

Water Related Fatalities in Scotland: A summary of the 2018 WAID statistics for Water Safety Scotland

Headlines

- The total number of Water Related Fatalities in Scotland is decreasing
- The number of ‘not recorded’ Water Related Fatalities is still a challenge, although there has been some improvements
- 2018 saw inland water accounting for the majority of Accidental Fatalities

Overall Water Related Fatalities

In 2018, there were 78 Water Related Fatalities in Scotland. Since 2013, there has been a gradual downwards trend (see figure 1 – overall Water Related Fatalities).

Figure 1 also breaks down Water Related Fatalities by cause. ‘Not recorded’ has seen a reduction since 2017, which is a result of the effort and resources placed in improving data capture. ‘Accident’ and ‘Natural Causes’ have decreased slightly (see figure 1).

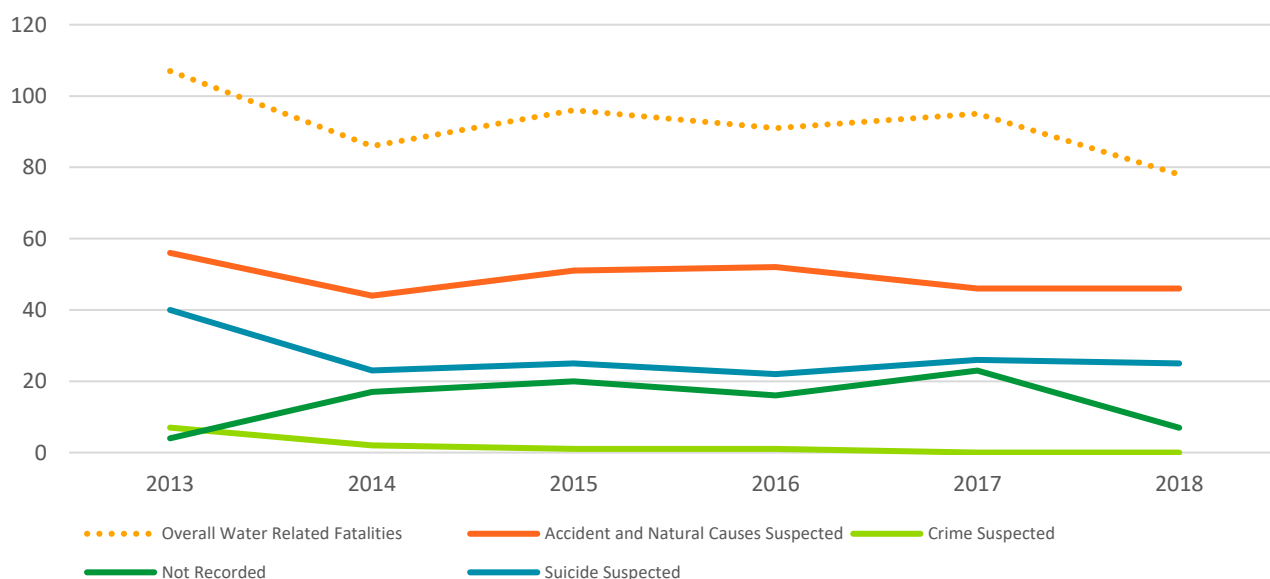


Figure 1: Water Related Fatalities by year, 2013 – 2018

Scotland’s Drowning Prevention Strategy (SDPS) utilised a three year average (2013-2015) to establish that there are 96 Water Related Fatalities on average per year.

The 2018 figures show around a **20 per cent decrease** in Water Related Fatalities in comparison to the SDPS baseline (see figure 2).

Year	Overall Water Related Fatalities
SDPS Baseline	96
2016	91
2017	95
2018	78

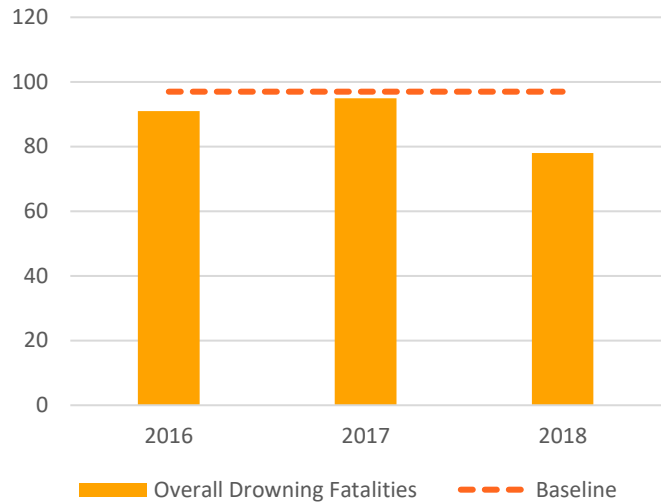


Figure 2: Overall fatalities by year 2016-2018 vs SDPS Baseline (2013-2015)

Suicide Suspected Fatalities

In 2018, there were 25 ‘Suicide Suspected’ Fatalities at or near water in Scotland. The 2018 figures therefore show a 14 per cent decrease in Suicide Suspected Fatalities against the three-year SDPS baseline.

It is also a year-on-year decrease.

Year	Suicide Suspected Fatalities
SDPS Baseline	29
2016	22
2017	26
2018	25

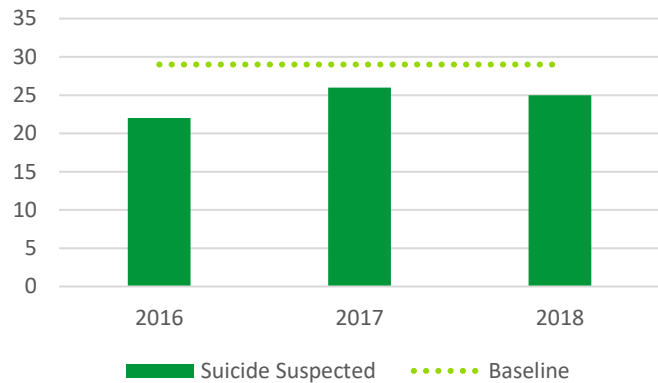


Figure 3: Suicide Suspected Fatalities by year 2016-2018 vs SDPS Baseline (2013-2015)

Accidental Fatalities

The following data in this report uses the term ‘Accidental Fatalities’. This refers to Accidental and Natural Cases suspected.

In 2018, there were 46 Accidental Fatalities in Scotland. This is an 8 per cent decrease in comparison to SDPS three-year average.

There was no change year-on-year.

Year	Accidental Drowning Fatalities
SDPS Baseline	50
2016	52
2017	46
2018	46

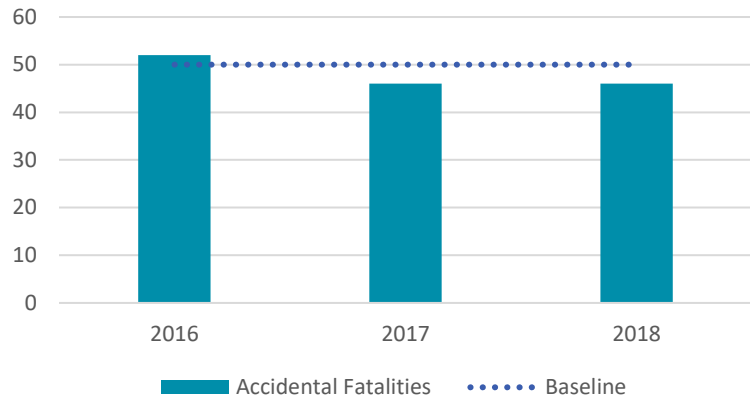


Figure 4: Accidental Fatalities by year 2016-2018 vs SDPS Baseline (2013-2015)

Activities

In 2018, 57 per cent of Accidental Fatalities were the result of recreational water related activities. Everyday activities such as walking or running account one in four (see figure 5).

The proportion of Accidental Fatalities due to recreational water related activities has increased in comparison to SDPS three-year average data, where it accounted for 41 per cent.

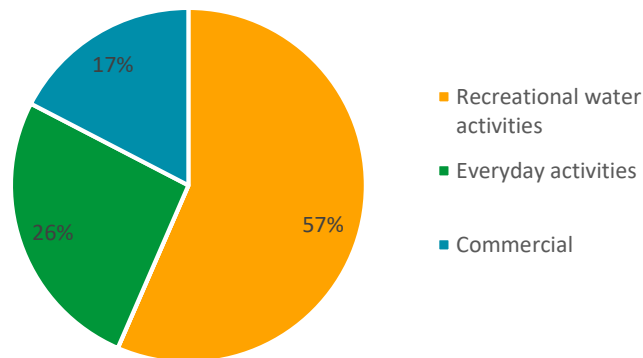


Figure 5: Accidental fatalities by activity. N=46

Demographics

Nine in every 10 Accidental Fatalities were male. The most frequent age group for Accidental Fatalities was males aged 40-49 (see figure 6).

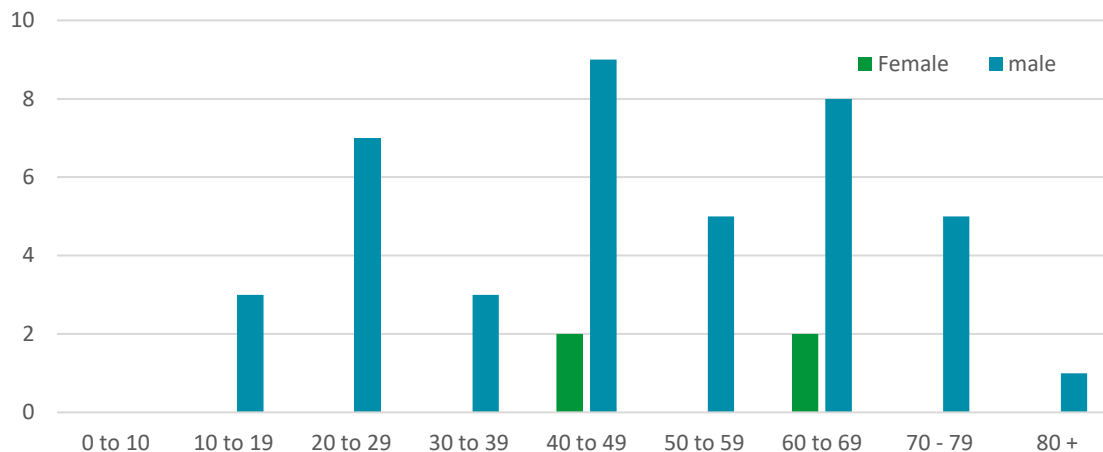


Figure 6: Accidental Fatalities by age. N=45 (insufficient information for one record)

In terms of location, 6 in 10 (59 per cent) of Accidental Fatalities happened at inland waters (see figure 7).

This has changed in comparison to SDPS three-year average data, where inland waters accounted for 46 per cent of Accidental Fatalities.

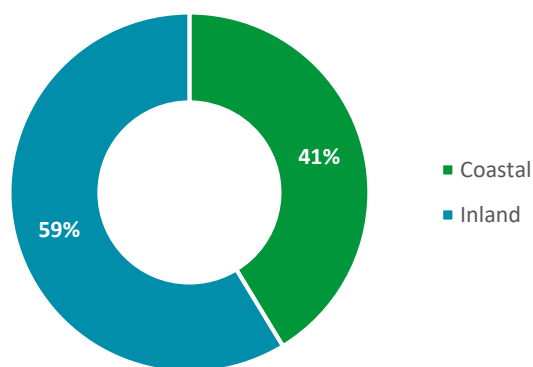


Figure 7: Accidental fatalities by location. N=46

Key points

In 2018:

- The total number of Water Related Fatalities in Scotland is decreasing
- There were 46 Accidental Fatalities and a further 25 Suspected Suicides
- The number of 'not recorded' Water Related Fatalities is still a challenge, although there have been some improvements
- Nine in every 10 of Accidental Drowning Fatalities were male
- Males aged 40-49 were the most frequent group for Accidental Fatalities
- 6 in 10 Accidental Fatalities happened at **inland waters**
- Recreational activities accounted for around 6 out of 10 Accidental Fatalities

Data limitations

This report uses data held in WAID as of March 2018. It is based upon the first release for the calendar year and is therefore provisional.

The core data providers continue to improve verification and completeness of records which can result in changes to the data.

The WSS Strategy uses a three-year average baseline for Accidental Drowning and Suicide. This is based on the years 2013-2015.

Notes on definitions can be found below.

Notes on definition and scope

Water Related Fatalities – All deaths in UK waters, that happened in or near to water.

Accidental drowning – A subset of the above. Those deaths that happened as a result of an Accidental or Natural Cause. These two categories are presented and tracked as one. This is due to the drowning process, in which the fatality is resultant of immersion/submersion in water, lack of oxygen, then cardiac arrest. It is often impossible to tell post-mortem if the cardiac arrest predicated, or resulted from the entry into water.

Drowning can result in a fatal or non-fatal outcome. The latter presents with sometimes life-changing injuries such as brain damage. In this report we include only fatal outcomes.

Data cut – The data in this report was cut as of March 2019. This has implications for our knowledge on incidents later in 2018, as reports are not always available.

SDPS Baseline – Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy Baseline is against three-year averages (2013- 2015).