

# **Dog attack deaths and maimings, U.S. & Canada**

## **September 1982 to December 31, 2014**

Reports are logged as received, and the current log is printed out as requested.

Compiled by the editor of *ANIMALS 24-7* from press accounts since 1982, this table covers only attacks by dogs of clearly identified breed type or ancestry, as designated by animal control officers or others with evident expertise, who have been kept as pets. All accounts are cross-checked by date, location, and identity of the victim.

Attacks by police dogs, guard dogs, and dogs trained specifically to fight are also excluded. "Attacks doing bodily harm" includes all fatalities, maimings, and other injuries requiring extensive hospital treatment. "Maimings" includes permanent disfigurement or loss of a limb. Where there is an asterisk (#), please see footnotes. If there are more "attacks" than "victims," it means that there were multiple dogs involved in some attacks. If the numbers of "victims" does not equal the numbers of "deaths" and "maimings," it means that some of the victims -- in attacks in which some people were killed or maimed -- were not killed or maimed.

Because attacks involve varying numbers of dogs and victims, because victims' ages are not always disclosed, and because not all victims of an attack in which someone is killed or disfigured are themselves killed or disfigured, these numbers cannot be added up from left to right to get a balance.

Over the duration of the data collection, the severity of the logged attacks appears to be at approximately the 1-bite-in-10,000 level.

The "%/dogs" column states the percentage of each breed of dog among 65,658 classified ads listing dogs for sale and adoption at web sites during July 2013, screened to eliminate duplicates. For most breeds the numbers differ little from those found in similar surveys done in June 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. Similar data has been collected in many previous years, but until 2010 was not included in this table. If a percentage is not listed for a breed or mix, it either appears to be too low to calculate or too difficult to isolate from other variants of the breed or mix. In some cases, including German shepherds, pit bulls and Rottweilers, the percentage includes mixes.

There is a persistent allegation by pit bull advocates that pit bulls are over-represented among reported dog attack deaths and maimings because of misidentifications or because "pit bull" is, according to them, a generic term covering several similar types of dog. However, the frequency of pit bull attacks among these worst-in-10,000 cases is so disproportionate that even if half of the attacks in the pit bull category were misattributed, or even if the pit bull category was split four ways, attacks by pit bulls and their closest relatives would still outnumber attacks by any other breed.

There is also a persistent allegation by pit bull advocates that the use of media accounts as a data source is somehow suspect. Reality is that media coverage incorporates information from police reports, animal control reports, witness accounts, victim accounts in many instances, and hospital reports. Media coverage is, in short, multi-sourced, unlike reports from any single source.

Note: to ensure that the columns are aligned properly, please print this table from e-mail using a non-proportional font, such as Courier or Roman Fixed Width.

Breed	Attacks doing bodily harm [dogs X victims]	Child victims	Adult victims	Deaths	Maimings	%/dogs	Notes	
		[-----Individuals-----]						
Akita	70	44	22	8	52	.07%	#	
Akita mix (inspecific)	2	2	0	0	2			
Akita/Chow mix	3	3	0	0	3			
Akita/Lab mix	1	1	0	0	1			
Akita/terrier mix	2	1	0	0	1			
Airedale/boxer	1	1	0	1	0		#	
Airedale	2	1	1	2	0	.02%	#	
Anatolian shepherd	1	1	0	0	1			
Australian blue heeler	13	4	2	1	5			
Australian shepherd	11	7	2	0	5			
Australian shepherd mix	1	0	1	1	0		#	
Basset	2	0	2	0	2		#	
Basset/GSD mix	1	1	0	1	0			
Basset/beagle mix	1	1	0	0	1			
Basset/Lab mix	1	1	0	1	0			
Beagle	4	3	1	1	3	2.32%	#	
Belgian shepherd (Malinois)	7	4	3	0	4	.04%		
Bernese mountain dog	1	0	1	0	1	.06%		
Black mouth cur	4	3	1	0	4			
Blue heeler	20	2	3	0	5			
Border collie	2	1	1	1	2	.09%	#	
Boston terrier	2	0	1	1	0	1.81%	#	
Boxer	64	19	23	7	31	1.25%	#	
Boxer/Australian shepherd	1	1	0	0	1			
Boxer/Boston terrier mix	1	1	0	0	1			
Boxer/bull mastiff mix	1	1	0	0	1			
Boxer/German shepherd mix	1	1	0	1	0			
Boxer/Lab mix	3	1	2	0	3			
Boxer mix	10	3	5	2	6			
Boxer/Sharpei	1	1	0	0	1			
Briard	2	0	1	1	0	.09%		
Brittany spaniel	4	1	0	0	1			
Bulldog (English)	20	12	4	1	14	.06%		
Bull mastiff (Presa Canario)	111	46	41	18	63	.02%		
Bull mastiff/German shepherd	2	1	0	1	0			
Buff mastiff/Rottweiler	2	1	1	0	2			
Bull mastiff/Boxer	1	1	0	1	0			
Bull terrier (not pit)	3	1	1	0	1			
Cane Corso/Italian mastiff	21	4	11	2	12	.05%		
Cane Corso/pit bull mix	1	1	0	1	1		#	
Catahoula	4	1	1	1	1	.02%		
Catahoula/pit bull mix	1	0	1	1	0			
Caucasian shepherd	1	0	1	0	1			
Cavalier King Charles spaniel	1	0	1	0	1		#	
Chesapeake Bay retriever	3	3	0	0	2			
Chihuahua	1	1	0	1	1	2.75%	#	
Chow	61	37	18	8	40	.01%		
Chow/German shepherd	2	1	1	0	2			
Chow/husky mix	2	2	0	1	1			
Chow/Labrador mix	5	5	0	0	4			
Chow/Sharpei mix	1	1	0	0	1			
Chow mix (other)	7	7	1	1	7			
Cocker spaniel	2	2	0	0	2	.08%		
Collie	4	4	0	1	3	1.62%		
Collie/retriever mix	1	1	0	0	1			
Coonhound	3	1	2	1	1	.02%	#	
Coton de Tulear	1	0	1	0	1		#	
Dachshund	6	3	3	1	6	4.68%	#	
Dalmatian	3	3	0	0	3	.01%		
Dalmatian/Akita mix	1	1	0	0	1			

Doberman	23	12	9	8	12	1.70%	#
Doberman/Great Dane mix	1	1	0	0	1		
Dogo Argentino	5	2	3	1	3		
Doge de Bordeaux	2	1	0	0	1		
East Highland terrier	1	0	1	1	0		#
Fila Brasileiro	5	1	1	1	1		#
German shepherd	113	65	41	15	73	3.72%	#
German shepherd mix	45	28	14	7	30		#
German shepherd/Malinois mix	4	4	0	0	1		
German shepherd/husky mix	6	5	1	2	3		#
German shepherd/Lab mix	11	4	2	1	5		#
German shepherd/Sharpei	1	1	0	0	1		
Golden retriever	11	9	2	3	7	3.08%	#
Golden retriever mix	1	0	1	1	0		#
Golden retriever/Lab mix	1	1	0	0	1		
Great Dane	37	12	9	3	19	1.08%	
Great Pyrenees	4	1	2	1	2		
Greyhound	1	1	0	0	1	1.60%	
Hound mix	3	2	1	0	3		#
Husky	83	51	8	26	27	1.04%	
Husky/Malamute mix	2	2	0	0	2		
Husky/Labrador mix	2	1	1	0	2		
Husky mix	3	0	2	1	1		
Jack Russell terrier	5	3	1	2	2	1.46%	#
Jack Russell/English bulldog	1	1	0	0	1		
Karelian bear dog	1	0	1	0	1		
Keeshond	1	0	1	1	0		#
Labrador	56	37	17	3	45	2.47%	#
Labrador mix	27	18	7	1	23	8.98%	#
Lab/blue heeler mix	1	0	1	0	0		
Labrador/boxer mix	1	0	1	0	0		
Lab/Doberman	1	1	0	0	1		
Lab/Great Pyranees	1	0	1	0	1		
Lab/St. Bernard	1	1	0	0	1		
Malamute	15	12	2	6	5	.08%	
Maremma	1	0	1	0	1	.01%	
Mastiff	28	23	5	5	17	1.15%	
Mastiff/Rhodesian ridgeback	1	1	0	1	0		
Mini-pinscher	1	1	0	0	1		#
Norwegian elkhound	1	0	1	0	1		#
Old English sheep dog	2	1	1	2	0		#
Old English sheep dog mix	1	0	1	0	1		
Pit bull	3397	1355	1312	295	2110	6.69%	#
Pit bull/Akita mix	4	0	4	0	4		
Pit bull/Australian shepherd	2	1	0	0	1		
Pit bull boxer mix	35	14	13	2	23		
Pit bull/chow mix	11	3	4	1	5		
Pit bull/Doberman mix	1	0	1	0	1		
Pit bull/Doberman/GSD/Lab	2	2	0	0	2		
Pit bull/Great Dane	1	1	0	0	1		
Pit bull/Great Dane/Dalmatian	1	0	2	0	2		
Pit bull/GSD mix	15	7	6	1	14		
Pit bull/Lab mix	43	27	11	5	29		#
Pit/Rhodesian ridgeback mix	2	2	0	0	2		
Pit bull/Rott. mix	56	12	9	2	17		
Pit bull/Sharpei mix	2	2	0	0	2		
Pit bull/Sheltie mix	7	4	0	0	4		
Pit bull/Weimaraner mix	1	0	1	0	1		
Pit bull/wolf hybrid	1	1	1	0	2		
Pit mix unknown	22	3	2	1	5		
Plott hound	10	0	1	0	1		
Pointer mix	1	0	1	0	0		#
Pomeranian	1	1	0	1	0	1.33%	
Poodle	4	2	1	0	1	2.55%	#

Poodle/terrier	1	1	0	0	1		
Pug	1	1	0	0	1		
Pug/Rottweiler mix	2	1	0	1	0		
Rat terrier	2	0	1	0	1		
Queensland heeler	5	0	3	0	3		
Rhodesian ridgeback	2	2	0	0	2	.02%	
Rottweiler	535	297	141	85	296	2.76%	#
Rottweiler/chow mix	2	2	0	0	2		
Rottweiler/GSD mix	18	9	8	3	14		
Rottweiler/Labrador	8	7	1	0	8		
Rottweiler/mastiff	2	1	1	1	1		
Russian terrier	1	0	1	0	1		
Saint Bernard	12	8	1	1	7	.10%	
Schnauzer	1	0	1	1	0	1.55%	#
Setter	1	0	1	0	1	2.26%	
Sharpei	6	6	0	0	6	1.45%	
Sharpei/Rottweiler	2	1	0	0	1		
Sharpei/unknown mix	2	2	0	0	2		
Sharpei/Labrador	1	1	0	0	1		
Shiba Inu	3	1	1	1	1	.05%	
Shih Tzu	5	2	3	0	5	1.74%	#
Springer spaniel	3	4	0	0	4		
Terrier mix (not pit bull)	2	0	2	0	2		
Tosa	1	1	0	0	1		
Unidentified	81	16	29	8	32		#
Weimaraner	2	2	0	1	1	.82%	
West Highland terrier	2	0	2	1	1	.32%	#
Wheaten terrier	3	1	1	0	2	.12%	
Wolf hybrid	85	70	5	19	49		#

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**Crude totals:**

5460	2436	1875	593	3285	
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(These numbers differ from the totals below because the totals below have been adjusted to avoid duplication in reporting attacks involving multiple dogs of differing breeds.)

**Totals of dogs attacking humans in fatal & disfiguring cases:**

5242	2423	1871	593	3285	41.9%
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**Totals of humans attacked by dogs in fatal & disfiguring cases:**

4870	2323	1810	579	3156	41.9%
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(The sum of fatalities is greater than the total from adding up the column because of deaths involving multiple dogs of differing breed.)

**Pit bulls & close pit mixes:**

3617	1443	1379	307	2249	6.0%
69%	61%	75%	53%	70%	

**Molosser breeds,** including pit bulls, Rottweilers, Presa Canarios, Cane Corsos, mastiffs, Dogo Argentinos, Fila Brasieros, Sharpeis, boxers, and their mixes:

4467	1895	1622	440	2732	9.2%+
86%	81%	89%	76%	86%	

**Wolf-like breeds,** broadly defined to include Akitas, German shepherds, huskies, Karelian bear dogs, Malamutes, wolf hybrids, Shiba Inus, and their mixes:

459	294	96	87	259	3.9%+
10%	14%	6%	15%	9%	

**Chows & their close mixes**, a chow being apparently an ancient cross of wolf-like Arctic dogs with molossers:

82	54	20	10	55	0.1%+
2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	

## Notes:

**Airedale/boxer:** The only listed attack was by 10 dogs at once.

**Airedale:** Anne Beth Grotzky, 87, died from complications of surgery for a broken hip suffered on July 27, 2010 when an Airedale kept by Dale Eggers, 65, knocked her down. Eggers was fined \$500 for allowing the dog to run at large.

**Akita:** Two fatalities occurring in 1991 and 1993 were initially excluded because they were reportedly inflicted by guard dogs. This has been disputed. Whether these attacks are included or excluded makes little difference to the overall statistical patterns shown on this chart.

**Australian shepherd mix:** Involved with golden retriever mix in July 26, 2008 fatal attack on Lorraine May, 74, of Titusville, Florida.

**Basset hound:** Ernest & Kim Lawrence, of Moira, New York, were both injured in 2010 in separate attacks by the same basset hound, who was adopted from the North Country Animal Shelter. Related litigation is underway.

**Beagle:** The fatality was a strangulation caused by tugging on a leash which was around a child's neck.

**Border collie:** Involved in 4-dog attack. The other dogs were two pit bulls and a mastiff.

**Boston terrier:** Elizabeth Louise Hirt, 93, of Bethel Township, Ohio, was found badly mauled by her two Boston terriers on November 27, 2012. Remaining in intensive care for the next two weeks, she died on December 11, 2012.

**Boxer:** Fatal attack on 3-week-old infant also involved a Rottweiler.

**Bull mastiff/Presa Canario:** A 13-day-old child was killed in Houston on September 3, 2011 by a dog described by sheriff's department and animal control first responders as a pit bull, but later reported by some media as a Lab mix. Harris County Veterinary Services eventually identified the dog as a Presa Canario.

**Cane Corso/pit bull:** The dog who killed Jayelin Graham, 4, in Brooklyn on 5/27/11 was reported by some sources as a Cane Corso and by others as a pit bull. A pit bull was also found at the scene. A *New York Daily News* photo of the killer dog showed both Cane Corso and pit bull characteristics.

**Cavalier King Charles spaniel:** Gary Abbuhl, 65, suffered fractured femur & other injuries on March 5, 2009 in Boulder, Colorado after dog belonging to Kelly Engholt, 31, ran into his bicycle.

**Coton de Tulear:** Reports differed as to whether the 2014 Coton de Tulear attack on a mail carrier was serious enough to include.

**Chihuahua:** Dog on retractable leash leaped up and bit the lip of a six-year-old who was riding past on a bicycle. The bicycle's momentum and restraint on the dog apparently increased the severity of the injury (8-12-08, Springfield Township, Indiana.)

**Coonhound:** Victim Kenneth D. Bock died in 2010 from *Capnocytophaga canimorsus sepsis* infection.

**Dachshund:** Julia Beck, 87, of Fort Wayne, died 5/15/05, two weeks after attack by dachshund & Lab at home she shared with Michael T. Kitchen, 48, and Linda A. Kitchen, 57. Linda Floyd, 56, a diabetic, lost toe to dachshund who gnawed it off in her sleep 6/30/08.

**Doberman:** At least two Dobermans were among 16 dogs who are believed to have killed Sherry Schweder, 65, and her husband Luther Schweder, on August 15, 2009 in Lexington, Georgia.

**East Highland terrier:** Victim, age 75, died of heart attack.

**Fila Brasileiro:** Bitten repeatedly on August 3, 2007 by four Fila Brasieros, also described in some accounts as "three bull mastiffs and one English bulldog," Jacob Adams, 40, died from a pre-existing condition called intravascular sickling, associated with illnesses including sickle cell anemia, hepatitis, and diabetes. Intravascular sickling can flare up and become fatal under conditions of extreme exertion.

**German shepherd:** Four disfiguring attacks on four different victims were inflicted by the same German shepherd between May 2000 and October 2009. The dog's keeper, Gary McKeown, 55 of Plymouth, Pennsylvania, was sentenced to two years on probation plus 100 hours of community service, and was fined \$2,244 in connection with the fourth attack. The dog was euthanized.

**German shepherd/Lab mix:** Attica, New York Police Chief John Palillo identified the alleged service dog who mauled 2-year-old Emilee Amrhein on April 4, 2004 as a "lab shepherd mix." WHEC video of the dog showed a dog of golden Lab coloration and a pit bull-like head.

**German shepherd mix:** One fatality victim, age 83, was apparently killed by an overly rowdy greeting. The victim was knocked down and suffered multiple broken bones, but was not bitten. The dog had bitten a person on a previous occasion. In that case, the skin was not broken. Another 83-year-old victim was killed by either a German shepherd/Labrador mix or a pit bull. Not clear whether both dogs attacked her, or just one of them. An 18-day-old child was killed in an attack also involving a pit bull/golden Lab mix. Mail carrier Robert Rochester, 55, of New Castle, Delaware, died on October 17, 2012 from a heart attack five days after receiving hospital treatment for multiple bites inflicted by a German shepherd who

was shot at the scene by police. The death was eventually found to have resulted from the dog attack.

**German shepherd/husky mix:** Neighbors identified the “German shepherd and husky mix” who killed Kyle Holland, 5, in Lincoln Park, Michigan, on July 12, 2010 (with a Lab mix) as a wolf hybrid.

**Golden retriever:** One dog responsible for an attack was rabid. Another accidentally strangled Kaitlyn Hassard, 6, of Manorville, Long Island, on 1/24/06, by tugging at her scarf.

**Golden retriever mix:** Involved with Australian shepherd mix in July 26, 2008 fatal attack on Lorraine May, 74, of Titusville, Florida.

**Hound mix:** The “hound/terrier mix” who attacked Ryan Baxter, 6, on February 14, 2014 in Marsing, Idaho, might in truth have been a pit bull.

**Jack Russell terrier:** Patricia Schneider, 50, of Discovery Bay, Calif., whose spleen had been removed, died in 2/98 of infection, 3 days after receiving bite on lip at home of Diane Gardner and Elaine Goodney. A Jack Russell chewed off gangrenous toe of Jerry Douthett, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in August 2010.

**Keeshond:** A 91-year-old woman whose arm was badly mauled by her “Keeshond mix” on November 14, 2014 at her home in Stratford, Connecticut died four days later from kidney failure believed to have resulted from an infection transmitted by bites. The dog was subsequently found to have a brain tumor.

**Labrador:** Adult victim was attacked in her home by as many as 23 dogs owned by daughter. The Lab who severely mauled Jasmine Charboneau, 2, on 7/29/04 in Devils Lake, ND, proved to be rabid.

**Labrador mix:** Reports varied as to whether one case was severe enough to include.

**Mastiff:** One mastiff attack also involved an attacking pit bull.

**Mini-pinscher:** One miniature pinscher apparently joined two pit bulls in attacking a child. The dog has also been identified in some accounts as a Doberman. Either way, this isolated event is not of statistical significance relative to the larger patterns of dog attacks.

**Old English sheep dog:** Gertrude Monroe, 87, mother of Kathryn Schwarb of Birmingham, Michigan, on December 19, 1984 tripped over King Boots, 8, an award-winning show dog belonging to Schwarb, and was severely bitten. Whether Monroe died of the bites, the fall, or a heart attack or stroke preceding the fall was not clearly established. King Boots was defanged and castrated, by judicial order, as this was the second biting incident involving him.

**Pit bull:** Two cases have involved dogs who assisted in killings carried out by a human, and may have inflicted the fatal injuries. Another case was a 6-year-old girl who was caught and strangled by a pit bull’s chain. An 83-year-old victim was killed by either a German shepherd/Labrador mix or a pit bull, but it was not clear whether both dogs attacked her, or just one of them. One case involved a woman who was apparently killed by two pit bulls and one Rottweiler. Not listed but suspect was the December 1998 death of **Z’aira Marshall**, age 4, in Glen Burnie, Maryland. Her father, Richard Prince Marshall, 25, left her remains inside two plastic garbage bags in a wooded area near the Baltimore/Washington Airport, telling a friend that he was disposing of a dead pit bull. She was not reported missing until August 1999. Richard Prince Marshall led police to the remains, saying she had died of convulsions of unknown origin.

Decomposition was so advanced that the cause of death could not be determined. Also not listed but suspect was the July 2006 death of **Serenity Brown**, 2, in Brooklyn, New York, who was not reported missing until 2011. The *New York Daily News* on February 10 2014 reported that police believe her father Edward “Chuck” Brown fatally punched her, immersed her in a bathtub, fed her remains to a pit bull, then killed the pit bull. Brown has not been charged, the *Daily News* indicated, due to lack of forensic evidence. A month-old baby girl was smothered in May 2005 in Lockland, Ohio, when a pit bull lay down on top of her. **Rashawn Thompson**, 18, was mauled on 4/25/07 by 13 dogs, including one pit bull and 12 of unidentifiable mix. **Amber Strode**, 22, of Springfield, Illinois, was found dismembered by pit bulls in her home on January 28, 2008. Coroner Susan Boone ruled that Strode had died of a cocaine overdose before the pit bulls attacked her. Boone later resigned for allegedly falsifying evidence in that and several other cases. **Leanne Bechtel** was convicted on October 26, 2012 of killing **Autumn**

**Franks**, 3, on April 3, 2008, in Lakewood, Washington. Bechtel contended that Franks suffered multiple skull fractures when knocked off a couch by a pit bull. However, Franks had suffered earlier injuries, including a prior skull fracture, indicative of human-inflicted abuse. The Franks case is accordingly not included in the dog attack data. As many as 27 pit bull puppies in August 2008 used terminal cancer patient **Michael Warner**, 55, “as a food source,” according to Pierce County sheriff’s spokesman Ed Troyer. Warner died from his injuries. **Louanne Okapal**, 55, of Sauk County, Wisconsin, suffered severe facial injuries on February 14, 2009 when a pit bull attacked a horse she was saddling and the horse kicked her in the face. A woman who was not named by police was killed on June 4, 2009 in Hayward, California, when a leashed pit bull ran after his owner, who had bicycled across railway tracks in front of an oncoming train, and dragged the woman in front of the train. The pit bull was also killed. This chart formerly included a stat line separate from pit bulls for “American bulldogs.” That line recorded an attack on September 13, 2007 in Livingston County, Michigan, by five dogs described by Livingston County animal control director Anne Burns as resembling an “English bulldog on stilts.” Photos subsequently established that these dogs were in fact pit bulls. They killed two adults. **Robert J. Klatch**, 83, of Port St. Lucie, Florida, was injured by a pit bull who attacked his shih tsu on February 11, 2009. Klatch died of his injuries and other deteriorating health conditions apparently aggravated by the dog attack on April 21, 2009. Animal control officer **Teresa Foss**, 48, of Plainfield, Connecticut, died on

October 8, 2009, from head injuries suffered when a pit bull she had been called to apprehend apparently knocked her down. **Timothy Niemeyer**, 56, of Indianapolis, suffered a fatal heart attack on October 10, 2009 when attacked by a pit bull; he died on October 14. **Ethel Baker Horton**, 65, of Lee County, Wisconsin, died of a heart attack on March 4, 2010 while intervening in an attack on her husband, Jerry Horton, 71. Portland, Oregon police officer **Stephen Gandy**, 33, suffered a life-threatening blood infection from a bite by a pit bull on April 12, 2010. **Miracle Parham**, 14, of Henry County, Georgia, was killed by a car on October 5, 2010 while trying to escape from a pit bull who rushed her at her school bus stop. **Christina Casey**, 53, was killed on November 2, 2010 in her yard in Moreno Valley, California, by two dogs who were initially identified as pit bulls, but were later mentioned in various reports as mixes of pit bull & Akita and/or pit bull & Weimaraner and/or pit bull, Wainmaraner, and Labrador retriever. The one consistent aspect of the description was that the dogs were at least part pit bull & of pit bull configuration. **Richard Martratt**, 64, died from a heart attack on November 25, 2010, after stabbing one of two pit bulls who had knocked down Joan Hardin, 78. Alan Hardin 50, was bitten in the same incident. A fatality not included in the numbers was **Anna Smith Brown**, 68, of Wilmington, North Carolina, who was killed in a car crash on December 5, 2010 while trying to rush her 20-month-old granddaughter to a hospital after the granddaughter suffered a facially disfiguring bite from a pit bull. **Cary Grant**, 56, died of a heart attack in Sullivan, Ohio, on April 17, 2011, soon after a pit bull attack which appeared to be the triggering event. **Addyson Paige Camerino**, nine days old, was killed on August 30, 2011 in Bladen County, North Carolina, by at least three dogs from among a group including "a pit bull, bulldog, Alaskan malamute, German shepherd and German shepherd-bulldog mix," according to investigators. Neighbors reported that the household also included a Rottweiler. **Emako Mendoza**, 76, of San Diego, died on December 24, 2011. She had been hospitalized since losing her left arm and leg in a June 18, 2011 attack by two pit bulls. **Mable Harrison McCallister**, 84, of Cleveland, Tennessee, was mauled on the face and neck on December 18, 2011. She died on January 1, 2012. **Diane Jansen**, 59, suffered a fatal stroke when attacked by a pit bull on March 4, 2012 in Escondido, California. **Tim Thomas**, 49, of Douglas County, Georgia, on July 13, 2012 suffered a fatal heart attack while trying to stop his two pit bulls from killing a Lhasa Apso. **America Viridiana**, 4, was killed on August 23, 2012 in Tijuana, Mexico, by an adult pit bull brought from San Diego only days earlier by her grandfather, **Godofredo Cruz Martinez**, 55. Although the attack occurred a few miles outside the U.S., it is listed because almost the entire life and acculturation of the dog were in the U.S. **James Harding**, 62, of East Baltimore, Maryland, was killed on February 22, 2013 when he ran in front of a car while trying to escape an attack by two pit bulls. **Carlos Eligio Trevino**, 54, of Idaho Falls, Idaho, died of "apparent natural causes" on January 7, 2014 after breaking up a fight involving seven pit bulls and pit mixes. Not listed is **Pedro Tepale**, 51, whose remains were being eaten by a pit bull and a Rottweiler when discovered on February 14, 2014 by Torsten Werner, animal control officer for Mendocino County, California. The man was believed to have already been dead when the dogs found him. An unidentified 24-year-old man suffered a severe but not life-threatening head injury in Springfield, Illinois on March 6, 2014 when hit by a car while trying to escape a pit bull attack. **Davon Jiggetts**, 17, of Fulton County, Georgia, was killed by a car on April 11, 2014 while trying to evade an attacking pit bull. Not included among these statistics is **Ryan Brown**, 15, of Fayette County, Tennessee, who was fatally injured on August 3, 2014 when struck by a pan his twin brother threw to try to break up a fight between two family pit bulls. Not listed is **Robert Franti**, 40, found dead on October 13, 2014 in Greenwood, Indiana. Police said Franti's pit bull and Cane Corso had eaten the soft tissue from his face, neck, and upper chest, but ascribed his death to a drug overdose.

**Pit bull/Lab mix:** One child was killed in an attack also involving a German shepherd mix. Cary Phelan, of Papillion, Nebraska, died in August 2012 from an infection transmitted by a pit bull/Lab mix.

**Pit bull/Pointer mix:** Was involved in attack on Iran Menses, 66, of Los Angeles, on 5/28/00, along with two pit bull terriers, but apparently did not inflict any of Menses' injuries.

**Poodle:** Very strange 2002 case involved prescription drug use possibly affecting dog as well as victim. A pit bull attack on a 3-year-old on December 2, 2011 in Seymour, Tennessee also involved two poodles who apparently joined in.

**Rottweiler: Jonathon Chandler**, 6 months, of Lancaster, Ohio, was reportedly crushed in bed by the family Rottweiler. Four other children, ages 2-11, were removed from home of **Shelly Fisher**; case was investigated as possible negligent homicide. Another case involved a woman who was apparently killed by two pit bulls and one Rottweiler. The May 15, 2005 death of **Neil Pera** in Wallingford, Connecticut, was attributed by the coroner to cirrhosis of the liver, but police photographs of his remains and the reports of the responding police officers indicate that innumerable bites were involved, apparently as Pera curled into a fetal position to avoid further injury. He died afterward, stretched out on his badly bitten back. **Joe Mortensen**, 22, of Dix Hills, N.Y., was mauled by two Rottweilers belonging to James Mazzone, 44, in June 2007, when the Rottweilers allegedly attacked his pit bull mix. A man fleeing an attack by two Rottweilers was critically injured by a car on September 20, 2009 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Mail carrier **Hao Yun "Eddie" Lin** of Oceanside, California, suffered a fatal head injury in a fall while trying to evade a lunging Rottweiler on May 25, 2010. **Michael Winter**, 30, of Henrietta Township, Lorain County, Ohio, was killed on June 15, 2010 by a reportedly Rottweiler-led pack also including five bull

mastiffs and three pit bull/boxer mixes. Not listed is an unidentified man whose remains were being eaten by a pit bull and a Rottweiler when found on February 14, 2014 by Torsten Werner, animal control officer for Mendocino County, Calif. The man was believed to have already been dead when the dogs found him. **Schnauzer:** A schnauzer joined a pit bull in fatally injuring **Mike Rocha Gomez**, 86, on October 14, 2005 in West Covina, California.

**Shih Tsu: Christine Caron**, 42, of Ottawa, Ontario lost her left arm and both legs to a *Capnocytophaga canimorsus* bacterial infection after suffering a bite on her knuckle while playing with her Shih Tsu, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported on July 22, 2013. Three other dogs licked the wound. The Public Health Agency of Canada found that only 200 human cases of this type of infection have been reported worldwide since 1976. "The medical literature emphasizes that the infection is much more severe in immune incompetent hosts including those with functional or anatomic asplenia [absence of a spleen]," wrote ProMed infectious disease moderator Larry Lutwick.

**Unidentified:** The death of **Nicholas Benjamin Loris**, 6, of Davidson County, NC, on February 21, 1987, was belatedly recognized by the county medical examiner as having been caused by an attack by an unknown dog in January 2012. **Keith Trout**, 60, of York, PA, died on November 23, 2011 from a septic dog bite, apparently inflicted by one of his own dogs. No breed information was available about the dogs. Sisters **Josefina Ledezma**, 63, and **Estela Regalado**, 51, of Brownsville, TX, were injured on January 24, 2013 by about a dozen of 29 dogs kept in their home, who appeared in news video to be typical mixed-breed Mexican street dogs. Many of the dogs who were not involved in the attack were puppies. Robin Sullins, 48, of Leander, Texas, lost both legs and nine fingers to *Capnocytophaga canimorsus* infection resulting from bites suffered on Christmas Day 2013 while breaking up a fight between her two dogs of unidentified breed.

**West Highland terrier: Rose Kazarian**, 75, suffered a fatal heart attack after a bite by a leashed West Highland terrier while visiting her husband's grave at the Hope Cemetery in Worcester, Massachusetts.

**Wolf hybrid:** One adult fatality was a small woman who was defending two children. The other was a small woman, 61, who was apparently defending her dog. In that instance, the wolf hybrid was identified as being a wolf hybrid/German shepherd cross, with the German shepherd configuration dominant. Some experts are skeptical that the animal had any wolf ancestry at all. A third possible adult fatality was

**Patricia Ritz**, 67, of Ohio County, Kentucky, a multi-time convicted animal hoarder whose remains were found on September 24, 2013. Her remains had apparently been eaten by some of her 50 starving wolf-hybrids, but her cause of death was not determined.

## Pit bull & pit mix trends, 1982-present

The 1992 data represents the first 10 years of data collection:

YEAR	ATTACKS		CHILDREN		ADULTS		KILLED		MAIMED	
	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total	Year
1992	104		44		60		18		36	
2002	731	86	346	45	248	22	62	6	394	54
2003	859	128	396	50	304	56	75	13	465	71
2004	938	79	434	38	330	26	83	8	503	38
2005	1082	144	495	61	370	40	97	14	584	81
2006	1196	114	524	29	417	47	111	14	647	63
2007	1274	78	554	30	440	23	124	13	684	37
2008	1400	126	595	41	476	37	138	14	738	54
2009	1562	162	668	73	527	51	162	24	831	93
2010	1807	245	778	110	607	80	191	29	973	142
2011	2102	295	880	102	718	111	214	23	1171	198
2012	2405	305	974	95	854	136	246	32	1360	190
2013	2993	588	1190	214	1094	240	276	30	1782	422
2014	3595	603	1454	264	1373	279	307	31	2233	451



## Analysis

The above data may be evaluated in three different contexts. The first pertains to breed-specific characteristic behavior, the second to bite frequency as opposed to the frequency of severe injuries, and the third to degree of relative risk.

Of the breeds most often involved in incidents of sufficient severity to be listed, pit bulls and their close mixes make up only about 6% of the total U.S. dog population, according to my frequent surveys of regionally balanced samples of classified ads of dogs for sale, but they constitute 37% of the dog population in U.S. animal shelters at any given time, according to my 2013 single-day shelter inventory survey, which followed up similar surveys producing similar results done in 2004, 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2012.

Pit bulls are noteworthy on the chart above for attacking adults almost as frequently as children. This is a very rare pattern, also seen in the bull mastiff/Presa Canario line. Children are normally at greatest risk from dog bite because they play with dogs more often, have less experience in reading dog behavior, are more likely to engage in activity that alarms or stimulates a dog, and are less able to defend themselves when a dog becomes aggressive. Pit bulls and the bull mastiff/Presa Canario dog category (whose ancestry overlaps pit bull ancestry) seem to differ behaviorally from other dogs in having far less inhibition about attacking people who are larger than they are. They are also notorious for attacking seemingly without warning, a tendency exacerbated by the formerly common and still occasionally seen custom of docking pit bulls' tails so that warning signals are not easily recognized. Thus the adult victim of a pit bull attack may have had little or no opportunity to read the warning signals that would avert an attack from any other dog.

Rottweilers by contrast show a fairly normal child/adult attack ratio. They seem to show up disproportionately often in the mauling, killing, and maiming statistics simply because they are both quite popular and very powerful, capable of doing a great deal of damage in cases where bites by other breeds might be relatively harmless.

Wolf hybrids, German shepherds, and huskies are at the extreme opposite end of the scale, rarely inflicting severe injury on adults—but it would be a huge mistake to assume that these seemingly similar patterns reflect similar behavior.

German shepherds are herding dogs, bred for generations to guide and protect sheep. In modern society, they are among the dogs of choice for families with small children, because of their extremely strong protective instinct. They have three distinctively different bites: the guiding nip, which usually does not break the skin; the grab-and-drag, to pull a puppy or lamb or child away from danger, which is as gentle as emergency circumstances allow; and the reactive bite, usually in defense of territory, a child, or someone else the dog is inclined to guard. The reactive bite usually comes only

after many warning barks, growls, and other exhibitions intended to avert a conflict. When it does come, it is typically accompanied by a frontal leap for the wrist or throat.

Because German shepherds often use the guiding nip and the grab-and-drag with children, who sometimes misread the dogs' intentions and pull away in panic, they are involved in biting incidents at almost twice the rate that their numbers alone would predict: approximately 28% of all bite cases, according to a recent five-year compilation of Minneapolis animal control data. Yet none of the Minneapolis bites by German shepherds involved a serious injury: hurting someone is almost never the dogs' intent.

Every one of the wolf hybrid attacks, however, seems to have been predatory. Only four of the fatality victims were older than age seven, and all three were of small stature. The first adult fatality was killed in the presence of her two young sons, whom she was apparently trying to protect. The second was killed while apparently trying to protect her dog. Most of the victims were killed very quickly. Some never knew the wolf hybrid was present. Some may never have known what hit them. Some were killed right in front of parents, who had no time to react.

Unlike German shepherds, wolf hybrids are usually kept well apart from children, and from any people other than their owners. Yet through the last two decades of the 20th century, wolf hybrids have found frequent opportunity to attack.

Though huskies are common in the U.S., fatal and disfiguring husky attacks have occurred mostly in Alaska, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, Labrador, and the northernmost parts of Quebec. In these regions, huskies are often kept in packs, in semi-natural conditions, and in some cases are even allowed to spend summers without regular human supervision. Thus many of the husky attack cases might be viewed more as attacks by feral animals, even though they technically qualified for this log because they were identified as owned and trained animals.

Akitas, Malamutes, and Samoyeds have a similar attack pattern, but while these are also "northern breeds" used to pull sleds, most of the attacks by Akitas, Malamutes, and Samoyeds have occurred in ordinary home situations.

Chows, apparently an ancient cross of Arctic dogs with dogs of molosser lineage, exhibit an attack pattern comparable to that of the northern breeds.

What all this may mean relative to legislation is problematic.

The traditional approach to dangerous dog legislation is to allow "one free bite," at which point the owner is warned. On second bite, the dog is killed. The traditional approach, however, patently does not apply in addressing the threats from pit bulls, Rottweilers, and wolf hybrids. In more than two-thirds of the cases I have logged, the life-threatening or fatal attack was apparently the first known dangerous behavior by the animal in question. Children and elderly people were almost always the victims.

Temperament, I must emphasize, is not the issue illustrated by the above data, nor is it relevant. What this data reveals is actuarial risk. If almost any other dog has a bad moment, someone may get bitten, but will not be maimed for life or killed, and the actuarial risk is accordingly reasonable. If a pit bull or a Rottweiler has a bad moment, often someone is maimed or killed—and that has now created off-the-chart actuarial risk, for which the dogs as well as their victims are paying the price.

Merritt Clifton, editor

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