



Penny Palfrey, Honor Swimmer, Australia, 2009



Videos: [Interview 1](#) [Swim 1](#) [Swim 2](#)

Penny Palfrey achieved the triple crown twice and completed several first ever swims: 108 km swim with a non-buoyant stinger suit between Little Cayman and Grand Cayman Islands in the Cayman Islands in 40 hours 41 minutes in 2011; 63.8 km from Santa Barbara Island to the California mainland in 17 hours 53 minutes in 2009; and 41.7 km Santa Barbara Channel from San Miguel Island to the California mainland in 11 hours and 30 minutes in 2008. She was the first female, 2nd swimmer, to complete the treacherous, shark-infested 47.6 km Alenuihaha Channel from the Big Island of Hawaii to Maui in 2009 and set the overall speed record of 14 hours and 51 minutes – which still holds in 2023 (and beyond). She set the speed records for: the Kaiwi Channel 45 km overall in 2011 in 12 hours and 7 minutes which held until 2015 and female until 2023 (and beyond); Gibraltar (N>S) 14.4 km female in 2010 in 3 hours and 3 minutes which held until 2016; Gibraltar (N>S>N) 28.8 km overall in 2010 in 8 hours and 27 minutes which held until 2011 and female which still holds in 2023 (and beyond); and Tampa Bay 37 km female in 2008 - which still holds in 2023 (and beyond)

She was 1st once and 2nd twice, overall, around Manhattan. She won in 2008 the 37 km Tampa Bay race; completed an English Channel crossing in 9 hours 16 minutes in 2006 and in 9 hours and 7 minutes in 2007; Tsugaru Strait in 14 hours 30 minutes in 2011; and 8 hours and 27 minutes crossing of the Cook Strait in 2006. Penny completed the Rottneest Channel Swim from 2000 to 2008 and was 3rd in the Australian 25 km national championship in 1993 and 1994.

Palfrey attempted a 168 km crossing from Cuba to Florida across the Florida Strait in 2012, in a stinger suit, but was thwarted by powerful oncoming currents from the Gulf Stream after 41 hours and 3 minutes. She tried twice to swim the 72-mile Kaieiewaho Channel between the islands of Oahu and Kauai in Hawaii, both times stopped by venomous stings of box jellyfish after nearly reaching halfway. She participated in the 120 km triple-crossing relay crossing of Lake Taupo, the biggest lake in New Zealand, finishing in 33 hours 33 minutes with five teammates.

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)