



Otter Aquatics Newsletter

No 34. March 2018

Dear swimmers and others

Welcome to the March 2018 edition of the Otter Aquatics newsletter.

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To give our Sunday swimmers some advance notice, Murrumba Downs pool will close for the winter at the end of April – and so will the neighbouring pools at Deception Bay and Sandgate. Burpengary (Caboolture Regional Aquatic Centre) will close at the end of April until the end of March 2019 to allow major work to be undertaken. We are currently looking for a winter venue to continue our Sunday swimming. At the moment, it looks like either North Lakes (25m, heated, outdoors) or Redcliffe (50m, heated, indoors). I will keep everyone posted,

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History in the Making: 99 year old man breaks record



A swimming world record has just been broken at the Commonwealth Games trials on the Gold Coast by a 99-year-old Australian man. George Coronas, who turns 100 in April, completed the 50 metre freestyle swim in 56.12 seconds. Coronas, the only swimmer in his 100-104 age group, swam alone.

Hell of the West

One of our OWSers, **Don Pezet**, took part in the Hell of the West triathlon last month. Here is his story.

The Hell-of-the-West (HOTW) Triathlon is held annually in Goondiwindi during the month of February. It was so named due to the gruelling summer temperatures usually endured by participants. Distances are 2km for the swim, 80km for the bike and 20km for the run – just short of half iron-man. Last year the event lived up to its reputation, with 44 degree temperatures, but this year the weather was much kinder – only reaching the low thirties. There had been rain for two days prior, and that served to keep the temperature down, and the river up.

In January this year I was asked by a friend to team up with him (rider) and another associate (runner) to tackle the swim leg of the 2018 HOTW. It was somewhat short notice, but I was reasonably confident of getting through unscathed due to our weekly frolic off Queens Beach North, Scarborough, where we usually complete just under 2km.

The event always starts early in order to take advantage of the coolest time of day. The first group to swim started at 5am, with remaining groups going at 5min intervals. There were five groupings (each with different coloured caps): Open Male, Open Female, all other males (individual), all other females (individual) and lastly, team swimmers. We team swimmers were away at 05:20. Water temperature was a near perfect 24.7 degrees.

This was quite an experience – good thing that I didn't drink much water before the event, because I ingested many mouthfuls during the first 3 minutes of the swim! Suitably hydrated, priority 1 was to find a clear path forward in order to change gear from thrashing about to actually swimming :-). It was quite good from that point on, although adjusting direction in order to avoid other swimmers continued unabated.

There were 95 teams, and in excess of two hundred individual competitors. Of the 95 teams, only 20 were all male. The impression at the start was that most of the males were just a *little* younger, but of course, in the early morning light, perhaps I also appeared like daunting opposition to them :-/.

The swim was 1km upstream (against the current), and then from the turn-around buoy, 1km back with the current. Whilst a source of some apprehension prior to the event, the current was far from my mind during the swim due to constant jockeying for position and adjusting course. The pink caps were in the group ahead of us (green caps), but we managed to reel a few in by the time we were back at the boat ramp. Someone I know from the Redcliffe Tri Club reached the boat ramp just ahead of me, and given their actual swim time, mine was around the 41 minute mark. Times were not registered however, until each swimmer reached the transition area – this meant going up the boat ramp, up some steps, over the road and running for some 500 metres before crossing into and through the main park in town. On a good day, I can usually put on a reasonable turn of speed (short distances only) – but this wasn't that day (not after a 2km swim :-\).

Anyway, of the 20 all-male teams, we were 13th at the transition from swim to bike, 10th at the transition from bike to run, but had slipped to 17th by the finish. It was a great experience, and something which I'll try again – Kaye is even considering taking on the bike leg next year. We will just need a runner.... any takers out there??

Don Pezet



Waiting at the start.



Standing with some of the Redcliffe Tri Club members.



Thinking through the race plan (?)



At the 60km mark with our rider...




Kicking: why do we do it?

Did you know that we use up to 70% of our body's energy by kicking? And that we get so much less in speed than that effort in return? If you are in a short sprint race, a strong and fast kick will certainly add to your speed, but probably not as much as you may think (no more than about 10%). For longer distances, the effort expended in a powerful kick will come at a price of reducing your energy and tiring more quickly.

You might be tempted to deduce that we are better off by not kicking; indeed, some distance swimmers do just that. But that is also not the answer. We need 'an effective kick' to bring our hips and legs up to the surface to create a horizontal body profile as well as to balance the body in particular by effecting a good body rotation.

So what is 'an effective kick'? It is one that is consciously deployed with almost straight legs, with only slight amplitude (say 10cm to 15cm to keep the legs and feet within the body profile envelop) and at a relatively slow pace (see below). Almost straight legs does not mean locking your knees; you should have 'soft' knee action but not deliberately bending the knees. Your feet should be pointed ('plantarflexion') and ideally with a slight pigeon toed position.

What is a 'relatively slow pace'? There are three main cadences or beats for a swimming kick:

-  A six-beat kick (six beats for every two strokes of the arm). This is a fast beat to achieve maximum speed in a short distance sprint race
-  A four-beat kick (four beats for every two arm strokes) is what most of would usually use for general swimming
-  A two-beat kick is ideal for distance or open water swimming. It is two beats for every two arm strokes (or one beat per arm stroke). It is like a foot flick (like trying to flick off a sock) using the opposite leg to the arm stroke. Its purpose is to fire the hip around to achieve a powerful body rotation, which is what causes forward propulsion.

Kicking practice should not be undertaken with a kick board as it forces the body into an ineffective and possibly damaging backwards arch by forcing the upper body into an unnaturally high position while trying to kick hard. Kicking practice should still be undertaken but without a kickboard and in a type of streamline body position. One arm should be extended while breathing to the other side. Sides should alternate every 25m or so

Stroke tip of the month: avoid hyper-extension of the elbow

Hyper-extension of the elbow usually occurs in breaststroke or butterfly, but it can also occur in freestyle if your technique is not good.

The two most common instances for elbow hyper-extension in freestyle occur in the reach to the front immediately after the entry and before the catch and in pulling back too far before the arm exit and recovery.

Over reach to the front. Achieve your full reach to the front with the last 15–20cms (about a hand length) under the water by about 10cm. After you have reached to the front, begin the catch with only a short delay. Remember that the catch should not be accompanied by the application of muscular strength as this will only contribute to lifting the upper body up, not at all to forward propulsion and will likely result in shoulder injury. To avoid elbow injury, make sure that *your wrist is below your elbow and your elbow is below your shoulder* in both the reach and the catch.

Pulling back too far. The pull/push part of the freestyle stroke should extend only so far that an outstretched thumb touches the thigh and never as far back as a straight arm behind. From the touching-the-thigh position, just lift the elbow up out of the water and commence the recovery part of the stroke. This is far more easily achieved if you can master a good body rotation.

Hyper extension of the elbow is a painful condition. Best to avoid it by using good technique.

Why be afraid of sharks when there are far more dangerous animals that can kill you?

To put shark attacks into perspective, here are the numbers of humans killed worldwide every year by animals:

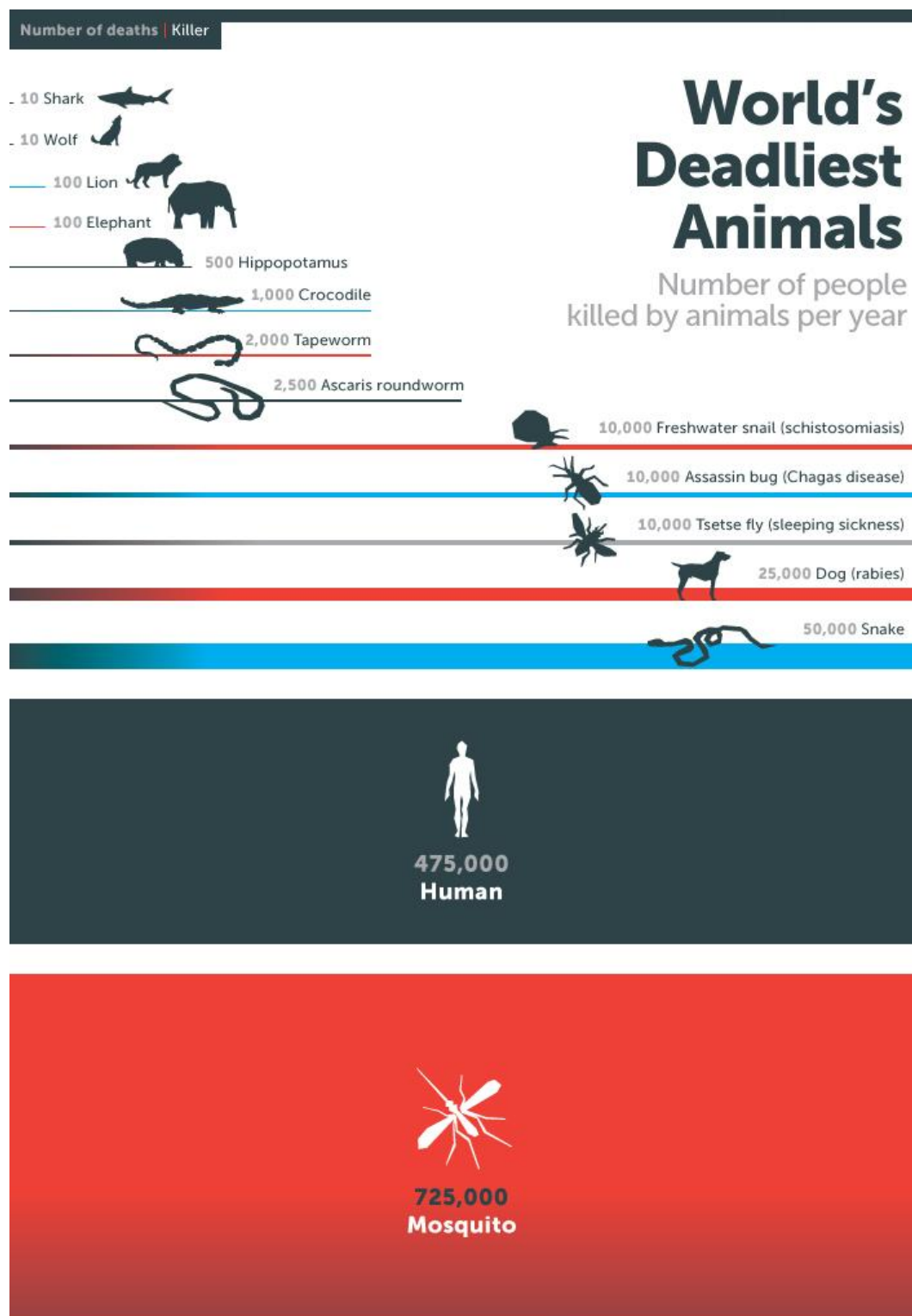
Sharks 6–10 (in Australia, 1–2)	Tsetse flies: 10,000
Wolves 10	Assassins Bugs 12,000
Lions 22	Freshwater snails: 20,000
Elephants 500	Dogs 35,000
Hippopotamuses: 500	Snakes 100,000
Tapeworms 500	Humans (homicides) 437,000
Crocodiles 1,000	Mosquitoes 740,000
Ascaris roundworms: 4,500	

But how many sharks are
killed by humans every year?

**100 million
(or 11,417 per hour)**

Why? To take their fins for shark fin soup,
after which the shark dies.

Sharks are an important part of the marine
ecosystem. Conserve them by taking away
the market by refusing to eat shark fin



Thanks to the Bill Gates blog for this graphic.






So what's stopping you swimming in the sea? Better to get in the sea and away from people I reckon.

Australian and European swimming holidays

The following Australian and European swimming holidays are on offer for 2019:

-  'The Iconic and Historic Swimming Places of Sydney' Swimtour – March and November each year

And the following trips are scheduled for August/September 2019:

-  Italy's Lake Orta
-  Cycling and Swimming Tour of Lake Constance.
-  Symi Island, Greece. We are contemplating organising this trip to coincide with Yoga Meditation Brisbane's (YMB) Greek island yoga workshop. More details in next month's newsletter
-  A Baltic swimming challenge
-  Swimming the Straits of Gibraltar

For full details, check out the website: <http://www.otteraquatics.com.au/swim-tours.html> .

All of these trips will go ahead only if there are sufficient numbers; say about 6 per event. The deadline for registration and payment of a 10% (refundable) deposit for each swimming holiday is **30 June 2018**. The rest of the 50% (non-refundable) deposit must be paid by **31 December 2018**. The balance must be paid by **30 June 2019**. But get in touch with me sooner if you are even a bit interested. More details including prices will be available in the next few months.

Quiz of the month

The answer to *last month's* question ('how can you tell the difference between *heat exhaustion* and *heat stroke*?') is: 'very high body temperature, rapid pulse, no sweating, disoriented – this is a medical emergency'. And the winner of a bucket of ice cream (to lower body temperature of course) is me – as no one else reads these newsletters apparently.

This month's quiz question is: what are two potentially fatal diseases transmitted to humans by mosquitoes?

Quote of the month:

"We shouldn't judge our worth on the successes we make. We should judge our worth on our capacity to manage the mistakes we make"

Pic of the month



Swimming (legally) with a playful humpback whale in Tonga. Many thanks to Oceanswims.com for the pic

