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## Nine-Year-Old Girl Dragged Underwater by Sea Lion During Surf Lesson in California

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A young girl learning to surf at a beach in California was bitten and pulled underwater by a sea lion in a rare and alarming encounter. The incident took place at Asilomar State Beach, located in Monterey County, where nine-year-old Corale Olsen was attending a surf camp with her siblings.

The sea lion approached unexpectedly during a lesson in deeper waters, where Corale was being guided by her instructor. “We were pretty deep in the ocean,” Corale said. “Then, the sea lion went under my instructor’s leg and came up to me and bit me, and then I got dragged underwater.” She described the ordeal to ABC7 News, saying she was in pain and screamed out for help. “It was pain and I was screaming and then my instructor said, ‘What happened?’ Then I said, ‘I got bit and it hurts so bad.’”

Surf instructor Alex De Marignac acted swiftly, rescuing Corale along with her brother and sister. He carried all three children back to the beach for treatment. “I had two kids under each arm and one hanging off my neck, and yeah, we all made it,” he told reporters. His quick response helped prevent further injury.

Corale sustained puncture wounds and bruising to her leg and was taken to an emergency treatment room set up on the beach. Photos showed her on crutches following the incident. Her sister, Skye, stayed by her side and comforted her throughout the medical evaluation. Speaking to KSBW, Skye said, “I was very worried, honestly. I was in the room, and I was worried. So, I was telling her to calm down.”

The sea lion’s behaviour has been described as highly unusual. While sea lions are known to be curious and territorial, such aggressive interaction with humans is rare. Mr De Marignac, who has surfed in the same waters since childhood, said it was unlike anything he had previously experienced. “I have surfed in these waters since I was about six years old. Never, ever seen something like that,” he stated.

Authorities have not reported any further incidents, but the event has prompted concern among local beachgoers and marine safety observers. Marine experts have occasionally noted that territorial or ill sea lions may behave unpredictably, especially when startled or provoked, though the exact cause in this case remains unclear.

Corale is now recovering from her injuries, and the surf camp has resumed with increased awareness among instructors and parents. While rare, the event serves as a reminder of the unpredictability of wildlife in open water, particularly in areas where human activity intersects with marine habitats.