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Deaths by alligator are rare, but they do happen

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PHELAN M. EBENHACK/AP

The Orange County Sheriff's Office conducted searches in the Seven Seas Lagoon at Walt Disney World Wednesday for the body of a boy who was dragged into the water by an alligator.

By Matt Rocheleau

GLOBE STAFF JUNE 15, 2016

Deaths caused by alligators or crocodiles are rare in the United States, but they do happen occasionally.

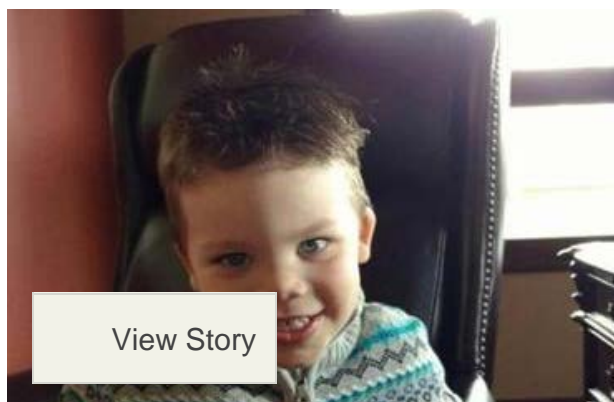
Mortality data tracked by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that between 1999 and 2014, a total of nine people nationwide were killed by being struck or bitten by either an alligator or a crocodile.

The figures do not show where in the United States those deaths occurred, but experts say wild alligators and crocodiles are typically confined to the southeastern portion of the country.

A 2-year-old boy was dragged into the water Tuesday night by an alligator near an upscale Disney resort in Florida. Officials said Wednesday they believe he is dead.



According to [data tracked by Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#), wild alligators have killed 23 people since 1973.



Search for boy taken by alligator now a recovery effort

The body of Lane Graves was found 16 hours

after authorities first got the call that a reptile had taken the boy from the water's edge.

Eight children, ages 2 to 16, were among the fatalities. Five died while swimming in lakes, rivers, or canals. The youngest victims were killed near lakes, including a 2-year-old girl who wandered 700 feet from her fenced backyard and a 3-year-old boy who left a roped-off swimming area in a county park to pick lily pads.

The national data for 1999-2014 from the CDC show that other animals besides alligators or crocodiles kill more people.

“Other reptiles” killed 78 people during those years, the data say.

Contact with hornets, wasps, and bees killed 921 people.

Meanwhile, dogs killed 486 people, the data show.


Bites and stings by nonvenomous insects and arthropods killed 143 people; venomous spiders killed 112 people; venomous snakes and lizards killed 101 people; marine animals killed 19; and rats killed three people.

Being bit or struck by “other mammals” killed 1,163 people during those years.

Material from the Associated Press was used in this report. Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter @mrochele

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