



*Texas Department of Health
Zoonosis Control Division
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756*



Summary of Animal Care & Control Statistics in Texas – 2001

Animal care and control organizations play vital roles in their communities. They are responsible for enforcing various laws relating to animals, protecting public health and safety through control of nuisance and dangerous animals as well as rabies, sheltering and disposing of unwanted animals, protecting abused and neglected animals, and educating the public about responsible pet ownership.

In order to supply animal control agencies and animal shelters with information that is useful to them for improving their programs and achieving their missions, the Texas Department of Health (TDH) collects annual data from organizations across the state and summarizes it in this annual report. All bonafide animal control agencies and animal shelters are encouraged to submit data on an annual basis to the Texas Department of Health. Information on how to submit data can be obtained from the Regional TDH Zoonosis Control offices.

This data summary provides

- < feedback for animal care and control groups on whether their efforts in curbing overpopulation are having a positive effect;
- < documentation required by funding sources (e.g., grants);
- < local elected officials with information they need to enact local regulations;
- < local officials with information on comparable communities regarding salaries, facilities, and animal control programs; and
- < state legislators with the information they need to evaluate proposed legislation.

Additional information on animal care and control (including dog and cat overpopulation, staff training and development, animal shelters, and community dog bite prevention programs) can be found on the TDH Zoonosis Control web page <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis/>.

Agencies Reporting

A total of 67 animal care and control organizations submitted data for 2001 (Figure 1).

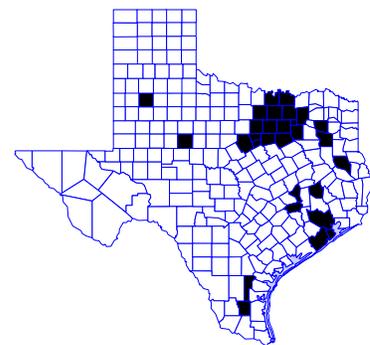


Figure 1. Texas counties containing organizations which reported animal care and control data for 2001.

Participating agencies varied from very small, single-person operations to large agencies in major metropolitan areas (Table 1) and represented city- or county-funded agencies as well as private non-profit organizations (Table 2). Fifty-nine of the 67 (88%) participating organizations operated an animal shelter; the remainder performed strictly field animal control activities.

Population Served	Number of Participating Organizations
Less than 5,000	4
5,000 – 20,000	16
20,001 – 100,000	34
More than 100,000	13

Table 1. Population served – 2001

Type of Agency	Number of Participating Organizations
City Operated	59
County Operated	2
City-County	1
Private Non-profit	5

Table 2. Type of agency - 2001

Animals Handled

The 67 participating agencies that provided animal sheltering services handled a total of 245,547 animals, including 136,373 (56%) dogs; 85,252 (35%) cats; 13,240 (5%) wild animals; and 10,682 (4%) other animals (such as domestic poultry, rabbits, and ferrets). The majority of the dogs and cats admitted into animal shelters were euthanized (Figures 2 and 3). Note: the total number of dogs and cats adopted, reclaimed, or euthanized, as shown in Figures 2 and 3, does not equal the number of dogs and cats sheltered (221,625) due to other methods of disposition of the animals (e.g., given to breed rescue groups, transferred to another animal shelter, etc) or incomplete data supplied by the participating shelters.

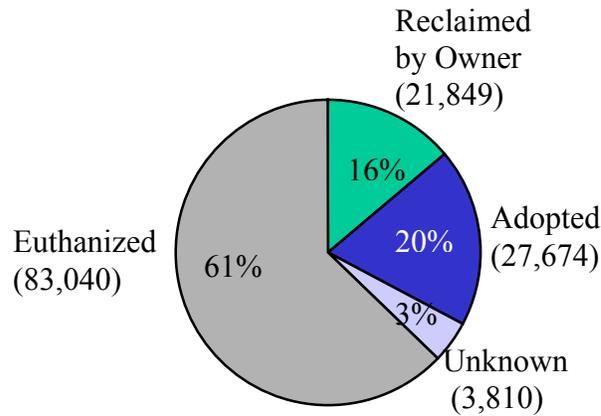


Figure 2. Disposition of dogs - 2001

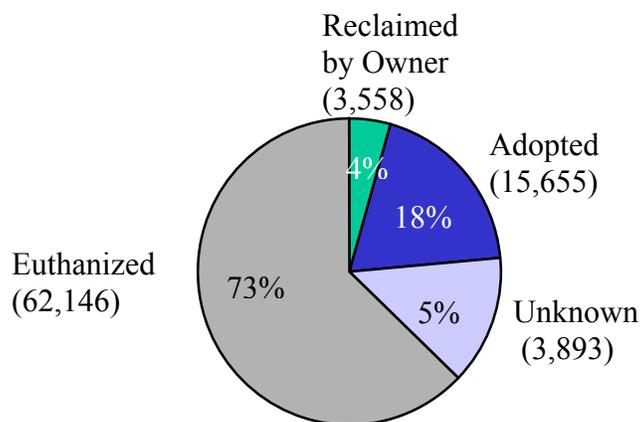


Figure 3. Disposition of cats - 2001

Sterilization

Millions of unwanted animals are killed in animal shelters in Texas each year. One of the basic methods of controlling the overpopulation of dogs and cats is surgical sterilization. Texas law (Texas Health & Safety Code Chapter 828) requires shelters in counties with populations of more than 20,000 and municipalities with populations of more than 10,000 make sterilization arrangements for each animal that is adopted.

Most animal shelters do not want to be a “revolving door” in which homeless animals are adopted this year only to have the same animals’ offspring enter the shelter next year. To help prevent future litters, the participating organizations that operated shelters utilized the methods shown in Table 3. Many organizations used more than one method.

Arrangements for Providing Surgical Sterilization	Number (%) of Participating Organizations
New owner signs sterilization contract	48 (81%)
Follow-up on non-compliant owners with phone call or letter	39 (66%)
File charges for non-compliance	29 (49%)
Deposit or voucher at time of adoption	21 (36%)
Animal sterilized before adoption	18 (31%)
Other	4 (7%)

Table 3. Sterilization arrangements – 2001

During the last two decades, a procedure referred to as “early-spay-and-neuter” has become increasingly popular with veterinarians. Rather than waiting until the dog or cat is at least six months old before performing surgical sterilization, early-spay-and-neuter involves spaying or castrating the animal as early as six weeks of age to ensure that no litters accidentally occur. Several scientific articles have been written about the advantages of early spaying and neutering and have provided documentation on the lack of adverse side effects of the procedure. Sixteen (27%) of the participating shelters included early-spay-and-neutering for the dogs and cats that were adopted either by performing the surgeries at the shelter or by working with local private-practice veterinarians. The minimum age for surgery at 8 of the shelters was 8 weeks of age, at 7 of the shelters it was 4 months of age, and at 1 shelter it was 6 weeks of age.

Purebred

Although most animal shelters do not keep data on the number of animals that enter their facility that are purebred, participating shelters estimated that 20% appeared to be purebred.

Budget

The annual budget reported from the participating 67 organizations ranged from \$0 to \$3,900,000, with an average of \$362,226. The budgets for the various sizes of communities are shown in Table 4.

Population Served	Average Budget	Lowest Budget	Highest Budget
Less than 5,000	\$37,565	\$34,000	\$41,130
5,000 – 20,000	\$64,346	\$2,500	\$141,000
20,001 – 100,000	\$225,645	\$0	\$600,000
More than 100,000	\$1,253,121	\$345,000	\$3,900,000

Table 4. Budgets based on size of community - 2001

Animal care and control programs can be successful only if competent employees are recruited and retained; therefore, good salaries and benefits are required. Figure 4 contains the distribution of salaries of employees who were paid on a monthly or annual basis (42%) while Figure 5 shows salaries of the employees who were paid an hourly wage (58%). These salaries reflected only those employees whose job duties included strictly animal care and control responsibilities and did not include employees whose job duties involved activities in addition to animal care and control (such as law enforcement or street maintenance). In addition to these 501 employees, there were also 36 additional employees whose job duties included responsibilities in addition to animal care and control.

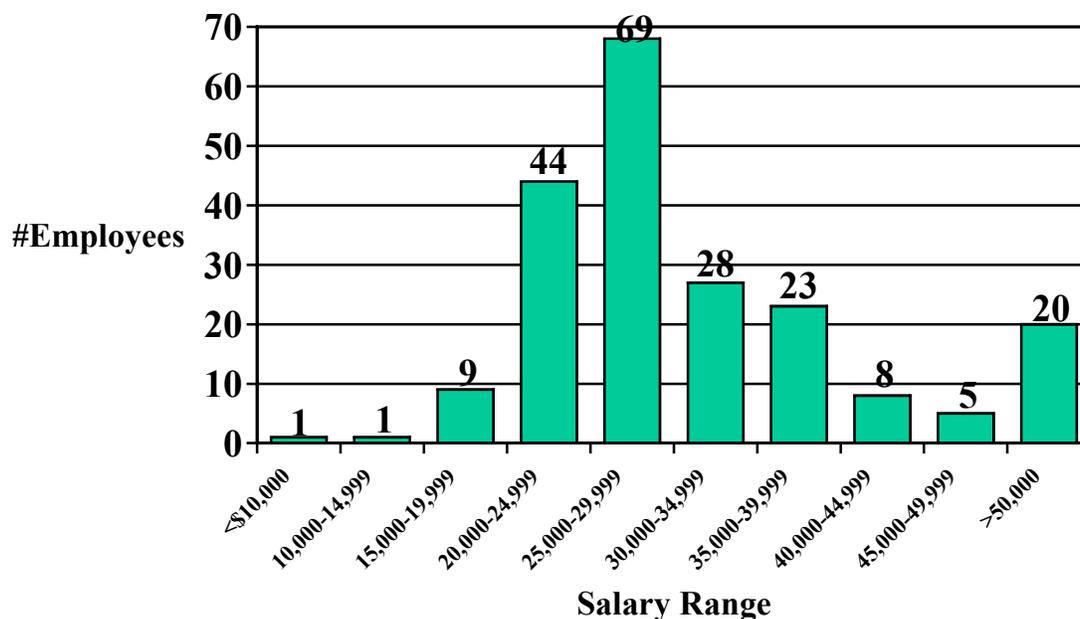


Figure 4. Salaries at the participating organizations - 2001

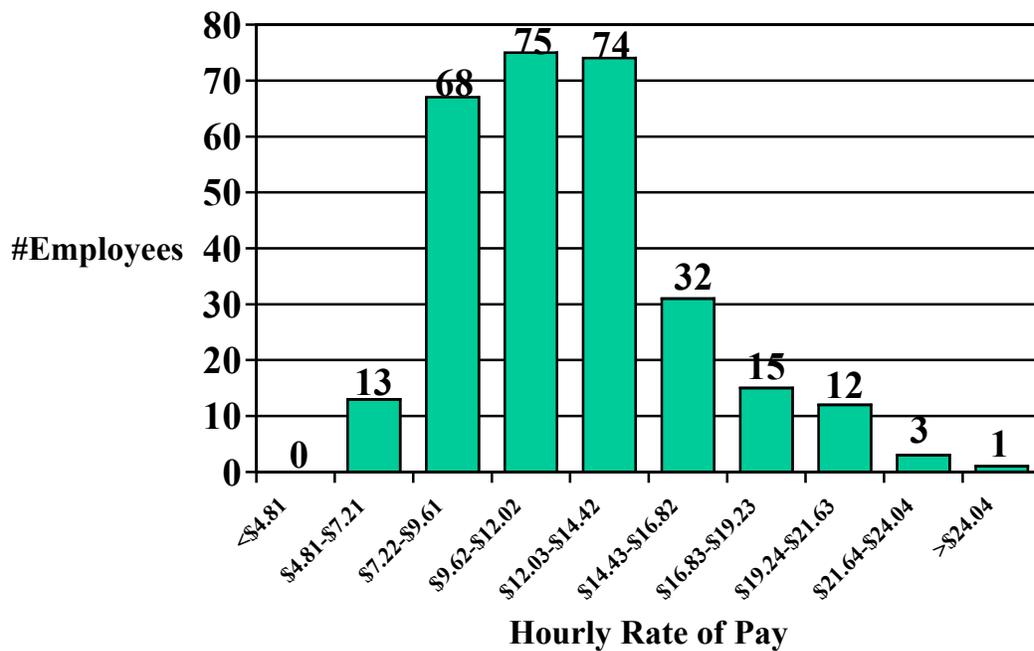


Figure 5. Hourly rates of pay at the participating organizations – 2001

Other Services Provided

Over two-thirds (45) of the participating organizations had a website, and 56 organizations (84%) had access to email.

Forty-nine (73%) of the participating organizations routinely made educational presentations to youth and school groups, and thirty-three (49%) organizations routinely addressed adult groups, such as civic organizations.

Laws

In order to effectively administer an animal control program or an animal shelter, laws and regulations are required. Listed below are the chapters of the Texas Health and Safety Code that affect animal care and control agencies. Information about these laws and their associated rules can be found either on the TDH website at:

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis/regs/LAWS/laws.asp>

or in the *Animal Control Officer Training Manual*, which is available from the Regional TDH Zoonosis Control offices.

Health and Safety Code Chapter 821	Treatment and Disposition of Animals
Health and Safety Code Chapter 822	Regulation of Animals
Health and Safety Code Chapter 823	Animal Shelters
Health and Safety Code Chapter 826	Rabies Control
Health and Safety Code Chapter 828	Dog and Cat Sterilization
Agriculture Code Chapter 142	Handling Estrays (loose livestock)
Penal Code §§42.09-42.10	Animal Cruelty; Dog Fighting