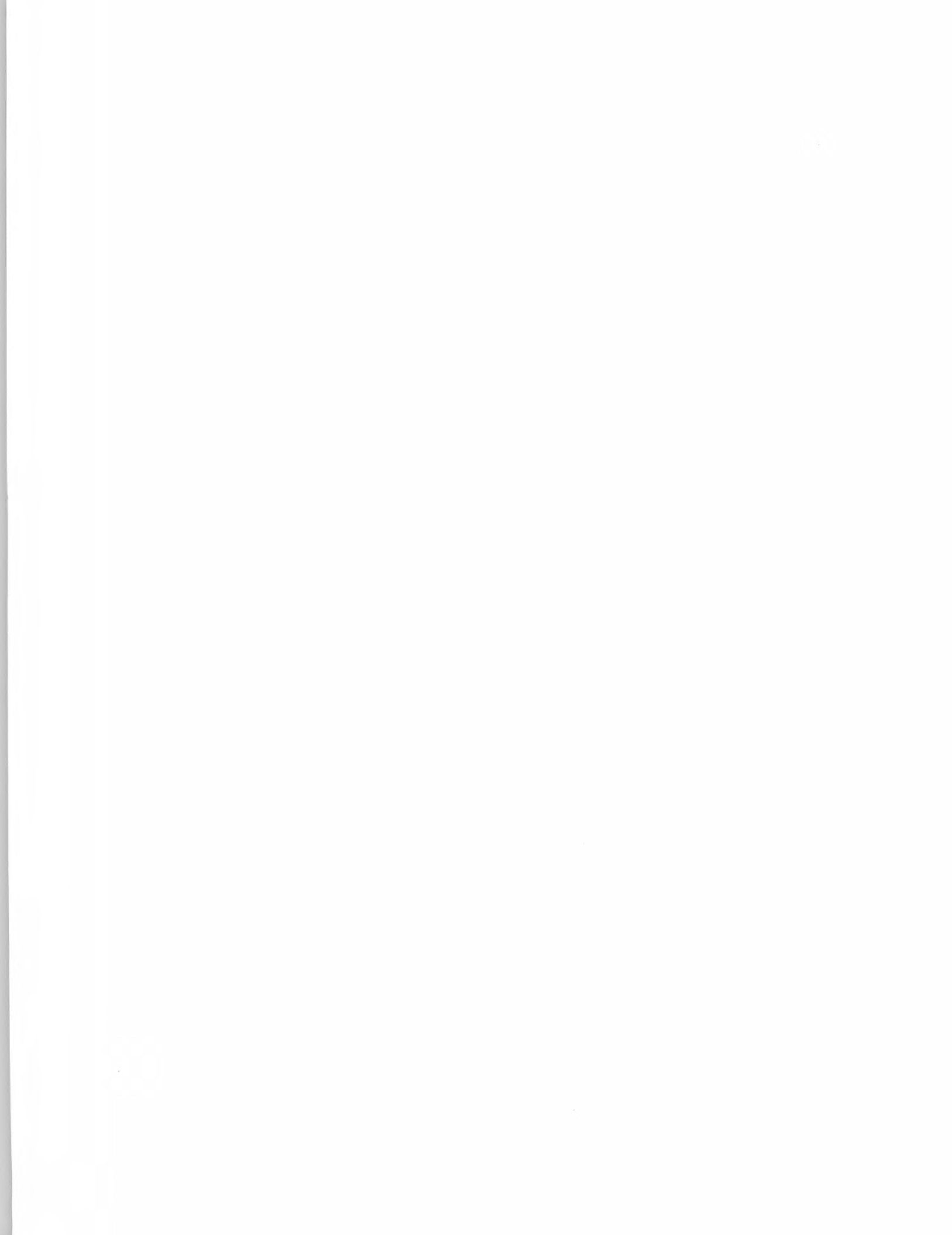


South Carolina  
Department of Natural  
Resources Law Enforcement  
Investigations Statistics  
2023  
[www.dnr.sc.gov](http://www.dnr.sc.gov)





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## INTRODUCTION

The State of South Carolina has an abundance of water resources with 8,000 miles of rivers, 460,000 acres of lakes, and 3,000 miles of coastline. Whether it's fishing, water-skiing, hunting or pleasure boating, these resources are used every day by thousands of recreational boaters. Currently there are 368,333 recreational motorboats and personal watercraft registered in South Carolina with thousands of new boats registered every year.

In 1973 there were sixty-four fatalities as a result of recreational boating accidents. That same year there were only 128,000 boats registered in this state. An increase in law enforcement personnel, additional laws like the Boating Safety Act of 1996, Drew's Law, and concentrated boating education classes statewide have all combined in an effort to reduce the number of accidents and fatalities.

The information found in this report is useful in our Boating Safety Education program as a reference for stressing facts relating to careless boat operation. This information helps to impress upon each student the importance of safe boating and shows that accidents do in fact happen.

This report is published by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Investigations Section. Copies are made available to SCDNR, the news media and concerned individuals whose efforts will make boating not only safe, but enjoyable.

## **ACCIDENT REPORTING**

When a person operating a boat on the waters of South Carolina is involved in a reportable accident, they are required to notify the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Accidents involving injury or loss of life must be reported within 48 hours; accidents in all other cases are required to be reported within 10 days. Any person violating these requirements is liable to a penalty for each violation.

Any of the following constitutes a reportable boating accident:

- A. Loss of life.
- B. Injuries incapacitating a person for more than 24 hours.
- C. Injuries that render a person unconscious.
- D. Injuries that require medical treatment.
- E. Physical damage to boats or real property in excess of \$2,000.00.

All boating accident reports are forwarded to the Law Enforcement Investigations Section where they are reviewed by designated personnel for completeness and accuracy. Reports that are incomplete or lack pertinent information are returned with an explanation of what additional information is needed. The primary and secondary causes of the accident are determined by the information given in the report. Copies of all "reportable accident" reports are forwarded to the United States Coast Guard.

## THE PAST TEN YEARS

Year	Recreational Boating Accidents	Recreational Boating Fatalities	
2023	176	23	3*
2022	170	22	2*
2021	201	21	0*
2020	161	29	3*
2019	146	14	1*
2018	142	15	0*
2017	163	15	0*
2016	140	23	7*
2015	131	19	4*
2014	127	15	1*

2014 - 485,253 Registered Motorboats

2023 - 368,333 Registered Motorboats

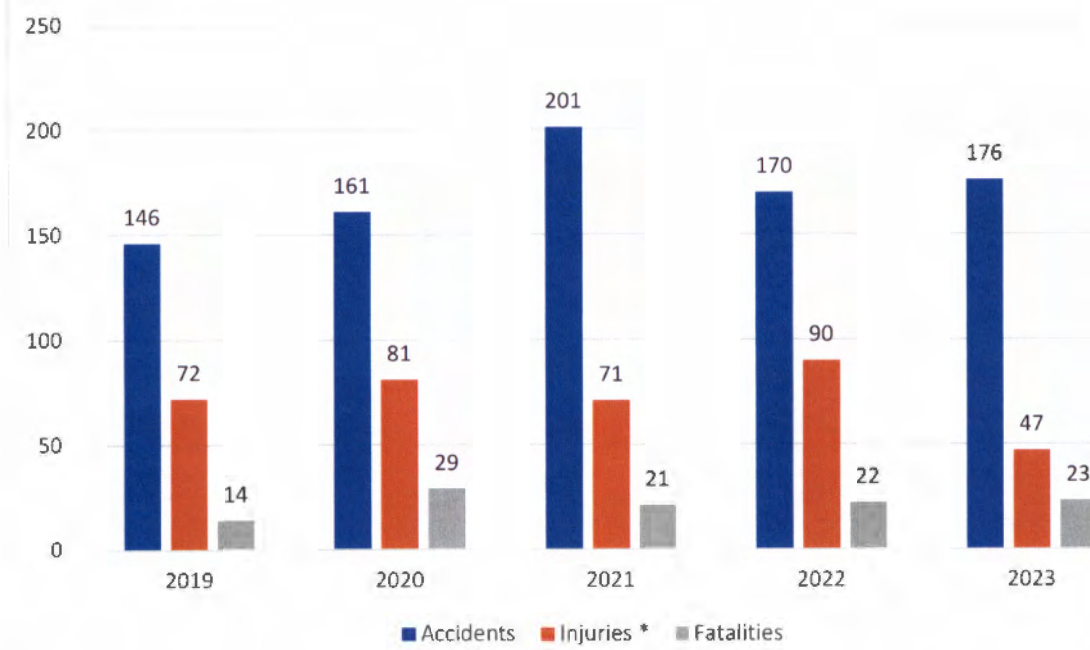
Lakes - 460,000 Acres

Rivers - 8,000 Miles

Coastline - 3,000 Miles

**\* Represents the number of private pond fatalities that are included in the total. Boating safety regulations are not enforced on private ponds.**

## FIVE YEAR HISTORY



\* Depicts the number of accidents with injuries.

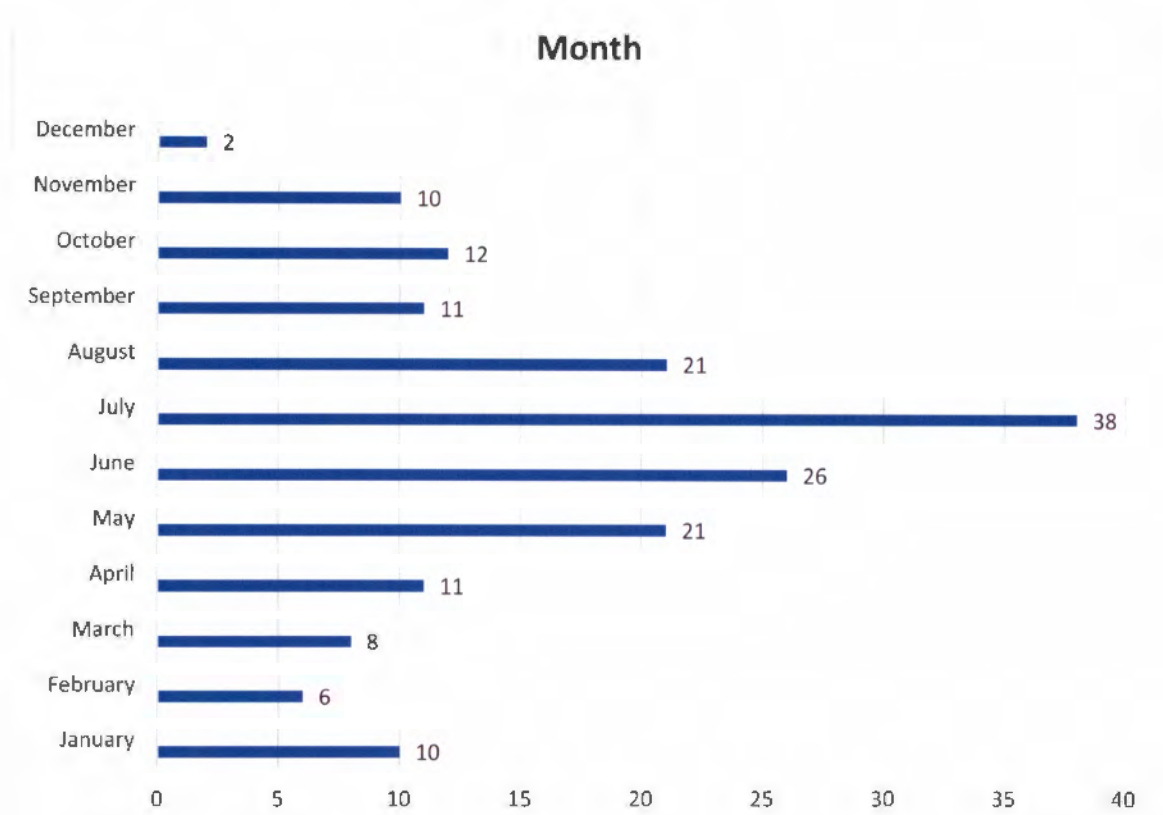
## 2023 BOATING STATISTICS BY COUNTY

<b>County</b>	<b>Boats</b>	<b>PWC</b>	<b>Accidents</b>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>
Abbeville	2,594	235	1	0	1
Aiken	9,724	954	1	2	0
Allendale	367	8	1	2	0
Anderson	15,031	2,500	5	4	1
Bamberg	964	24	1	0	0
Barnwell	1,987	85	0	0	0
Beaufort	13,031	1,045	17	5	1
Berkeley	16,183	1,484	8	2	3
Calhoun	2,250	105	0	0	0
Charleston	29,867	1,887	33	13	1
Cherokee	2,628	213	0	0	0
Chester	1,947	112	0	0	0
Chesterfield	2,206	145	0	0	0
Clarendon	4,995	426	3	2	0
Colleton	4,538	218	11	6	0
Darlington	4,773	220	1	0	0
Dillon	1,924	112	0	0	0
Dorchester	8,548	760	0	0	0
Edgefield	2,095	176	0	0	0
Fairfield	2,052	298	0	0	0
Florence	11,035	606	4	1	2
Georgetown	9,192	499	13	4	3
Greenville	16,774	2,690	1	0	0
Greenwood	4,767	736	0	0	0
Hampton	1,425	52	1	2	0
Horry	22,253	3,292	21	10	3
Jasper	1,531	87	1	1	0
Kershaw	5,593	666	2	0	1
Lancaster	3,251	408	1	0	0
Laurens	5,814	704	3	0	0
Lee	934	36	0	0	0
Lexington	25,448	4,041	5	0	1
Marion	2,596	126	0	0	0
Marlboro	1,084	68	0	0	0
McCormick	1,545	202	4	1	1

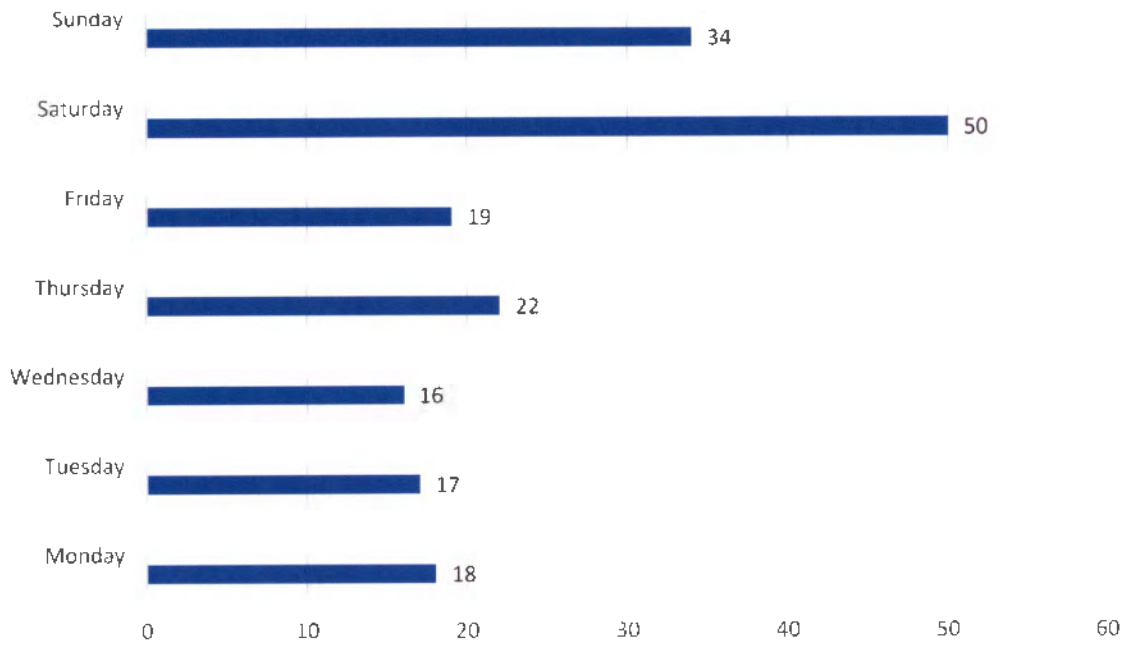
Newberry	5,077	651	3	0	0
Oconee	11,069	2,692	12	2	2
Orangeburg	5,784	291	3	4	1
Pickens	8,160	1,244	3	0	0
Richland	11,795	1,484	4	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Saluda	2,635	396	1	0	0
Spartanburg	13,893	1,941	2	0	1
Sumter	6,823	363	2	0	1
Union	1,589	110	0	0	0
Williamsburg	3,161	86	0	0	0
York	10,941	2,182	8	3	0
Unknown	6,105	1,684	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>327,978</b>	<b>38,344</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>65*</b>	<b>23</b>

\* The number of persons injured.

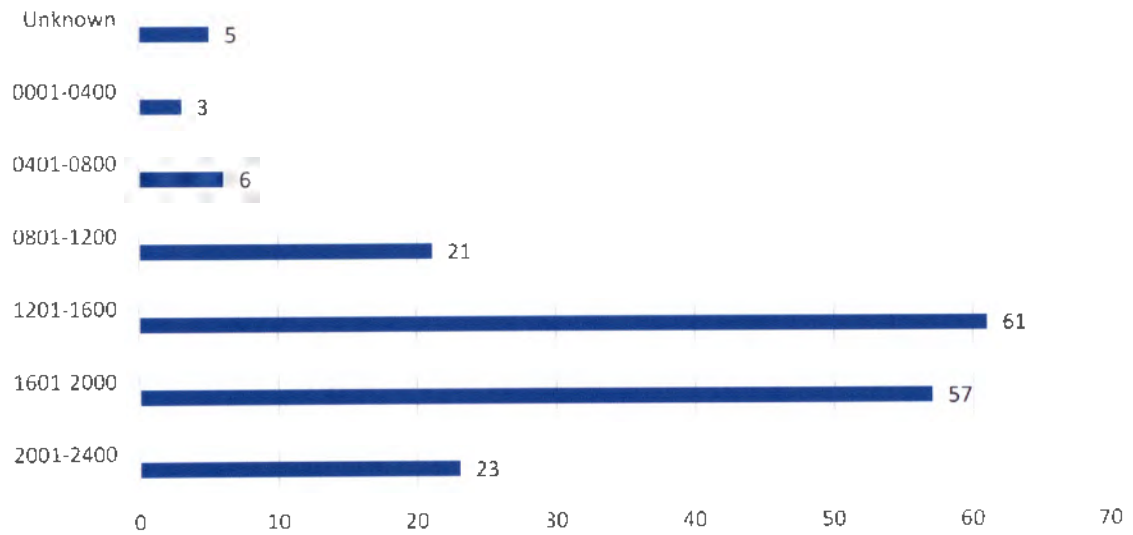
## Month, Day of the Week, Time of Day Accidents Occurred in 2023



### Day



### Time



### Statistics by Accident Type

Accident Type	# Deceased	# Injured	# Vessels
Capsizing	1	1	10
Grounding	0	9	11
Swamping	2	3	17
Sinking	1	0	10
Starting Engine	0	0	2
Struck Submerged Object	0	3	7
Other	1	0	1
Other – Motor Fell Off	0	0	1
Other – Sudden Stop	0	1	1
Collision w/Fixed Object	3	8	41
Collision w/Floating Object	0	5	8
Collision w/Vessel	2	12	100
Fall in Boat	0	0	0
Fall Overboard	7	5	13
Fire/Explosion	0	1	7
Towed Watersport Mishap	0	4	6
Struck by Prop	0	4	4
Hit and Run	0	0	0
Sudden Medical Condition	2	0	2
Person Ejected from Vessel	2	3	4
Person Impacts Vessel	0	4	2
Unknown	2	2	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>250</b>

## Primary Causes of Accidents

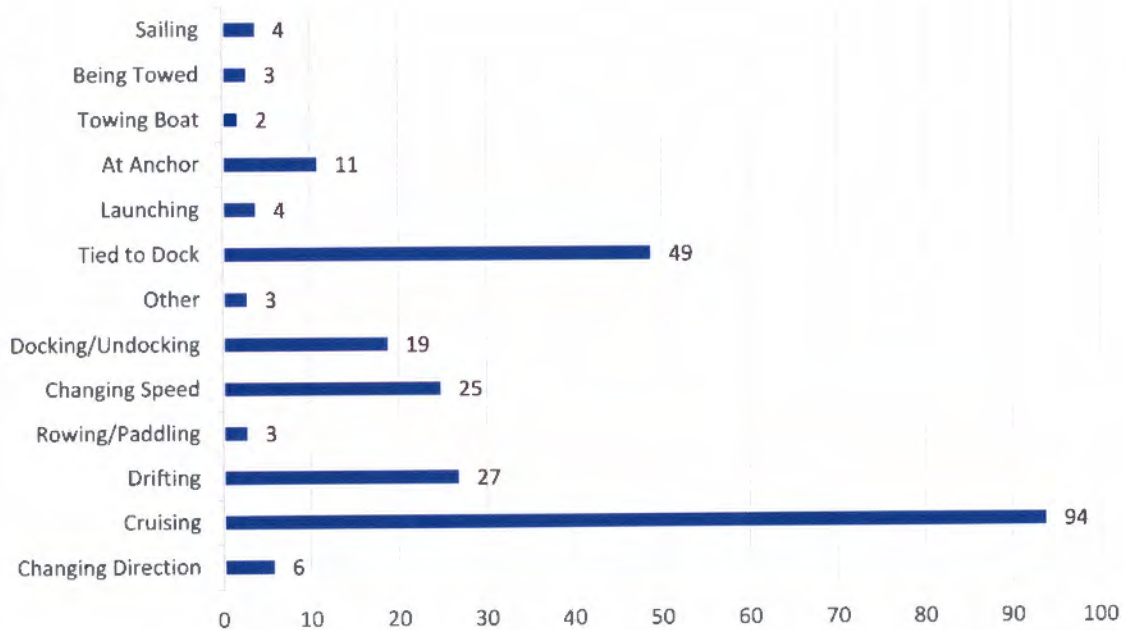
<b>Accident Cause</b>	<b>Accidents</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Vessels Involved</b>
Alcohol Use	9	4	3	12
Careless/Reckless	3	0	2	4
Congested Water	1	0	0	2
Excessive Speed	12	0	5	18
Fault of Equipment	6	0	4	10
Fault of Hull	6	0	0	6
Fault of Machinery	11	0	2	15
Hazardous Water	11	3	2	13
Ignition of Fuel/Vapor	2	0	1	2
Improper Anchoring	1	0	0	2
Improper Lights	1	0	0	2
Improper Loading	2	0	3	2
Nav Aid Not Performing	1	0	0	2
Nav Rules Violation	3	2	1	6
No Proper Lookout	17	0	7	24
Operator Inattention	27	2	21	43
Operator Inexperience	20	2	5	33
Other	2	0	1	2
Overloading	6	1	3	6
Passenger/Skier Behavior	2	0	2	2
Restricted Vision	2	0	1	3
Sharp Turn	0	0	0	0
Wake	3	0	0	7
Weather	19	2	1	25
Unknown	9	7	1	9
<b>Total:</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>250</b>

\*Number of persons with injuries.

## 2023 Statistics by Operation

Vessel Operation	# Fatalities	# Injured	# Vessels
Changing Speed	0	8	25
Docking/Undocking	1	0	19
Tied to Dock/Moored	0	3	49
Changing Direction	1	2	6
Cruising	10	25	94
Drifting	9	3	27
At Anchor	0	2	11
Rowing/Paddling	1	1	3
Launching	0	1	4
Towing a Boat	0	0	2
Being Towed	0	0	3
Sailing	0	1	4
Other/Misc	1	1	3
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>250</b>

## Vessels Operation at Time of Accident

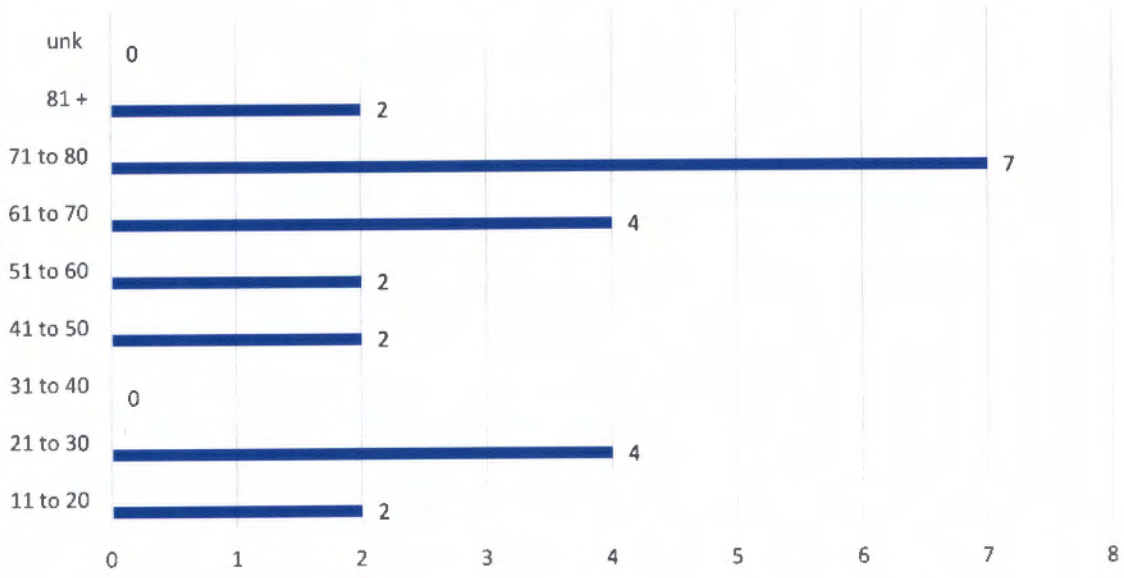


## Statistics by Body of Water

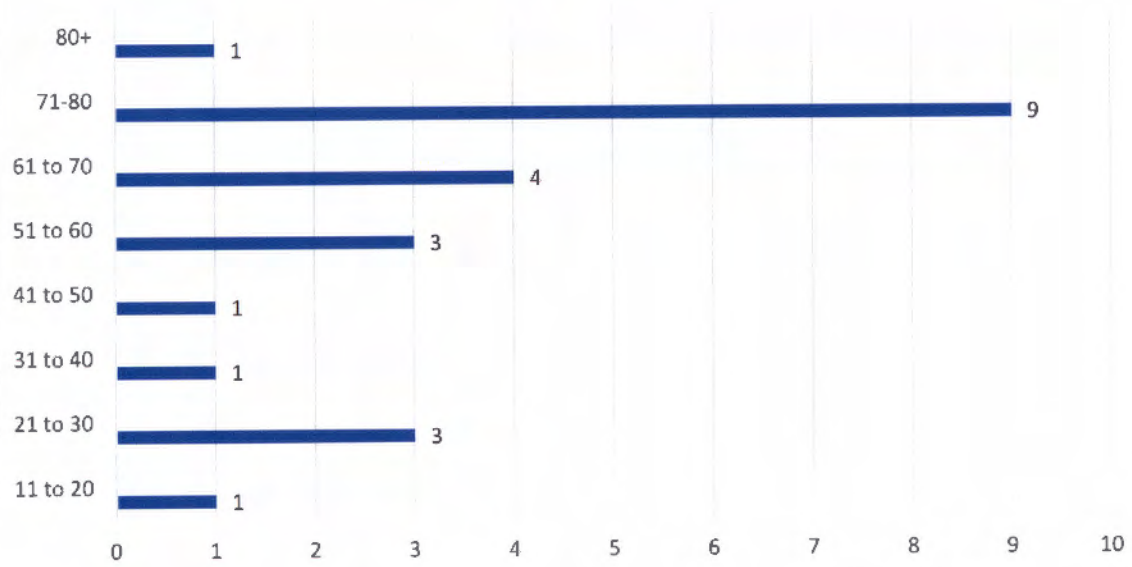
<b>Body of Water</b>	<b>Accidents</b>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>Vessels Involved</b>
Abbapoola Creek	1	1	0	1
Ashepoo River	3	5	0	3
Ashley River	4	0	0	8
Atlantic Ocean	6	3	2	6
Beaufort River	2	0	0	6
Big Bay Creek	2	0	0	2
Big Pee Dee River	3	1	0	3
Black River	2	1	1	2
Bohicket Creek	1	0	0	2
Broad River	1	0	0	1
Calibogue Sound	2	2	0	3
Charleston Harbor	8	1	0	11
Clarks Hill Lake	1	0	1	1
Combahee River	1	0	0	1
Cooper River	9	3	0	16
Edisto River	5	1	0	6
Factory Creek	1	0	0	1
Folly River	1	1	0	1
Great Pee Dee River	3	2	1	4
Harbor River	1	1	0	1
Huspa Creek	1	1	0	1
ICW – Isle of Palms	1	0	0	2
ICW – Little River	5	0	1	8
ICW – Mt Pleasant	1	1	0	1
ICW – Myrtle Beach	8	1	1	14
ICW – Waccamaw	1	0	0	2
Lake Bowen	1	0	0	2
Lake Greenwood	3	0	0	4
Lake Hartwell	9	4	2	11
Lake Jocassee	2	0	1	3
Lake Keowee	9	2	0	13
Lake Lyman	1	0	1	1
Lake Marion	5	6	0	5
Lake Moultrie	6	1	3	8
Lake Murray	11	1	1	15
Lake Robinson	1	0	0	1
Lake Secession	1	0	1	1
Lake Thurmond	3	1	0	4
Lake Wateree	1	0	0	1
Lake Wylie	8	3	0	13
Little Pee Dee River	4	4	0	5
Lynches River	1	0	1	1
Mackay Creek	1	0	0	1
Murrells Inlet	1	0	0	2

<b>Body of Water</b>	<b>Accidents</b>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>Vessels Involved</b>
Pee Dee River	1	0	0	3
Private Pond	1	0	0	3
Ralston Creek	1	1	0	2
Saluda River	1	0	0	1
Sampit River	1	0	0	2
Savannah River	3	6	0	3
Scott Creek	1	0	0	1
Skull Creek	1	0	0	3
Sol Legare Creek	1	0	0	1
Stono River	4	4	0	7
Town Creek	1	0	1	5
Waccamaw River	3	3	0	5
Wallace Creek	1	1	0	1
Wando River	4	1	1	5
Wappoo Creek	2	2	0	2
Wateree River	4	0	1	6
Winyah Bay	1	0	0	2
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>250</b>

### Fatalities By Age of Operator

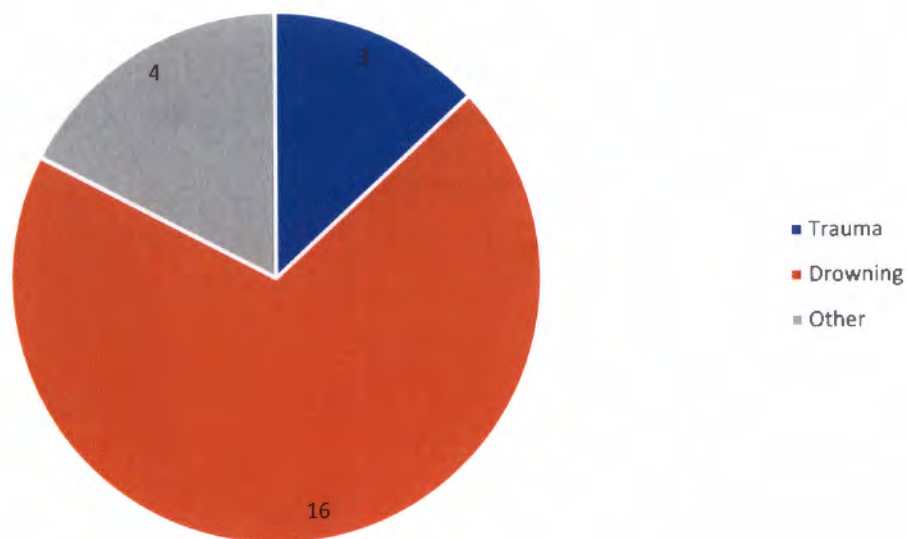


### Age of Deceased



## Statistics by Accident Type

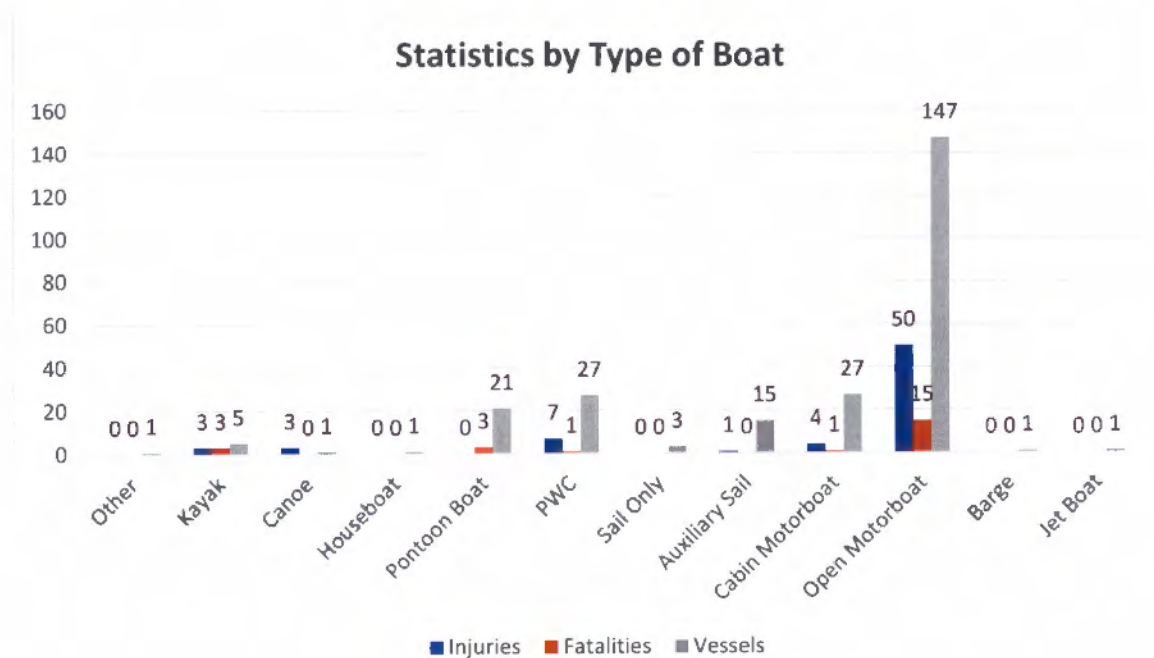
Type of Accident	Cause of Death	# Fatalities
Person Falls Overboard	Drowning	6
Person Falls Overboard	Acute Myocardial Infarction	1
Capsizing	Drowning	1
Collision With Fixed Object	Drowning	2
Collision With Fixed Object	Trauma	1
Sudden Medical Condition	Drowning	1
Sudden Medical Condition	Major Cardiac Event	1
Person Ejected From Vessel	Natural Causes	1
Person Ejected From Vessel	Drowning	1
Swamping	Drowning	2
Collision With Recreational Vessel	Trauma	1
Collision With Vessel	Trauma	1
Sinking	Missing	1
Other	Drowning	1
Unknown	Drowning	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>



## Statistics by Type of Boat

Boat Type	# Injuries	# Fatalities	# Vessels
Open Motorboat	50	15	147
Cabin Motorboat	4	1	27
Auxiliary Sail	1	0	15
Sail Only	0	0	3
PWC	7	1	27
Pontoon Boat	0	3	21
Houseboat	0	0	1
Jet Boat	0	0	1
Kayak	3	3	5
Barge	0	0	1
Canoe	3	0	1
Other	0	0	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>250</b>

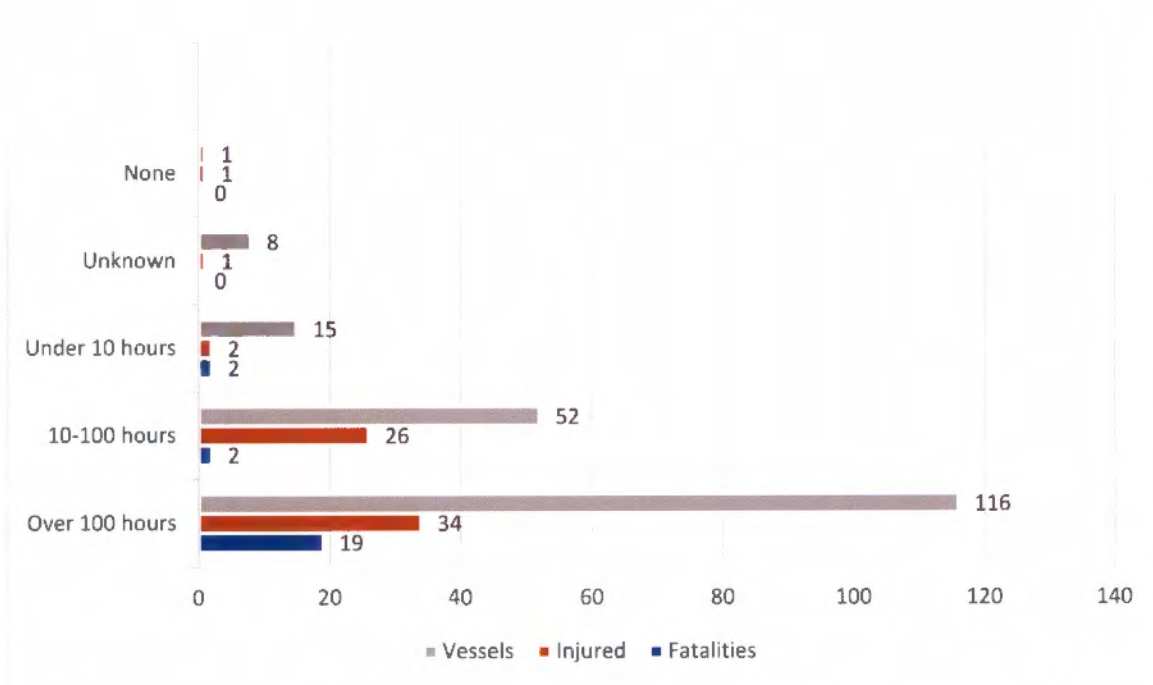
\*Number of vessels involved where injuries occurred.



## Statistics by Operator Experience

Operator Experience	# Fatalities	# Injured	# Vessels
Over 100 hours	19	34	116
10-100 hours	2	26	52
Under 10 hours	2	2	15
Unknown	0	1	8
None	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>64*</b>	<b>192</b>

**\*Not all vessels involved had an operator.**



## Statistics by Operator Education

<b>Operator Education</b>	<b># Fatalities</b>	<b># Injuries</b>	<b># Vessels</b>
Boater Exam	0	0	1
California Boater Safety	0	0	1
Captains License	0	1	3
Florida Boating Safety	0	0	1
Georgia Boater Education	0	2	1
Informal	6	10	28
NC State Boaters Ed	1	0	2
NJ Boating Safety Course	0	1	1
None	10	24	85
State	2	11	21
TN Boater Education	0	0	1
Unknown	4	13	37
US Power Squadron	0	0	4
USCG & VA State	0	0	1
USCG Auxiliary	0	0	3
USCG Veteran	0	1	1
Utah Boaters Ed	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23*</b>	<b>64*</b>	<b>192*</b>

\* Not all vessels had operators.

## Summary

In 1971 the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department began investigating accidents and keeping records. The first year, with 79,804 registered boats, there were 85 reported accidents with 45 fatalities. In 2009, South Carolina had its lowest year of fatalities on record with 11.

In 2023 there were 174 accidents reported to the Law Enforcement Investigations section, which included 21 fatalities and 65 injuries. There were 45 non-reportable boating incidents.

Boating accidents occurred in every month. Forty-eight percent of all accidents occurred on Saturday and Sunday. Sixty-seven percent occurred between the hours of 12:01pm and 8:00pm. In eighty-seven percent of all accidents, the operator was twenty one years of age or older.

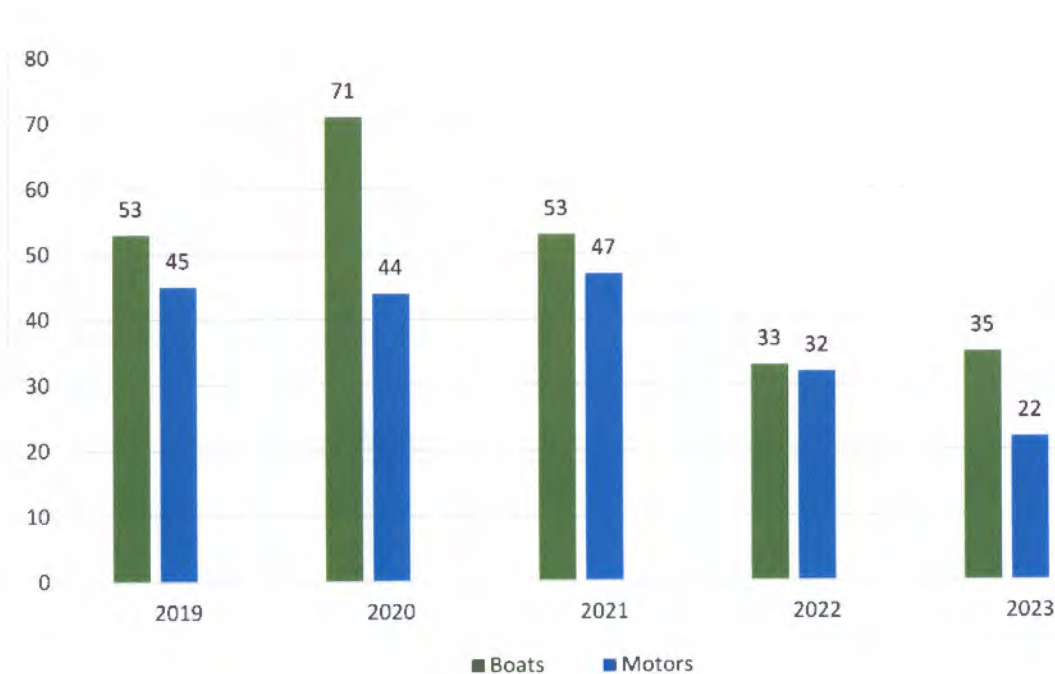


Collision with Vessel ranks as the number one type of accident. Fall Overboard ranks as the number one type of fatal accident. The majority of accidents are the result of No Proper Lookout. There were 174 recreational boating accidents, with eleven percent involving Personal Watercraft.

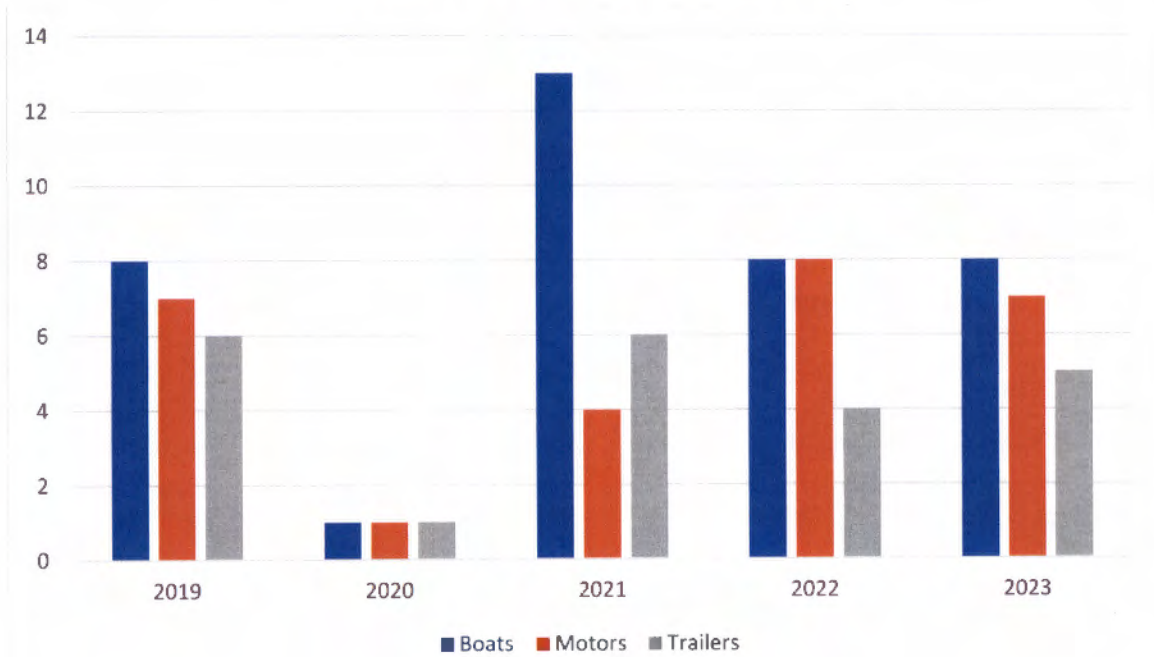
## Marine Theft Investigations Annual Report 2023

This year the Marine Theft Investigations section conducted 949 investigations. Throughout the year, investigators examined 300 boats with 253 motors. Eight boats, seven motors, and five trailers were recovered. The total approximate value of these recoveries were \$91,035.00. These recoveries were made by SCDNR Investigators and do not include recoveries made by outside agencies. During the year, Investigators issued 18 summons tickets and 153 warning tickets. This year a total of 35 boats and 22 motors were reported stolen in South Carolina.

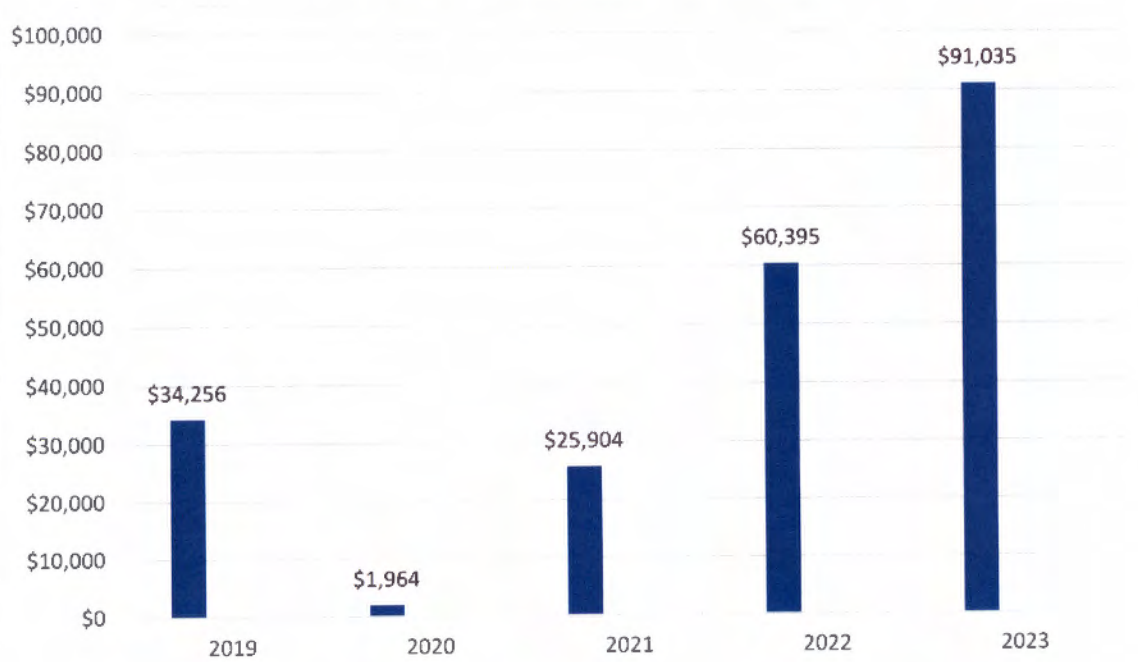
### SC Registered/Titled Reported Stolen Boats/Motors



## Marine Theft Recoveries 2023

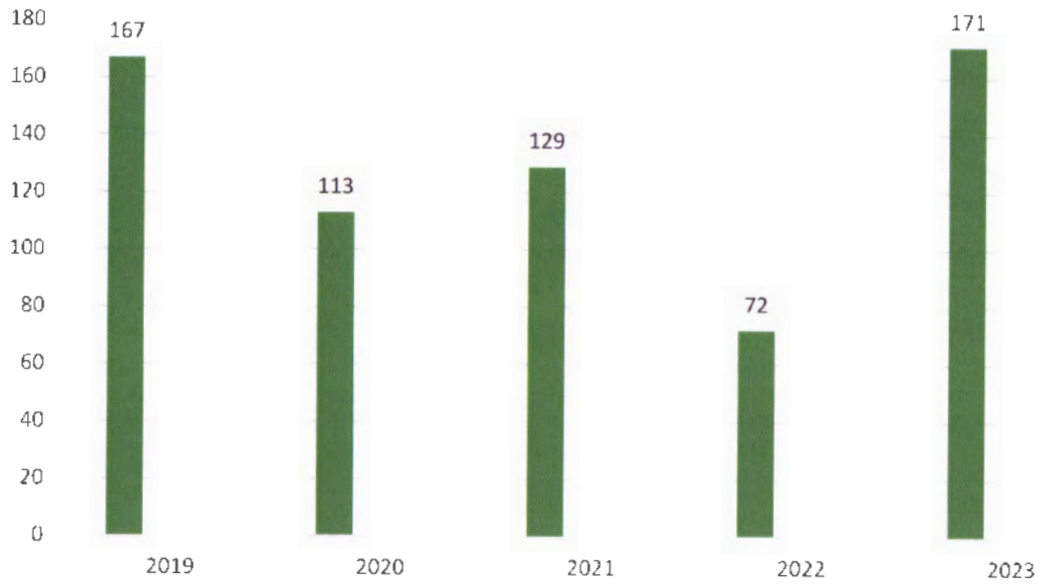


## Value of Recovered Property

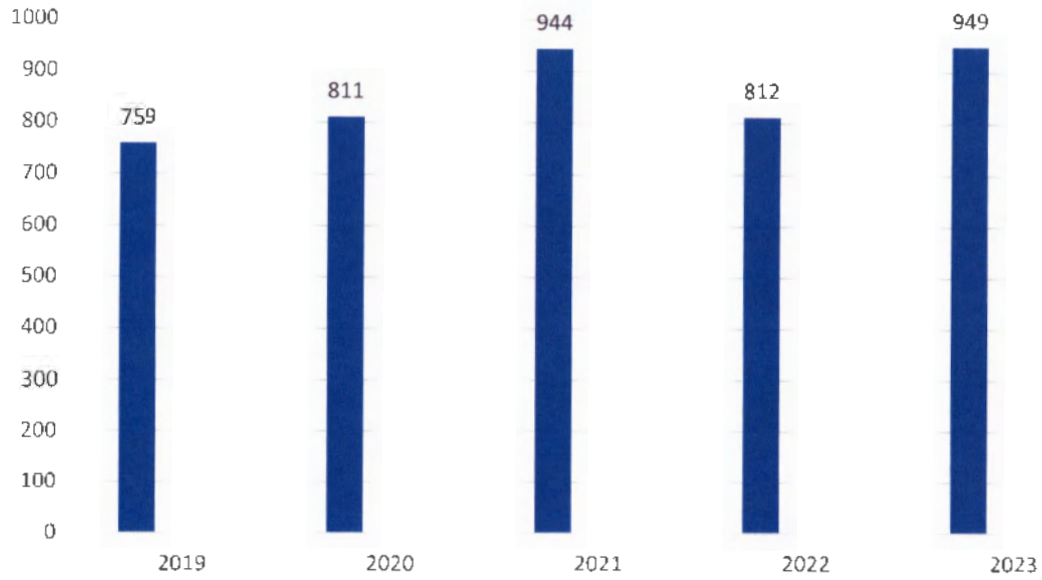


# Marine Theft 2023

## Criminal Cases Made



## Number of Investigations Conducted



## Aids to Navigation

The Aids to Navigation Program requires regular monitoring and routine maintenance on 2,417 aids to navigation. There are 250 official Regulatory Zones throughout South Carolina. Incorporated into these Regulatory Zones are 704 No Wake Buoys, 341 No Wake Signs, 159 Boat Exclusion Buoys and 10 Boat Exclusion Signs. There are 756 Hazard Buoys that currently mark hazardous locations. The majority of these hazards are located on the inland lakes of South Carolina with almost 50% located on Lake Murray alone. In 2023 there were 270 Hazard Buoys, 224 No Wake Buoys, 23 No Wake Signs, and 49 Boat Exclusion Buoys placed across the state as part of ongoing maintenance. The Aids to Navigation staff continues to work closely with security personnel at all water treatment facilities and nuclear power stations on all the states lakes to enhance homeland security efforts. Maintenance of the Aids to Navigation required 4,533 man-hours. Of these hours, 1,392 were boating hours. During 2023, a total of 69 areas were investigated on the waters of South Carolina for regulatory zoning.

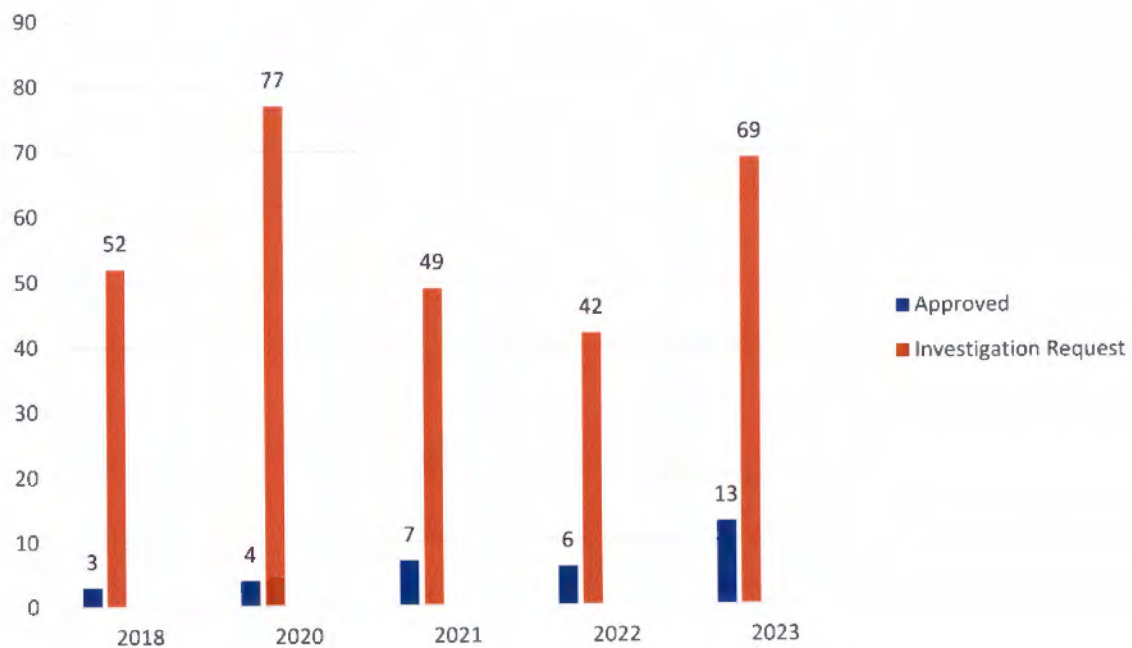


There were 13 regulatory investigations that met the required consideration for permanent official zoning. The Department of Natural Resources provides official information signs stating “Slow You Are Responsible For Your Wake” to be posted in areas that do not meet the zoning consideration and 68 of these signs were distributed in 2023. An increase in Boating Law Enforcement in these areas was also recommended to local officers in an effort to increase safety and public awareness.

## Statewide Aids to Navigation 2023

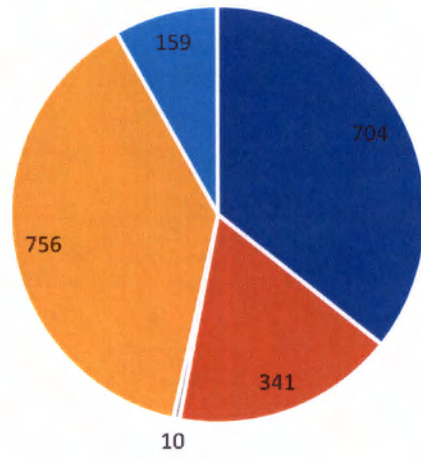
Description	Quantity
Official Regulatory Zones	250
No Wake Buoys and Signs	1,045
Hazard Buoys	756
Exclusion Buoys and Signs	159
Devices Added in 2023	59
Aids to Navigation Boating Hours	1,392
Aids to Navigation Maintenance Man-Hours	4,533

## Zoning Investigations



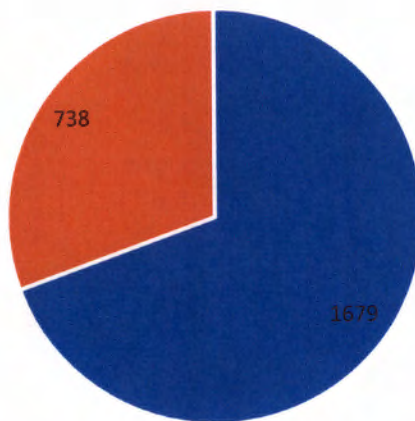
\* 5 no wake zones, 5 no wake zone extensions, 2 exclusion zones and 1 temporary exclusion zone were approved.

### Aids To Navigation Equipment



■ No Wake Buoy ■ No Wake Sign ■ Exclusion Sign ■ Hazard Buoy ■ Exclusion Buoy

### Equipment Placement



■ Lakes ■ Rivers

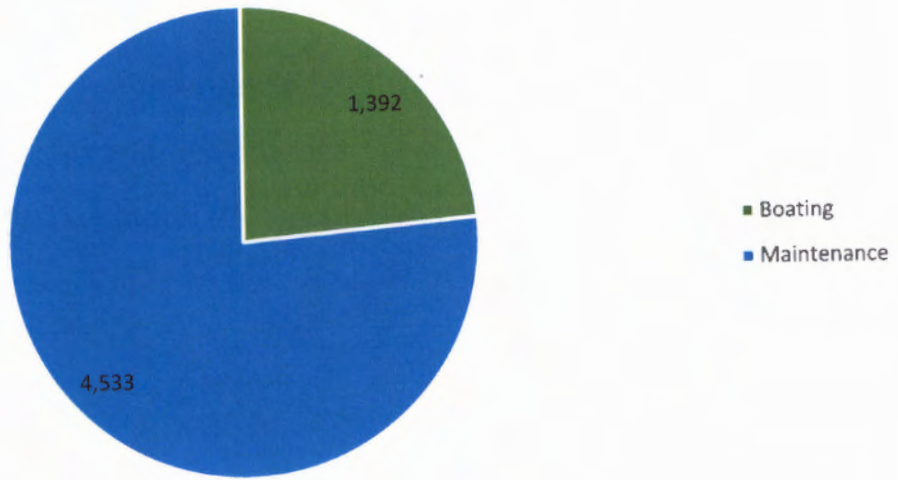
## Official No Wake and Exclusion Zones By County

County	No Wake Zones	Exclusion Zones
Abbeville	2	0
Barnwell	0	0
Berkeley	8	0
Beaufort	18	2
Calhoun	2	0
Charleston	19	1
Chester	0	1
Clarendon	13	0
Colleton	4	1
Darlington	2	1
Dorchester	3	0
Fairfield	3	1
Georgetown	8	0
Greenwood	5	1
Greenville	2	2
Horry	11	0
Kershaw	4	0
Laurens	7	2
Lexington	36	8
McCormick	0	0
Newberry	8	1
Oconee	16	4
Orangeburg	6	2
Pickens	5	0
Richland	4	0
Saluda	5	1
Spartanburg	11	0
Sumter	3	0
Union	0	2
Williamsburg	1	0
York	7	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>36</b>

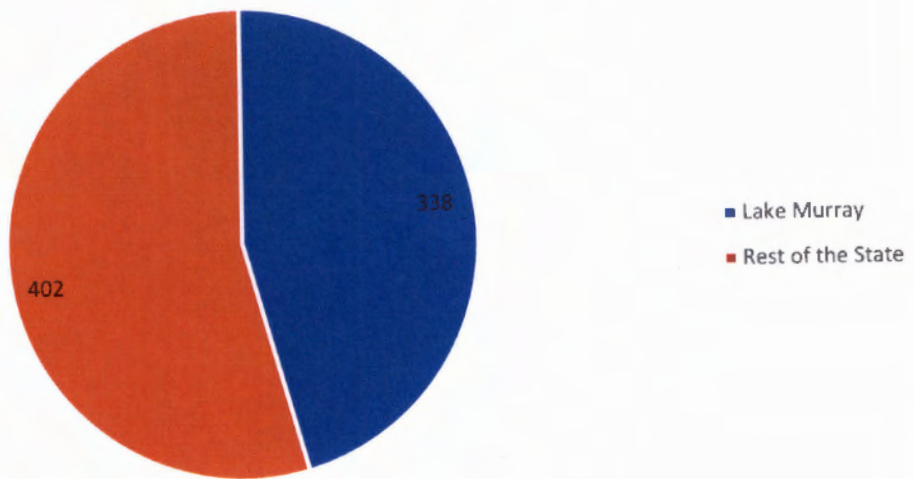
## Hazard Buoys 2023

<b>Body of Water</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Lake Blalock	5
Lake Bowen	6
Fishing Creek Lake	2
Lake Greenwood	60
Lake Jocassee	14
Lake Keowee	120
Lyman Lake	3
Lake Marion	6
Lake Monticello	35
Lake Moultrie	6
Lake Murray	348
Lake Robinson	18
ICW-North Myrtle Beach	1
Saluda Lake	7
Savannah River	15
Stono River	1
Lake Secession	18
Lake Wateree	38
Wateree River	2
Lake Wylie	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>756</b>

### Man Hours



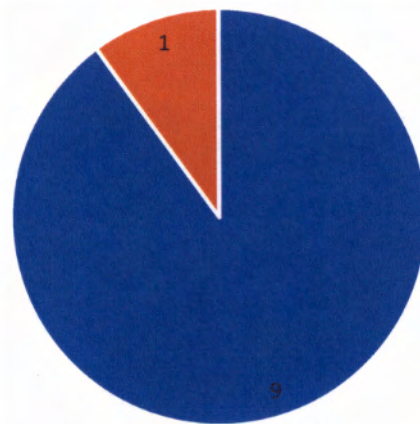
### Hazard Buoys



## Aquatic Investigation and Recovery (AIR)

In 2023 the AIR Team participated in 12 recovery assignments. The AIR Team recovered 9 victims on those assignments, 2 bodies were not recovered by the AIR Team, and one was never found. The AIR Team responded to 5 evidence assignments. 1,108 hours were dedicated to training this year. 238 of those hours were dedicated to training West Virginia DNR's first ever dive team.

Body Recovery



■ AIR Team ■ No Body Located

## Body Recovery Assignments

County	Body of Water	Activity
Lexington	Lake Murray	Scuba Diver
Horry	Little River	Duck Hunting-Boating
Lexington	Lake Murray	Boating
Aiken	Savannah River	Boating
Colleton	Edisto River	Swimming
Dorchester	Edisto River	Boating
Allendale	Savannah River	Boating (assist GA)
Aiken	Pond	Overtured Tractor
Richland	Pond	Vehicle Entrapment
McCormich	Strom Thurmond	Swimming
Oconee	Lake Jocassee	Boating
Georgetown	Black River	Boating

**Total Number of Recovery Activities:**

Boating 7  
 Scuba Diving 1  
 Swimming 2  
 Vehicle Entrapment/Overtured 2

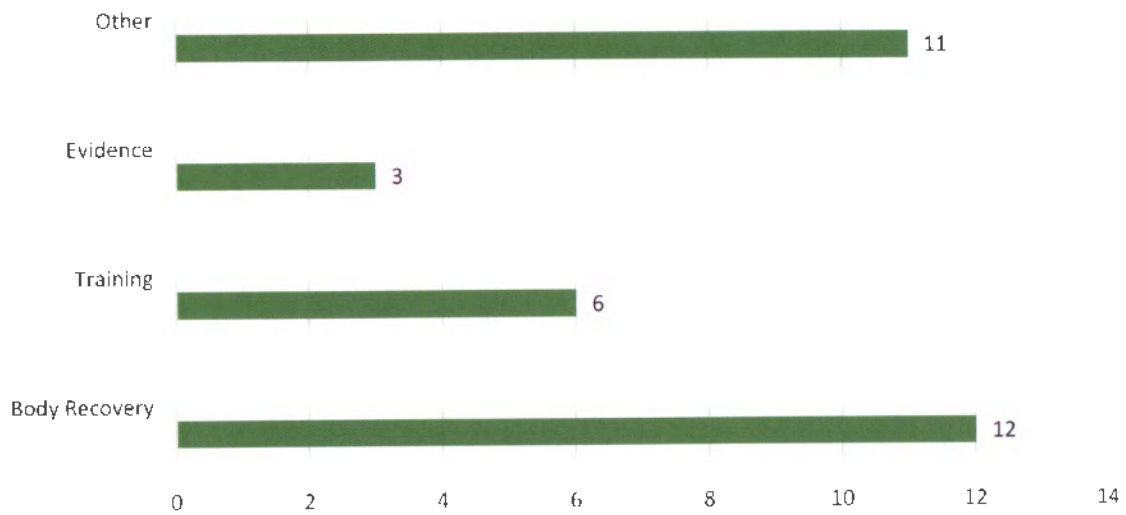
## Evidence Assignments

County	Body of Water	Agency
Clarendon	Pond	Clarendon Co
Orangeburg	Edisto River	Orangeburg Co
Chesterfield	Lake Robinson	Sumter Co

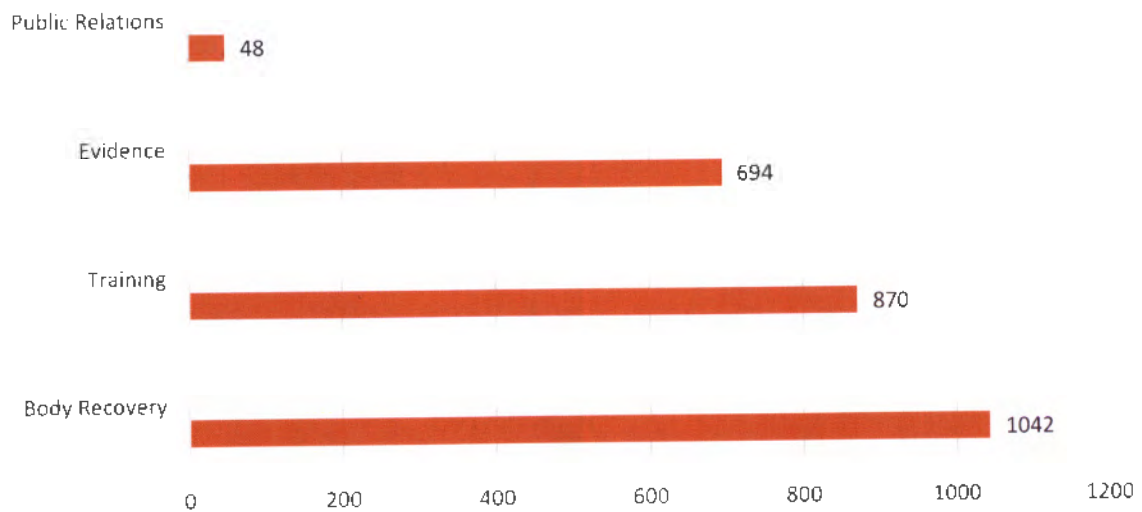


# 2023 Diving Operations

## Diving Assignments



## Man Hours



## 2023 Marine Events

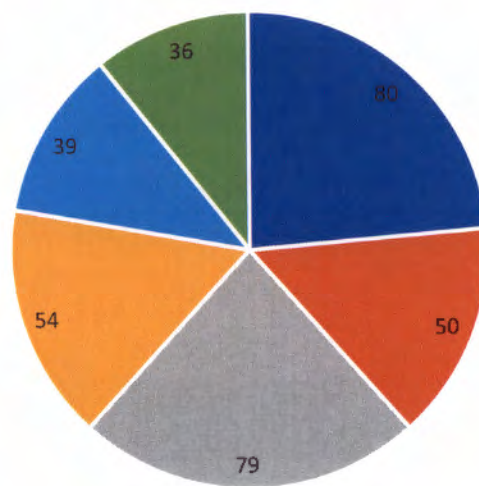
A total of 613 marine events were held in 2023 on the waters of South Carolina. Below is a breakdown by county, total events in each county, body of water, and number of events held on each body of water.

<b>County</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Body of Water</b>	<b>Per Body of Water</b>
Abbeville	10	Lake Russell	7
		Lake Secession	3
Aiken	3	Savannah River	3
Anderson	39	Broadway Lake	1
		Lake Hartwell	38
Bamberg	6	Edisto River	6
Beaufort	36	Atlantic Ocean	4
		Battery Creek	1
		Beaufort River	27
		Calibogue Sound	1
		May River	1
		Shelter Cove	1
		Skull Creek	1
Berkeley	80	Cooper River	69
		Lake Moultrie	11
Charleston	50	Ashley River	2
		Atlantic Ocean	7
		Bohicket Creek	2
		Charleston Harbor	33
		Gray Bay	2
		Jeremy Creek	2
		Wando River	2
Chester	1	Fishing Creek	1
Chesterfield	1	Great Pee Dee River	1
Clarendon	15	Lake Marion	15

Colleton	8	Ashepoo River	1
		Atlantic Ocean	2
		Big Bay Creek	2
		South Edisto River	1
		St Helena Sound	2
Darlington	7	Great Pee Dee River	6
		Lake Robinson	1
Dorchester	1	Ashley River	1
Fairfield	14	Lake Monticello	9
		Lake Wateree	5
Florence	4	Lynches River	1
		Great Pee Dee River	3
Georgetown	29	Atlantic Ocean	4
		Dawhoo Lake	6
		Great Pee Dee River	1
		Murrells Inlet	7
		Sampit River	9
		Santee River	2
Greenville	1	Lake Robinson	1
Greenwood	20	Lake Greenwood	20
Horry	12	Great Pee Dee River	2
		ICW	3
		Waccamaw	7
Kershaw	15	Lake Wateree	15
Lancaster	3	Fishing Creek	3
Laurens	2	Lake Greenwood	2
Lexington	28	Lake Murray	27
		Saluda River	1
McCormick	31	Strom Thurmond Reservoir	29
		Lake Russell	2
Newberry	31	Lake Monticello	1
		Lake Murray	30

Oconee	22	Lake Hartwell	2
		Lake Jocassee	10
		Lake Keowee	10
Pickens	7	Lake Keowee	7
Richland	1	Lake Murray	1
Sumter	54	Lake Marion	54
York	79	Lake Wylie	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>613</b>		

### 2023 Marine Events (Top Counties)



■ Berkeley
 ■ Charleston
 ■ York
 ■ Sumter
 ■ Anderson
 ■ Beaufort

## **Abandoned Boats**

In 2008, South Carolina passed legislation to identify abandoned vessels, and their owners, and to impose penalties for those responsible for abandoning their vessels on State waters.

The SCDNR Law Enforcement Investigations section is responsible for managing the abandoned boat program.

During the initial survey conducted in 2009, there were 215 boats meeting the criteria for initiating an investigation. The number of abandoned boats continues to be a significant problem along coastal areas. Boat owners, no longer choosing to be responsible for fees associated with maintaining, storing, or removing their unwanted equipment, or failing to tend to their property as required, abandon their vessels on our waterways. Some owners leave their vessel unattended for years, in the seemingly “free space” of our public waterways. These derelict vessels become significant problems for the quality, safety, and aesthetics of our waterways.

After surveying waterways and lakes, files are created for each vessel identified for possible abandonment. The ownership history is researched, and the file is assigned to an investigator. The investigator posts the vessels that meet the established definition. The owner, or responsible party, may be identified and given an opportunity to make corrections for noted problems. If the responsible party fails to correct the problem, and, only after 45 days, may be charged with abandoning their vessel on state waters. If found guilty, the owner is responsible for the boat removal within 14 days, at his/her own expense. If the owner/responsible party is undetermined during the investigation and after 45 days, without tending the vessel, the vessel is categorized as abandoned.

In 2023, we removed or assisted in the removal of 1 boat from Charleston County and 3 boats from Georgetown County.

In 2022, we were able to remove 4 boats from Georgetown County and 2 from Horry County.

In 2021, we were able to remove 19 abandoned boats from Georgetown County, 15 from Charleston County, and 9 from Beaufort County.

In December 2019, a complete coastal survey was done resulting in 143 vessels being addressed. We are continuing to locate and contact owners to determine which vessels are abandoned.

In 2018, there were 32 vessels surveyed and investigated as abandoned. Thirty-one of those vessels were reclaimed by their owners or pending disposition. One vessel was destroyed.



In 2017, as a result of Hurricane Matthew, 53 vessels were surveyed and investigated in Beaufort County resulting in 17 vessels being destroyed, 4 were returned to their owners or insurance companies. The remaining vessels were reclaimed by their owner. Post Hurricane an additional survey was conducted in Beaufort and Charleston counties. There were 47 vessels posted and investigated as abandoned, 40 were reclaimed by owners or removed by counties and 7 vessels have gone through the abandoned boat process and are awaiting disposition.

The local county and city jurisdictions may remove vessels in the abandoned status category.

The combined efforts of the state and local jurisdictions will ensure our waterways will not become cluttered with abandoned vessels. The removal of these vessels will provide safe navigation for those using state waters. In addition, the removal helps in creating a higher water quality and aesthetic value for those enjoying our water resources, while also providing a cleaner environment for organisms and wildlife that are dependent upon clean water.

