



2017 Texas Oral Rabies Vaccine Distribution Update

1/11/2017: Personnel from Texas Wildlife Services, Texas Military Department, Dynamic Aviation, USDA National Rabies Management Program, and Texas Department of State Health Services arrived in Zapata yesterday, and the Command Trailer was set up. Personnel participated in orientation and safety training for the 23rd annual Texas oral rabies vaccination program (ORVP) this morning. Dr. Chris Menges, Health Service Region 4/5N Zoonosis Control (ZC) veterinarian and ORVP participant, earned veterinary continuing education (CE) credit. The afternoon was hot and windy, and all four planes began their first flights by 1:45 pm. The four planes were each able to complete 2 flights before sunset which enabled all of the flying personnel to go up once. A total of 62,025 of the 313,800 oral rabies vaccine baits being distributed by airplane in the Zapata-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone were distributed.

1/12/2017: Another hot day was forecast in Zapata. Three of the four planes were up by 8:00 am, while the 4th plane had electrical problems with the bait dispensing machine prior to take-off. The other planes encountered low visibility at the northwestern end of their assigned lines. The electrical problems in the 4th plane were resolved by midmorning, but additional problems with the bait dispensing machine were encountered during its 2nd flight of the day. Schedulers worked hard to reconfigure flights to maximize flying time during the day. A total of 114,000 of the 313,800 oral rabies vaccine baits being distributed by airplane in the Zapata-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone remain to be distributed.

Dr. Ronald Tyler, HSR 11 ZC veterinarian, and Angel Guevara, HSR 11 ZC Specialist, conducted ORV handbaiting safety and continuing education training for 18 ACOs and Registered Sanitarians from Alice Animal Control, the City of Laredo Health Department Animal Control, Webb County Environmental Health, and Zapata City/County Environmental Health. ORV baits for ground distribution by jurisdictions in HSR 11 were also allocated today. Dr. Tyler earned veterinary CE credit for his visit to the site and participation in the program.

1/13/2017: Despite cloudy skies and brisk winds, all four planes were up by 7:45 am and completed the 10 remaining flights by 5:00 pm. Some crews had bumpy rides and winds increased ahead of the cold front. All 313,800 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Zapata-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone have been distributed. Personnel packed up equipment, cleaned up the site, and prepared for the move to Del Rio tomorrow. Many thanks to Zapata County Airport manager Charles Avaritt for his hospitality!

1/14/2017: Personnel, planes, trailers and equipment all arrived safely in Del Rio, and the Command Trailer was set up. Rain showers and gusty winds moved in to the area in the late afternoon ahead of a cold front. The weather forecast was evaluated throughout the day and early evening to plan for Sunday's flights.

1/15/2017: Continued showers and heavy cloud cover prevented flights during the morning. Improved weather conditions allowed 3 planes and crews to depart for one round of 3 hour flights. Mechanical issues were identified for the 4th plane during the pilot's preflight inspection, which has taken the plane off the roster until repaired. A line of thunderstorms moved into the area and cut short the baiting time for two of the airplanes. A total of 32,025 of the 445,500 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Del Rio-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone were distributed.

1/16/2017: Clear skies, cooler temperatures, and light winds allowed early takeoffs, with 3 planes ready to drop rabies vaccine baits on their lines at sunrise. The 3 planes were able to complete a total of 9 flights ranging in length from 2.5-3.4 hours each today. Replacement components for the 4th plane arrived mid-afternoon and the Dynamic Aviation personnel immediately began working on necessary repairs. A total of 111,600 of the 445,500 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Del Rio-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone have been distributed.

1/17/2017: Rain showers and thunderstorms throughout the day prevented any rabies vaccine bait distribution flights. Dynamic Aviation personnel completed repairs on the 4th plane. DSHS, Dynamic Aviation, and USDA Wildlife Services representatives met with Laughlin AFB Airspace Management Officers to discuss coordination of ORVP flight operations.

1/18/2017: The weather improved first in the southeastern end of the Del Rio flight grids, so the schedule was switched to fly those flights in the early morning round. Weather in the northwestern part cleared much more slowly but met ceiling and visibility requirements by the time the 2nd round of flights was ready to depart. A total of 151,800 of the 445,500 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Del Rio-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone remain to be distributed.

USDA Wildlife Services personnel received 46,200 oral rabies vaccine baits for helicopter distribution in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties).

1/19/2017: Heavy fog in Del Rio kept planes and crews on the ground until mid-morning. As a result, only two rounds of flights could be completed by the four planes. All crew members were able to fly one flight. This leaves four flights (one round) to be completed tomorrow morning if all goes well. A total of 43,500 of the 445,500 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Del Rio-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone remain to be distributed.

1/20/2017: It was a big relief to see clear skies early this morning! The four planes and their crews were up within 10 minutes of sunrise to complete the final flights out of Del Rio. All 445,500 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Del Rio-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone have been distributed. Personnel packed up equipment, cleaned up the site, and will travel to Alpine this afternoon to set up operations for the final leg of this year's ORVP.

1/21/2017: Personnel and planes arrived safely in Alpine yesterday, and the Command Trailer and base of operations were set up at the Alpine-Casparis Municipal airport. Three DSHS personnel returned to their headquarters yesterday due to unforeseen circumstances but remaining personnel from USDA, the Texas State Guard, and DSHS shifted duties to fill the gap. Staff Sergeant Timothy Pruitt, a Public Information Officer from the Texas Military Department based in Austin, visited the site and met with Texas State Guard personnel to gain insight on their role in the ORVP.

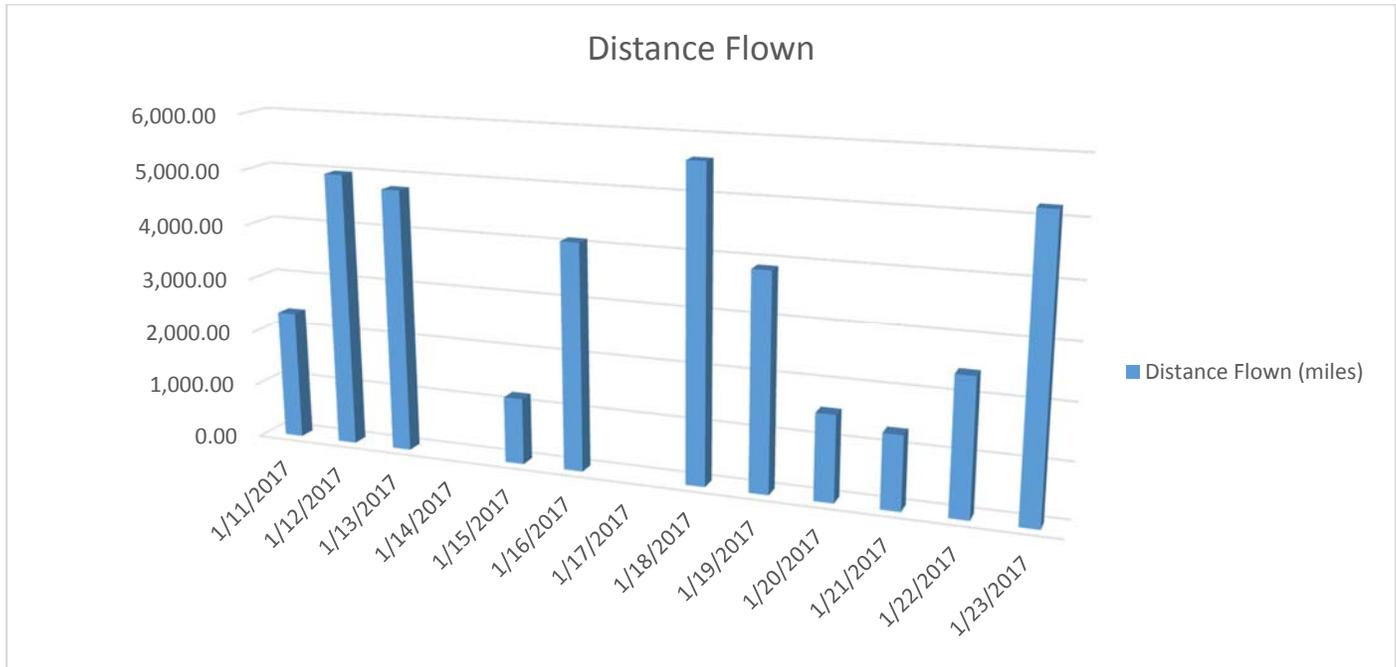
The four planes were up by 8:00 am for the first round of flights but three had to return to base early because of increased wind turbulence in the mountainous areas in the ORV vaccine bait distribution zone. High winds and encroaching storms prevented additional flights today. A total of 19,425 of the 203,100 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Alpine-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone have been distributed.

1/22/2017: Continued high winds and wind gusts prevented flights in the morning. The four planes finally took off slightly before 2 pm and completed their 3.25-3.8 hour flights well before sunset. A total of 126,000 of the 203,100 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Alpine-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone remain to be distributed.

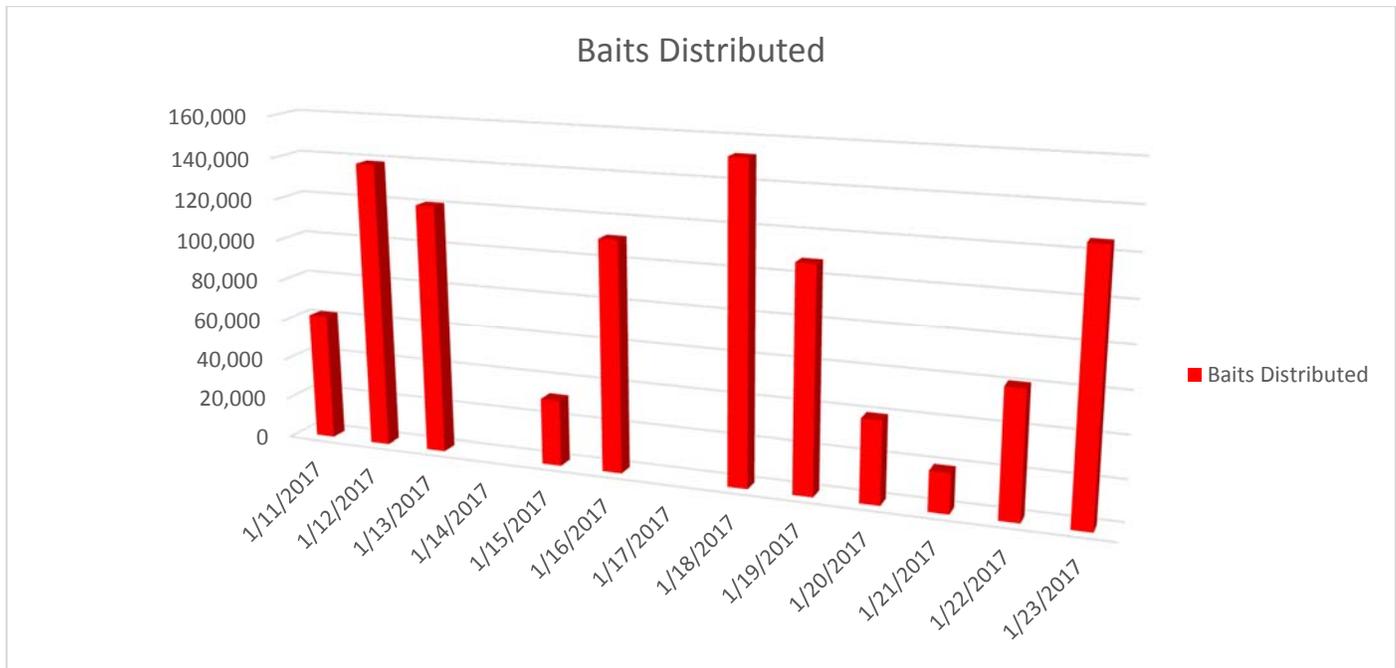
1/23/2017: It was a beautiful day in Alpine, with clear, sunny skies and brisk winds. All four planes were en route to their baiting areas by sunrise. Dr. Ken Waldrup, HSR 9/10 ZC veterinarian, visited the site for an update and to pick up ORV baits for ground distribution in El Paso County.

The remainder of the 203,100 oral rabies vaccine baits for the Alpine-based portion of the Border Maintenance Zone were distributed today, completing this year's project. We truly appreciate everyone's hard work, flexibility, patience, and endurance. Planes and personnel will return to their home bases tomorrow. Safe travels and we hope to see y'all again next year!

Distance Flown By Day



Baits Distributed By Day



Daily Map

