



Plague

Maps and Statistics

Plague in the United States

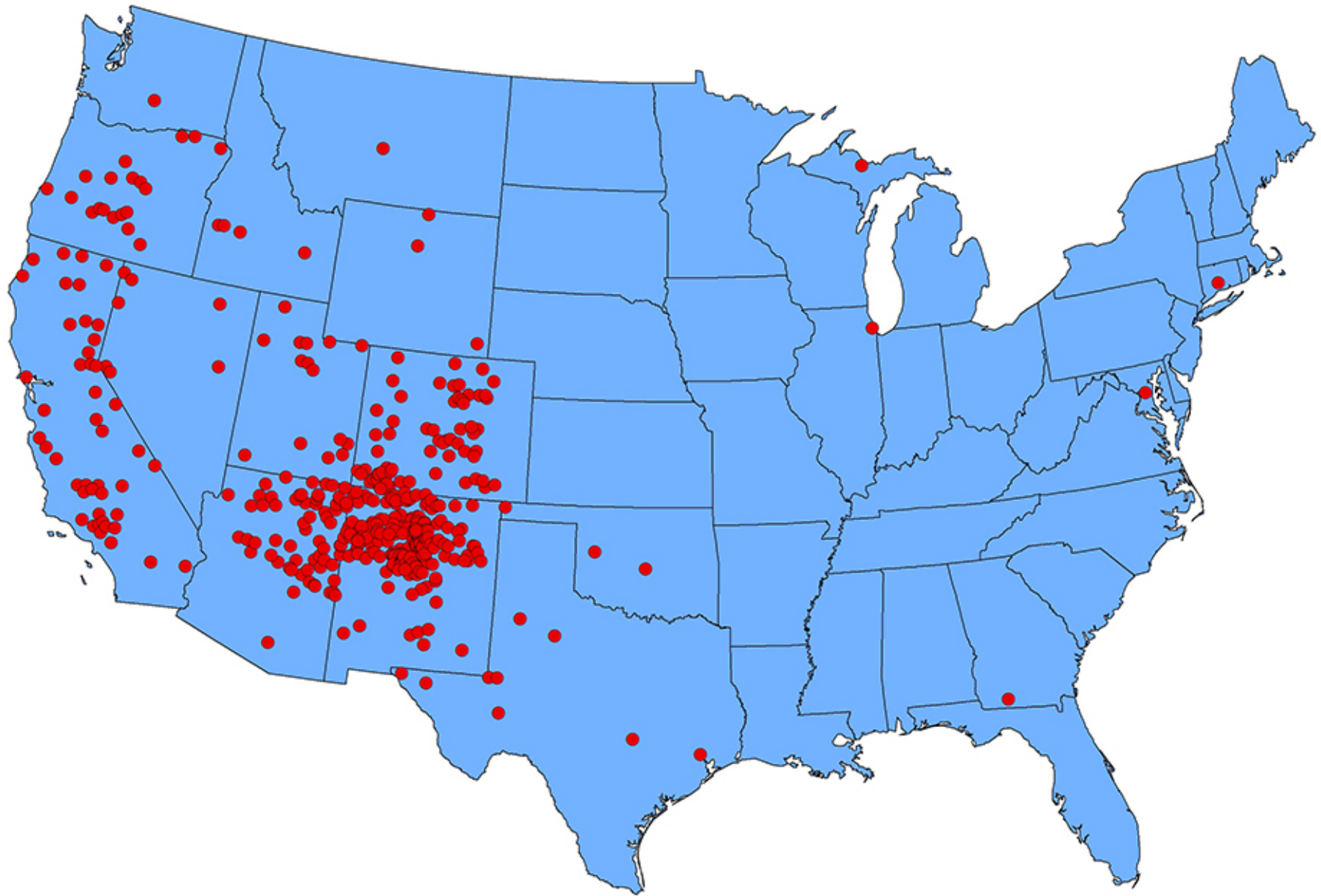
Plague was first introduced into the United States in 1900, by rat-infested steamships that had sailed from affected areas, mostly from Asia. Epidemics occurred in port cities. The last urban plague epidemic in the United States occurred in Los Angeles from 1924 through 1925. Plague then spread from urban rats to rural rodent species, and became entrenched in many areas of the western United States. Since that time, plague has occurred as scattered cases in rural areas. Most human cases in the United States occur in two regions:

- Northern New Mexico, northern Arizona, and southern Colorado
- California, southern Oregon, and far western Nevada

Over 80% of United States plague cases have been the [bubonic form](#). In recent decades, an average of seven human plague cases have been reported each year (range: 1–17 cases per year). Plague has occurred in people of all ages (infants up to age 96), though 50% of cases occur in people ages 12–45. It occurs in both men and women, though historically is slightly more common among men, probably because of increased outdoor activities that put them at higher risk.

Reported Cases of Human Plague - United States, 1970-2020





1 dot placed in state of residence for each reported plague case

Since the mid-20th century, plague in the United States has typically occurred in the rural West. The case shown in Illinois was lab-associated.

Table of Reported Cases – U.S. 1970-2020

State of Residence

Alabama

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Delaware

District of Columbia

Florida

Georgia

Hawaii

Idaho

Illinois

Indiana

Iowa

Kansas

Kentucky

Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota

Mississippi

Missouri

Montana

Nebraska

Nevada

New Hampshire

New Jersey

New Mexico

New York

North Carolina

North Dakota

Ohio

Oklahoma

Oregon

Pennsylvania

Rhode Island

South Carolina

South Dakota

Tennessee

Texas

Utah

Vermont

Virginia

Washington

West Virginia

Wisconsin

Wyoming

Total

Reported Cases, 1970-2020

0

0

65

0

45

66

1

0

0

0

1

0

4

1

0

0

0

0

0

0

1

0

1

0

0

0

1

0

7

0

0

253

0

0

0

0

3

19

0

0

0

0

0

9

15

0

0

1

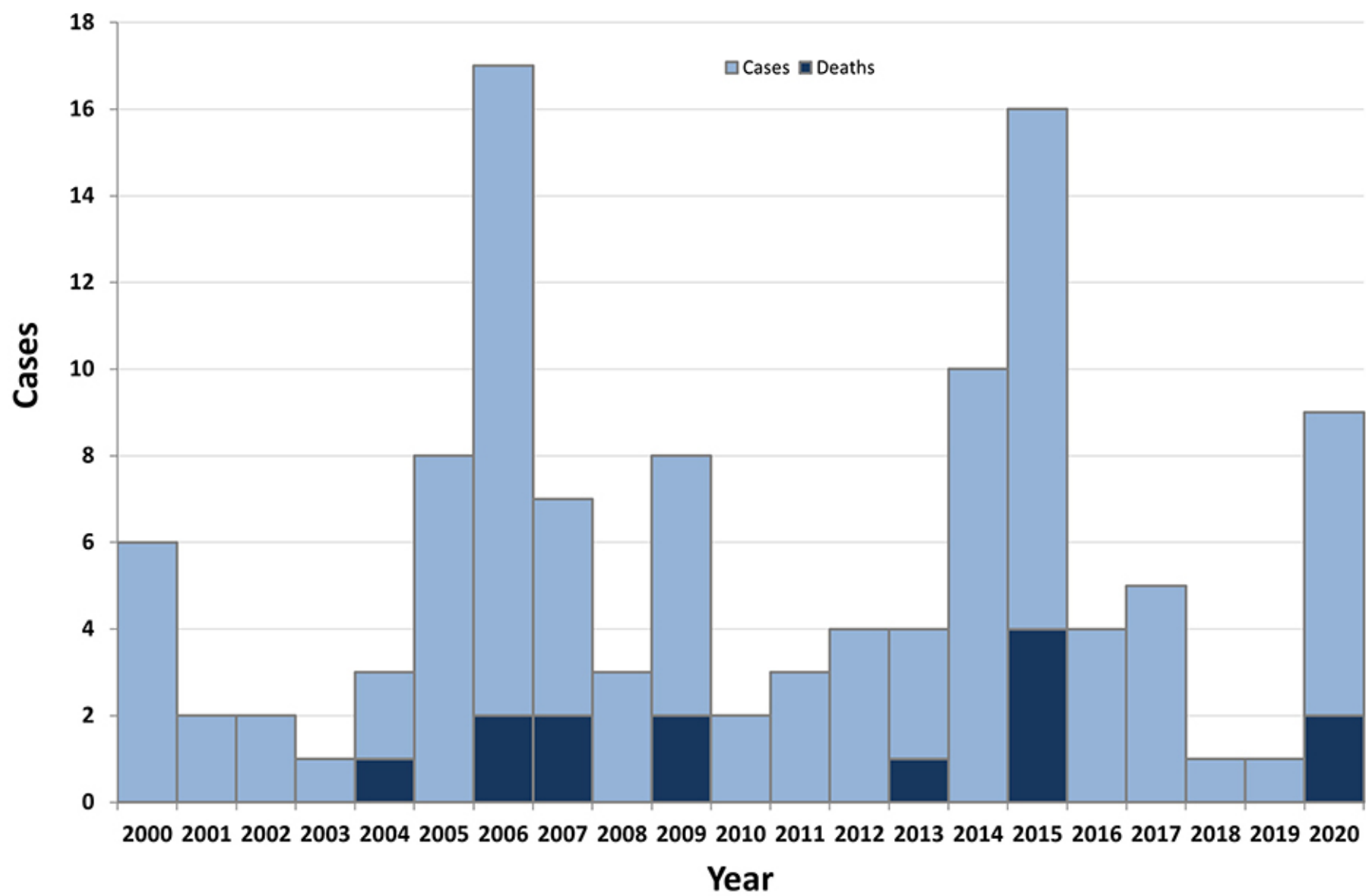
0

0

3

496

Human Plague Cases and Deaths - United States, 2000-2020



In recent decades, an average of seven human plague cases have been reported each year (range: 1–17 cases per year).

Year

2000

Total cases

6

Deaths

0

Year

2001

Total cases

2

Deaths

0

Year

2002

Total cases
2

Deaths
0

Year
2003

Total cases
1

Deaths
0

Year
2004

Total cases
3

Deaths
1

Year
2005

Total cases
8

Deaths
0

Year
2006

Total cases
17

Deaths
2

Year
2007

Total cases
7

Deaths
2

Year
2008

Total cases
3

Deaths
0

Year
2009

Total cases
8

Deaths
2

Year
2010

Total cases

2

Deaths

0

Year

2011

Total cases

3

Deaths

0

Year

2012

Total cases

4

Deaths

0

Year

2013

Total cases

4

Deaths

1

Year

2014

Total cases

10

Deaths
0

Year
2015

Total cases
16

Deaths
4

Year
2016

Total cases
4

Deaths
0

Year
2017

Total cases
5

Deaths
0

Year
2018

Total cases
1

Deaths

0

Year

2019

Total cases

1

Deaths

0

Year

2020

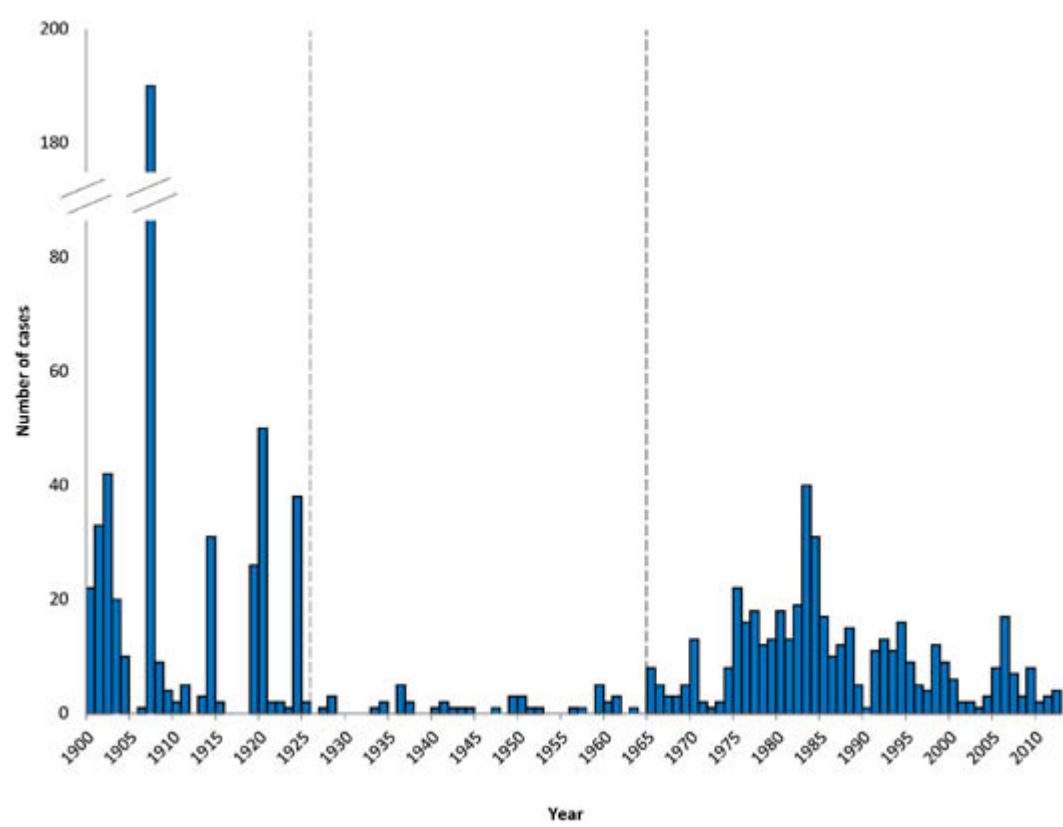
Total cases

9

Deaths

2

Number of Reported Confirmed and Probable Plague Cases per Year in the United States: 1900-2012

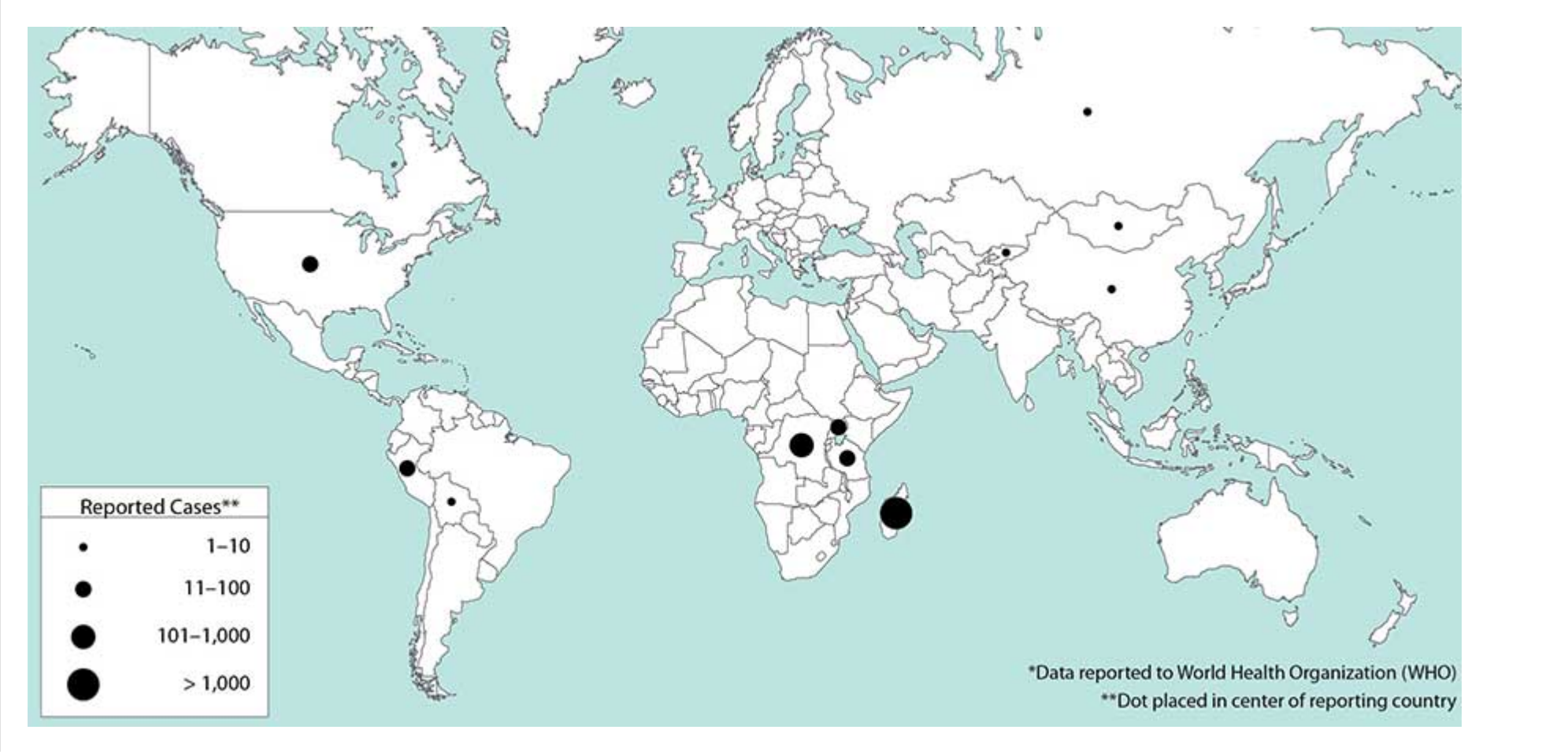


Between 1900 and 2012, 1006 confirmed or probable human plague cases occurred in the United States.

Plague Worldwide

Plague epidemics have occurred in Africa, Asia, and South America but most human cases since the 1990s have occurred in Africa. Almost all of the cases reported in the last 20 years have occurred among people living in small towns and villages or agricultural areas rather than in larger towns and cities.

Reported* Plague Cases by Country, 2013-2018



Last Reviewed: November 16, 2022