



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



## Summary of Animal Care & Control Statistics in Texas – 2002

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, and against 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.

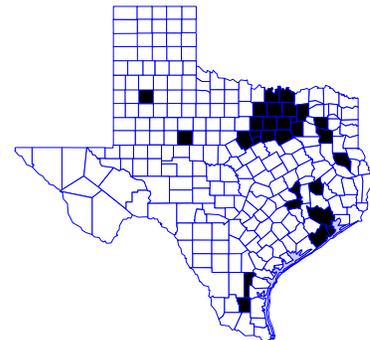
This data summary provides

- ▶ 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);
- ▶ information for local elected officials as they need to enact local regulations;
- ▶ information for local officials on comparable communities regarding salaries, facilities, and animal control programs; and
- ▶ information for state legislators as 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 89 animal care and control organizations submitted data for 2002 (Figure 1). TDH estimates at least 700 animal care and control organizations exist in Texas.



**Figure 1. Texas counties containing organizations which reported animal care and control data for 2002**

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). Eighty of the 89 (90%) participating organizations operated an animal shelter; the remainder performed strictly field animal control activities.

| Population Served | Number of Participating Organizations |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Less than 5,000   | 11                                    |
| 5,000 – 20,000    | 25                                    |
| 20,001 – 100,000  | 32                                    |
| More than 100,000 | 18                                    |

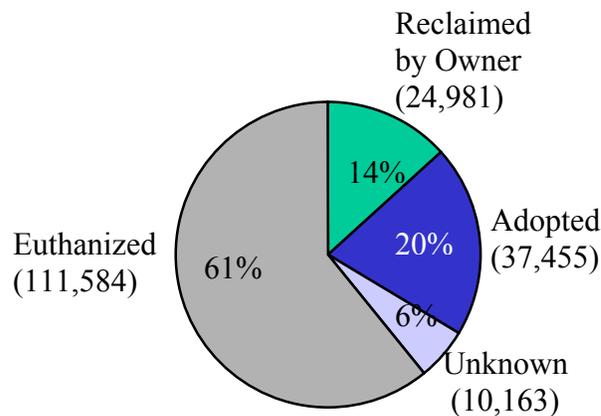
**Table 1. Population served – 2002**

| Type of Agency     | Number of Participating Organizations |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| City Operated      | 75                                    |
| County Operated    | 1                                     |
| City-County        | 5                                     |
| Private Non-profit | 8                                     |

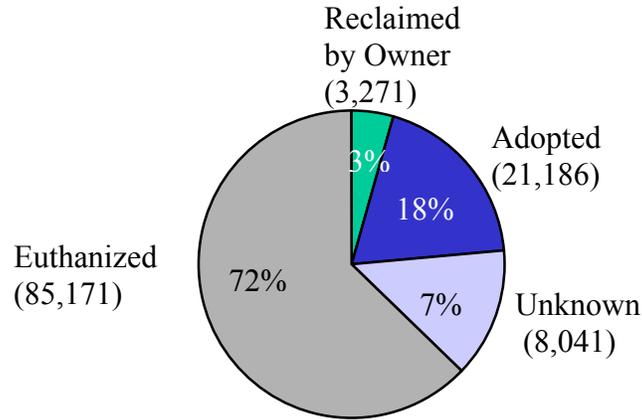
**Table 2. Type of agency - 2002**

### Animals Handled

The 80 participating agencies that provided animal sheltering services handled a total of 364,477 animals, including 184,183 (51%) dogs; 117,669 (32%) cats; 19,629 (5%) wild animals; and 42,996 (12%) 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 (301,852) due to other methods of disposition of the animals (e.g., given to breed rescue groups, transferred to another animal shelter, died, etc.) or incomplete data supplied by the participating shelters.



**Figure 2. Disposition of dogs - 2002**



**Figure 3. Disposition of cats - 2002**

### **Sterilization**

Over a million 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 to 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.

| <b>Arrangements for Providing Surgical Sterilization</b>    | <b>Number (%) of Participating Organizations</b> |
|---|--|
| New owner signs sterilization contract                      | 62 (78%)   |
| Follow-up on non-compliant owners with phone call or letter | 45 (56%)   |
| File charges for non-compliance                             | 33 (41%)   |
| Deposit or voucher at time of adoption                      | 32 (40%)   |
| Animal sterilized before adoption                           | 24 (30%)   |
| Other   | 6 (8%)   |

**Table 3. Sterilization arrangements – 2002**

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 8 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. Twenty-four (30%) 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 11 of the shelters was 8 weeks. At 11 additional shelters the minimum age was 4 months.

## 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 17% appeared to be purebred.

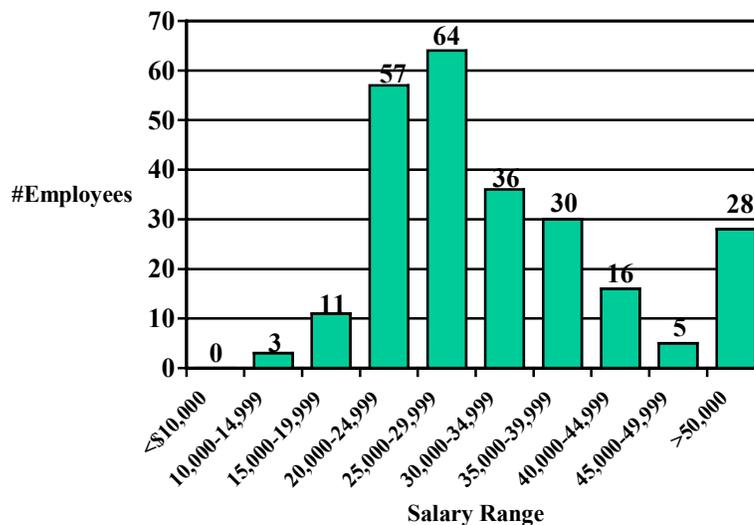
## Budget

The annual budget reported from the participating organizations ranged from \$900 to \$4,019,938, with an average of \$375,621. 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   | \$44,575       | \$900         | \$110,401      |
| 5,000 – 20,000    | \$82,977       | \$3,000       | \$139,312      |
| 20,001 – 100,000  | \$223,648      | \$13,662      | \$564,475      |
| More than 100,000 | \$1,277,335    | \$279,000     | \$4,019,938    |

**Table 4. Budgets based on size of community - 2002**

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 (34%) while Figure 5 shows salaries of the employees who were paid an hourly wage (66%). 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). Not included in these 727 employees were 59 other employees whose job duties included responsibilities in addition to animal care and control.



**Figure 4. Salaries at the participating organizations - 2002**

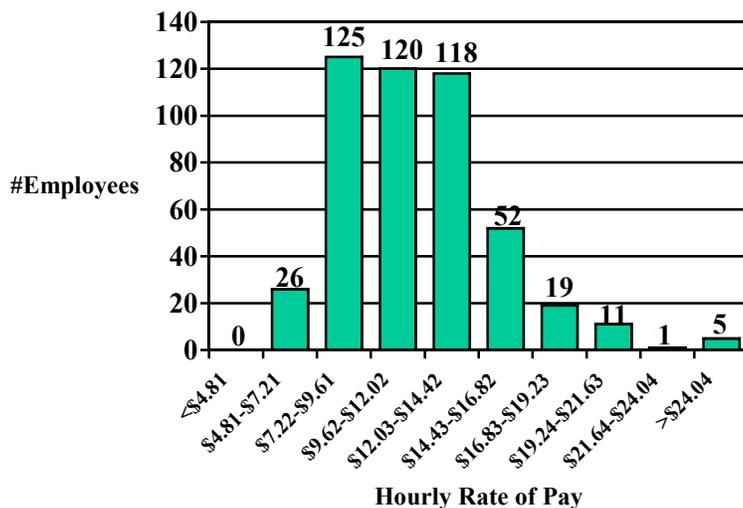


Figure 5. Hourly rates of pay at the participating organizations – 2002

### Other Services Provided

Fifty-four (61%) of the participating organizations had a website, and 73 organizations (82%) had access to email.

Fifty-eight (65%) of the participating organizations routinely made educational presentations to youth and school groups, and 43 (48%) 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 need to be enacted and enforced. 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 on the TDH website at:

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

Information on state laws can also be found 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         |

Local animal control laws and regulations vary from community to community. Information on local laws and regulations can be found at [www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis/animcont/Regs/regs.asp](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis/animcont/Regs/regs.asp).