



Florence Chadwick, Honor Swimmer, United States of America, 1966



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

Florence Chadwick was the first woman to swim from England to France in 1951 at age 32. She set 4 female speed records for the English Channel: 1950 in 13 hours and 23 minutes (until 1951); 1951 England to France in 16 hours and 19 minutes; broken in 1953 in 14 hours and 42 minutes; and broken again in 1955 in 13 hours and 55 minutes (which held until 1964). On her last three she attempted 2-way routes but gave up on the return leg on each occasion.

In 1952, she set the female speed record for the Catalina Channel in 13 hours and 48 minutes – which held until 1959. In 1953, she set the overall speed record for the Gibraltar Strait in 5 hours and 6 minutes which for 35 days – by the female record stood until 1988.

She is also an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame (1970).

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

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