

Summer 2025



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Rabies Update

Table 1. PHR 9/10 Positive Rabies Cases to date, 2025

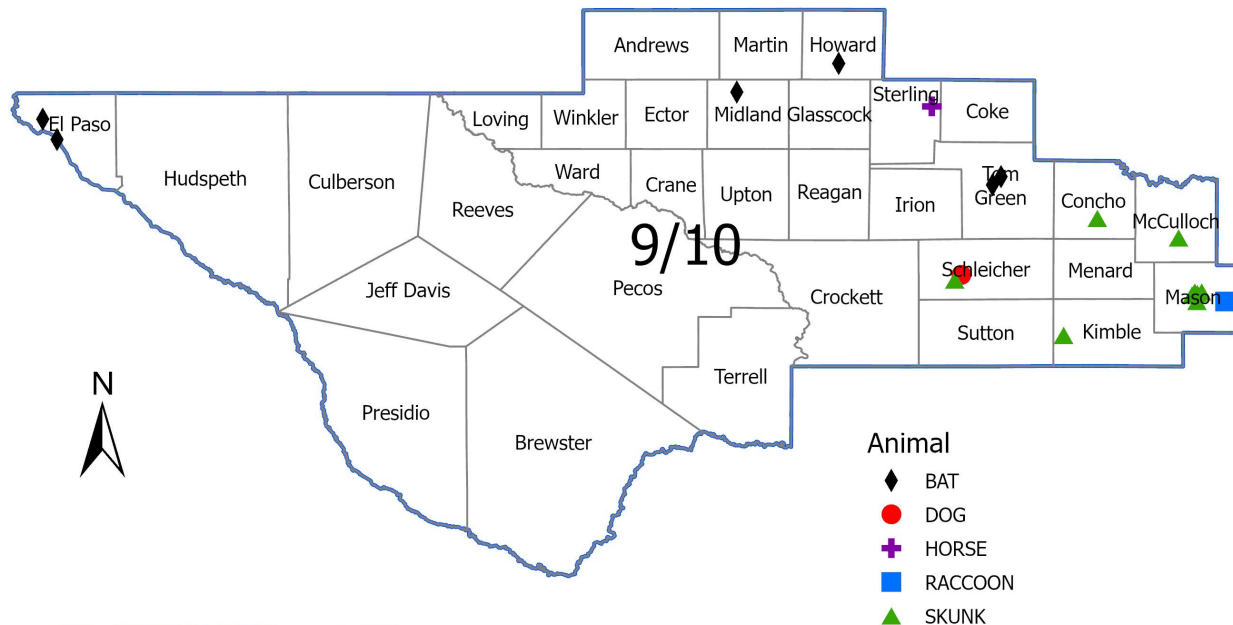
County	Bat	Dog	Horse	Raccoon	Skunk
Concho					1
El Paso	2				
Howard	1				
Kimble					1
Mason				1	6
McCulloch					1
Midland	1				
Schleicher		1			1
Sterling			1		
Tom Green	2				
Total	6	1	1	1	10

Rabies Links:

- [Statewide Rabies Cases](#)
- [Submitting Rabies Specimens to DSHS Laboratory](#)
- [G-9 Form 2025 - FINAL Version 2.pdf](#)

Region 9/10 has had 19 Rabies cases from January to June 2025. Mason County has had the most cases with 6 skunks and 1 raccoon. The dog, horse and raccoon rabies positives we have seen this year in Region 9/10 were all spillover of the South Central Skunk rabies variant.

Region 9/10 Rabies Cases January 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025



Stay Safe from Mosquitoes: Tips to Keep the Bites Away!

By: Veronica Suarez

Mosquitoes are very active in warm weather and can carry many diseases. Luckily, there are many ways to prevent mosquito bites and stay safe while enjoying the summer.

Mosquitoes bite to get blood, which they need to lay eggs. Only female mosquitoes bite because they need the nutrients from blood. The bite can make you itchy, and sometimes it can lead to more serious health problems.



Here are some simple and effective ways to keep mosquitoes away:

1. Wear Protective Clothing

When you're outside, wear long sleeves and long pants. Light-colored clothing is best because mosquitoes are attracted to dark colors. If you can, tuck your pants into your socks to cover your skin completely. The CDC recommends wearing loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants to help prevent mosquito bites (CDC, 2024).

2. Use Insect Repellent

Insect repellent is a spray that keeps mosquitoes away. According to the CDC, you should "use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents" (CDC, 2024). Look for one that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.

3. Stay Indoors During Peak Hours

Mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk. If you can, try to stay indoors during these times. If you need to go outside, make sure to wear protective clothing and use insect repellent.

4. Remove Standing Water

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. To help reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home, check for places where water can collect, like flowerpots, bird baths, or clogged gutters.

5. Use Screens on Windows and Doors

Make sure windows and doors have screens without holes. This helps keep mosquitoes out of your home while still allowing fresh air to come in. The CDC recommends to "use screens on windows and doors. Repair holes in screens to keep mosquitoes outdoors" (CDC, 2024).

Remember, staying safe is always the best choice!

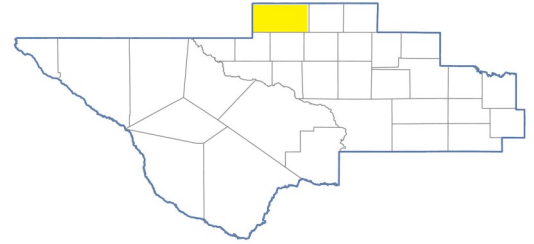
Arbovirus Links:

- [DSHS Arbovirus Weekly Activity Reports | Texas DSHS](#)
- [Mosquito-Borne Diseases in Texas | Texas DSHS](#)
- [Find the Repellent that is Right for You | US EPA](#)

Get to know your ACO

By: Kelly Spencer

Each quarterly newsletter PHR 9/10 will be highlighting a regional shelter and staff. This edition, we will be getting to know the City of Andrews Animal Shelter and their team. Andrews, Texas is located 35 miles north of Midland-Odessa and was established in 1876. With a current population of approximately 19,000, Andrews has a rich history of ranching and oil & gas industry for over a hundred years.



Sara Brus, Animal Services Supervisor, started out as an administrative assistant to the Andrews Police Department, then moved to animal control in 2021 and was made Supervisor in April 2025. Andrews Animal Shelter employs two ACO's, Jalon Driver and Jawuan Driver, who are responsible for addressing animal care needs and public safety. Shelby Thompson is the shelter attendant; she ensures the facility residents are happy and well cared for during their stay.

Andrews Shelter has 15 large dog kennels and 10 cat kennels along with 3 dog and 1 cat quarantine kennels. Sara reports that the city has approved a new adoption center, which will include 28 dog and 9 cat kennels allowing the current facility to be used for initial intake of animals. Groundbreaking is set for June 2025.

The Andrews Shelter has made great strides with community involvement. In 2024 a Trap Neuter Vaccinate Release program began to help reduce pet overpopulation. The shelter staff have coordinated with local businesses and organizations to host events for fundraising and to provide adoption opportunities. Upcoming events planned to raise awareness include; animal themed Movie in the Park, Howl-O-Ween celebration where kids bring treats to shelter pets, Christmas and Homecoming parades, and visitations to senior retirement homes.



Continued on pg 5

Get to know your ACO— Andrews Animal Shelter

When asked how social media has impacted the lives of the shelter animals, Ms. Brus said, “Social media has made all the difference in our shelter’s recent success.” She keeps it lighthearted, generating public interest in animals with photos and stories, while keeping it real about the issues shelters face. Check out their Facebook page for inspiration at Andrews TX Animal Shelter Adoptables.

The main challenge that the Andrews Shelter faces is animal overpopulation. Sara is working to have local laws updated regarding sterilization requirements and eventually have resources to have animals neutered prior to leaving the shelter. Another challenge is the public’s perception of what an ACO is. Sara said, “Every kid’s movie or show that you see reflects ‘dog catchers’ in a negative light. My hope is to educate people that they are so much more.” Public safety is priority and helping the residents of Andrews with animal care education, resolving structure/confinement issues, and sterilization methods are what makes these ACO’s so valuable to Andrews.

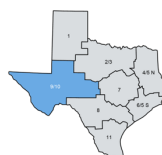


Jalon Driver and Jawuan Driver



Shelby Thompson and Sara Brus

When asked what words of wisdom Ms. Brus would have for other ACO’s she replied, “You are only as strong as your team. The burnout in animal control is REAL, and you have to be able to lean on and be a rock for your coworkers. Let them take days off guilt free, encourage vacations, make sure to point out specifically what they are doing that is contributing to success, give grace, pass on compliments, and look for the positive in both the animals and people!”



DSHS West Texas

Public Health Region 9/10 Serving You

Don't Feed the Wildlife!!

Recently we have received several reports of bites in Region 9/10 that have occurred in the course of feeding wildlife, or that we suspect were the result of wildlife conditioned to being fed. Feeding wildlife is detrimental to both wildlife and humans. Human foods are not healthy for animals and animals that are fed by humans may stop hunting or foraging for their natural diet and can starve. Animals can also become conditioned to being fed and lose their fear of humans. They may approach humans to beg for or steal food, and may even bite to get food. Wildlife conditioned to being fed can become a nuisance and may have to be relocated or euthanized if they are presenting a threat to humans. Keep yourself and wildlife safe by watching from a distance and don't share your food!



Photo: Russell Greaves

Video: [Texas Parks and Wildlife: Keeping Wildlife Wild](#)





I DIDN'T KNOW THAT! Don't Feed Wildlife



It's not just a snack.

Feeding wildlife is dangerous for the animals and for you.

There are risks to people.

Animals that rely on human foods can become aggressive.

There are risks to wildlife.

Animals that rely on human foods can stop naturally hunting or foraging and starve.



You can help keep wildlife wild.

- Never feed wildlife.
- Clean up and leave no trace.
- Keep your distance.

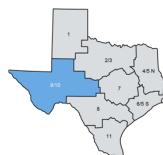


idkt!



go.nps.gov/idkt

Source: [I Didn't Know That!: Don't Feed Wildlife \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)



DSHS West Texas

Public Health Region 9/10 Serving You

Staff Updates

Welcome Dr. Schaff!

Dr. Susan Schaff joined the PHR 9/10 Zoonosis Control Program in April 2025 as the Regional Zoonosis Control Veterinarian. Originally from Maryland, Dr. Schaff has a BA in Biology from Boston University, an MPH from the University of California Berkeley, and a DVM from Colorado State University. She first came to West Texas in 2008 when she completed a two-year CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship at the Texas Department of State Health Services Office of Border Health and the CDC El Paso Quarantine Station. After her fellowship she joined the DSHS Region 9/10 Zoonosis Control Program as the Program Specialist in Region 10 from 2010– 2011. Inspired by working for Zoonosis Control Dr. Schaff left to attend Veterinary School at Colorado State University and graduated with her DVM in 2016. After graduation she returned to El Paso where she was an Associate Veterinarian at Crossroads Animal Hospital. She then moved to Washington, DC where she was an Associate Veterinarian at City Paws Animal Hospital. In 2020 she moved with her family to Gustavus, Alaska, a remote community off the road system in Southeast Alaska, where she started Glacier Bay Veterinary Services to provide veterinary care to the community. From 2023—2025 Dr. Schaff also worked as a HPAI Veterinary Medical Officer for the USDA on the Animal Product Export Team. Dr. Schaff is excited to be back in Region 9/10 and Zoonosis Control. She spends her free time enjoying the West Texas sunshine and exploring with her husband and 10 year old son.



Thank you Dr. Tyler!

The Region 9/10 Zoonosis Control Program would like to give a big Thank You to Dr. Tyler (Region 11 Zoonosis Control Veterinarian) for serving as our acting Zoonosis Control Veterinarian after Dr. Waldrup's retirement and before Dr. Schaff's arrival. Thank you Dr. Tyler for all the support you have provided to Region 9/10!!



Upcoming Dates



Course: ACO BASIC

Location: Midland

Date: October 21 and 22, 2025

Course: LRCA Seminar

Location: Midland

Date: October 23, 2025

Registration information will be in our Fall Newsletter

July:

7/1 – National Lost Pet Prevention Month
7/5 – Pet Remembrance Day
7/6 – World Zoonoses Day¹
7/21 – National Take a Monkey To Lunch Day²
7/31 – National Mutt Day

August:

8/1 - International Assistance Dog Week
8/12 – [World Elephant Day](#)
8/15 – [National Check the Chip Day](#)
8/30 – International Bat Night
8/31 – National Zoo Awareness Day

September:

9/4 – National Wildlife Day
9/15 – Adopt a Less-Adoptable Pet Week
9/28 – [World Rabies Day](#)

1. World Zoonoses Day is held on July 6th to commemorate the [first rabies vaccine given by Louis Pasteur in July 1885](#).
2. Region 9/10 Zoonosis Control does not recommend physically taking a monkey to lunch, but you can learn more about art and science related to monkeys [here](#) while you eat your lunch.

Contact Information

PHR 9/10 Zoonosis Control

We have a shared mailbox

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions about [zoonotic notifiable disease conditions](#). If there is an in-person or virtual event you would like to collaborate on with our program, let us know! phr9-10.zoo@dshs.Texas.gov

West Texas Region 9/10 Zoonosis Control Program Personnel		
Susan Schaff, DVM, MPH Zoonosis Control Veterinarian El Paso Office	susan.schaff@dshs.Texas.gov	915-834-7782
Veronica Suarez, MS Zoonosis Control Specialist El Paso Office	veronica.suarez@dshs.Texas.gov	915-834-7780
Kelly Spencer Zoonosis Control Specialist Midland Office	kelly.spencer@dshs.Texas.gov	432-571-4118

Useful Links:

DSHS: [Zoonosis Control | Texas DSHS](#)

DSHS: [Texas Public Health Region 9/10 | Texas DSHS](#)

CDC: [Responding to a Dead Animal in the Pool | Healthy Swimming | CDC](#)

Avian Influenza

USDA: [H5N1 Influenza](#)

CDC: [H5 Bird Flu: Current Situation | Bird Flu | CDC](#)

New World Screwworm

USDA: [New World Screwworm](#)

CDC: [About New World Screwworm Myiasis | Myiasis | CDC](#)