

# Region 8 Zoonosis Control Newsletter



**Public Health Region 8 | Zoonosis Control**  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
[dshs.texas.gov/region8/zoonosis](https://dshs.texas.gov/region8/zoonosis) | [Region8.Zoonosis@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:Region8.Zoonosis@dshs.texas.gov)

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## Happy New Year!

*By: Amanda Kieffer*

We hope everyone had a festive holiday season and is looking forward to a successful New Year! This newsletter will include some important information on rabies, including the annual 2022 rabies summary and information on the Oral Rabies Vaccination Program (ORVP). We also have some disease highlights on Chagas and Dengue, two very significant vector-borne diseases of Texas. Be sure to check out the announcements page for important ACO Training and CE updates. Wishing everyone a productive start to the weeks ahead!



## Zoonosis News

### Rabies Poster Contest

The annual DSHS Rabies Awareness and Prevention Poster contest is currently open for submissions! The contest helps educate students on rabies risks and prevention. Students in grades K-12 can participate and prizes are sponsored by the Zach Jones Memorial Fund. Deadline for submissions is April 7, 2023.

For more information, visit: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/rabies/rabies-information/rabies-awareness-prevention-poster>

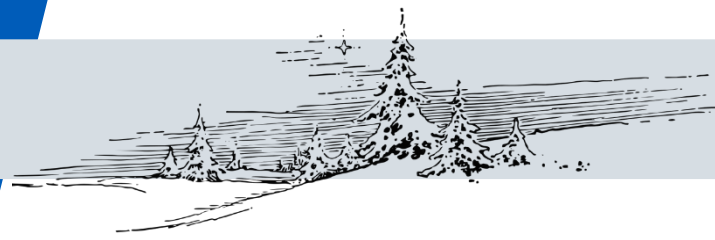
### ORVP

The 29<sup>th</sup> Oral Rabies Vaccination Program (ORVP) rabies vaccine bait airdrop on Texas border kicked off January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The goal is to vaccinate wildlife against rabies. The program targets coyotes and gray foxes along the border to prevent past or new rabies variants from entering Texas.

For more information, visit: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/rabies/oral-rabies-vaccination-program-orvp>



2022 Rabies Poster Contest Submission  
1<sup>st</sup> Place: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Castle Hills Elementary School, San Antonio



## Rabies Update

By: Jon Stewart

### Annual Rabies Update: January – December 2022

Between January and December of 2022, bats made up 58% of all positive rabies reports, followed by skunks (16%), foxes (9%), raccoons (6%) cats (6%), and one equine (3%).

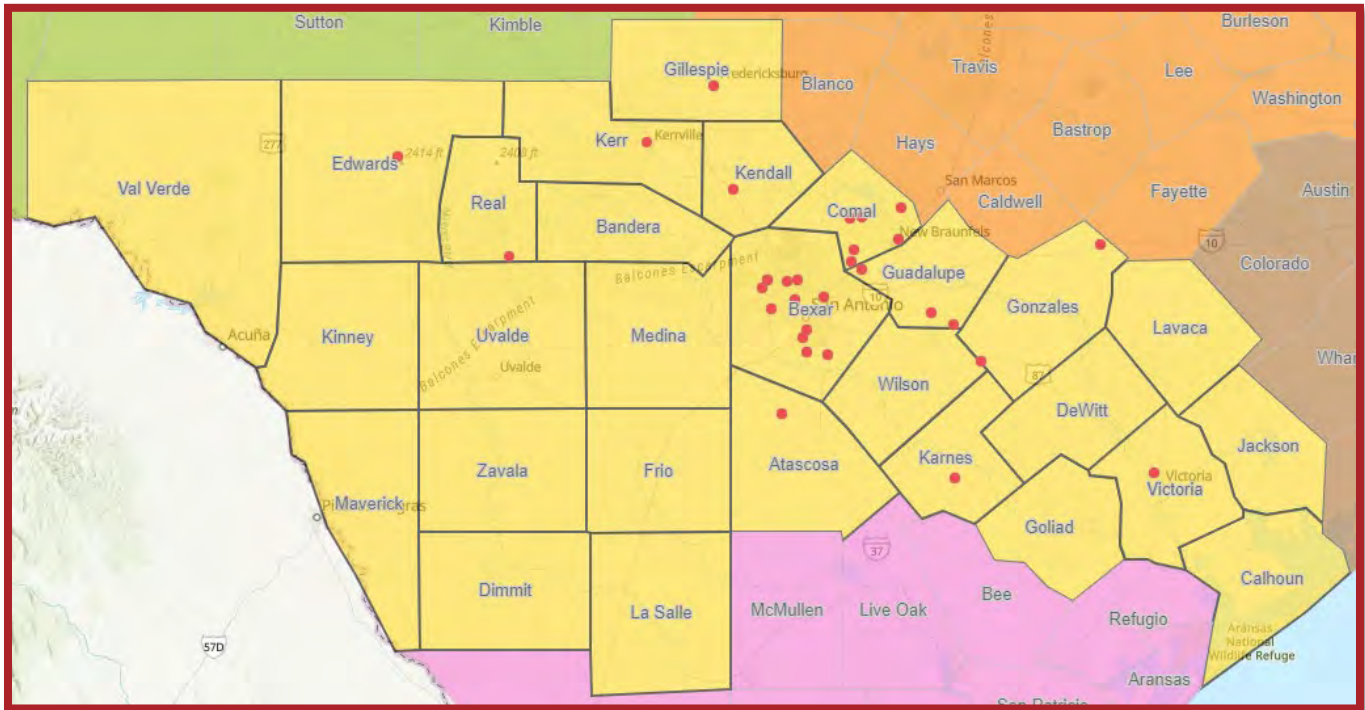
### 2022 Rabies Cases in Animals, Region 8 January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

	Cat	Bat	Dog	Equine	Skunk	Raccoon	Fox	All
Atascosa					1			1
Bandera								0
Bexar		11						12
Calhoun								0
Comal		3				1	2	6
Dewitt								0
Dimmit								0
Edwards	1							1
Frio								0
Gillespie	1							1
Goliad								0
Gonzales					2			2
Guadalupe		1			2			3
Jackson								0
Karnes				1				1
Kendall		1						1
Kerr							1	1
Kinney								0
La Salle								0
Lavaca								0
Maverick								0
Medina								0
Real								0
Victoria		1						1
Uvalde						1		1
Val Verde								0
Wilson								0
Zavala								0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>

**2022 Rabies Map**

By: Jon Stewart

**2022 Rabies Cases in Animals, Region 8  
January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022**



**ORVP CE**

The Oral Rabies Vaccination Program (ORVP) will offer approved continuing education (CE) hours for sanitarians and animal control officers during 2023 operations. There will be opportunities to observe and learn about the ORVP at three locations to include Edinburg, Del Rio and Alpine with a maximum potential of five continuing education hours. **The DSHS Region 8 Zoonosis Team will be at the Del Rio location on January 18<sup>th</sup>.**

Please call Kathy Parker, Assistant Director, ORVP at 512-705-2947 to coordinate date and time. The program schedule can vary due to weather or mechanical repairs so dates at individual locations can change.

<p><b>January 10-13, 2023</b> <b>South Texas International Airport</b> 1300 East FM 490 Edinburg, TX 78542</p>	<p><b>January 15-19, 2023</b> <b>Del Rio International Airport (DRT)</b> 1104 West 10th Street Del Rio, TX 78841</p>	<p><b>January 21-23, 2023</b> <b>Alpine Casparis Municipal Airport (E38)</b> 3401 N Hwy 118 Alpine, TX 79830</p>
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## Rabies Lab Submissions

By: Rachel Panneton

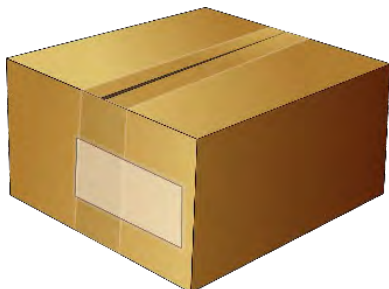
This just a few reminders and links for submitting specimens for Rabies testing.

### Submitters are **required** to:

- Notify the Laboratory of the shipment of rabies specimens at:
  - **DSHS Lab:** 1-800-252-8163
  - **SAMHD Lab:** 210-207-8820
- Have a completed [G-9 Rabies Submission Form](#) with **each** submission.

### In addition:

- Do **NOT** submit **LIVE** animals! Live animal will **not** be accepted.
- Ship only the animal head, unless you are submitting a bat or a very small rodent.
  - *Have a qualified person separate the animal head from the body as soon as possible after death.*
- **DO NOT FIX BRAIN TISSUE IN FORMALIN OR ANY OTHER FIXATIVE!**
- Avoid damage to the brain, including the brainstem.
- Immediately chill the specimen(s) to between 32°F and 45°F (0°C to 7°C).
- **DO NOT FREEZE SPECIMENS!** Freezing may damage the brain tissue and can compromise the test.



### Contact information:

#### DSHS Rabies Laboratory

Rabies Hotline: 1-800-252-8163

Phone: 512-776-7595

Laboratory Services Section

1100 W. 49th Street

Austin, TX 78756

ATTN: "Rabies Identification Team"

#### SAMHD Rabies Laboratory

Phone: 210-207-8820

2303 SE Military Dr., Bldg. 533

San Antonio, TX 78223

### Sources for more information:

#### SAMHD Rabies Laboratory:

- <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Health/HealthServices/LabServices>

#### SAMHD Rabies:

- <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Health/HealthServices/Rabies>

#### DSHS Rabies Laboratory:

- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/laboratory-services/programs-laboratories/rabies-laboratory>

#### DSHS Rabies Testing:

- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/laboratory-services/programs-laboratories/rabies-laboratory/rabies-testing>

#### DSHS Shipping & Packing:

- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/laboratory-services/programs-laboratories/rabies-laboratory/rabies-specimen-shipping-packing>

#### DSHS Rabies Specimen Submission PDF:

- [https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/lab/PDF/2019rabies\\_Packaging\\_Tut\\_or\\_GK\\_ST\\_Reviewed.pdf](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/lab/PDF/2019rabies_Packaging_Tut_or_GK_ST_Reviewed.pdf)

## Chagas Disease

By: Amanda Kieffer

Chagas disease is caused by a protozoan known as “*Trypanosoma cruzi*” which is transmitted in the feces of certain triatomines (“kissing bugs”). Humans and other species can contract Chagas disease if they are exposed to the feces of positive triatomines. People can also become infected through congenital transmission (from a pregnant woman to her baby), blood transfusion or organ transplant, consumption of uncooked or unpasteurized food or beverages (especially those containing [acai fruit](#)), and/or accidental laboratory exposure.

Triatomine bugs are found in most of South America and the southern United States, including Texas. Triatomines become infected with *T. cruzi* after feeding on an infected animal or person. The *T. cruzi* organism reproduces in the bug and can spread to people if they are exposed to the bug’s feces. The bugs typically seek a host meal at night, and are attracted to outdoor lights and nesting areas of animals (such as rodents or outdoor dog kennels).

There are two phases of Chagas disease: acute and chronic. The acute phase may occur during the first 8 weeks after exposure and may have no symptoms at all, or non-specific symptoms such as fever and body aches. There may be localized swelling at the site of exposure, which is known as a “[chagoma](#).” The chronic phase of disease typically happens many years after the exposure, during which the organism grows within the body and causes tissue damage. The majority of people with chronic disease will remain symptom-free for life, but about 20-30% develop serious illness including cardiomyopathy (enlarged heart), heart failure, heart arrhythmias, or sudden death and/or megaesophagus (enlarged esophagus) or megacolon (enlarged colon).

DSHS can [test triatomines](#) for the presence of the *T. cruzi* parasite. If a person is exposed to a positive kissing bug, they can contact a health care provider and request an IgG blood test for *T. cruzi* no sooner than 8 weeks after the exposure. If this blood test is positive, further testing will be performed to confirm the diagnosis. If confirmed, treatment may be recommended. DSHS program staff can help clients discuss testing options for laboratory diagnosis.



(Left to right) *Triatoma protracta*, the most common species in the western U.S.; *Triatoma gerstaeckeri*, the most common species in Texas; *Triatoma sanguisuga*, the most common species in the eastern U.S.  
Source: [Curtis-Robles et al.](#)

Please visit the following link for more information:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/Chagas/humans/>



## Dengue

By: Jon Stewart

Dengue virus (DENV) is a viral infection transmitted to humans through the bite of infected female mosquitoes. The primary vectors that transmit the disease are *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes and, to a lesser extent, *Ae. albopictus*. Both vectors are found in Texas, especially the eastern and southern portions of the state, which makes locally acquired DENV cases a possibility.

DENV are flaviviruses and are divided into 4 serotypes (DENV-1, -2, -3, -4). All 4 serotypes can cause DENV and have been associated with severe illness.

### Epidemiology in Texas

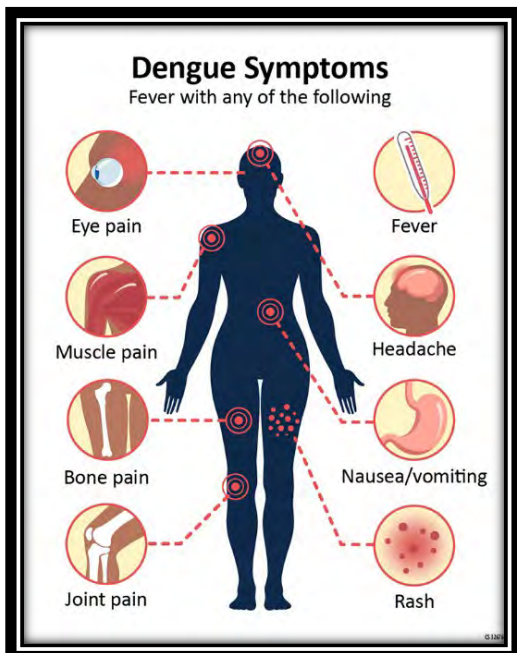
Dengue cases reported to ArboNET by state and travel status  
Texas, 2021-2022 (as of January 4, 2023)

Year	Travel-Associated Cases	Locally Acquired Cases
2021	10	0
2022	35	0

### Symptoms

Most DENV cases are asymptomatic or show mild symptoms.

For people who get sick with DENV, symptoms can be mild or severe.



The most common symptom of DENV is **fever** with any of the following:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Rash
- Aches and pains (eye pain, typically behind the eyes, muscle, joint, or bone pain)

Symptoms of DENV typically last 2–7 days. Most people will recover after about a week.

**About 1 in 20 people who get sick with dengue will develop severe dengue.**

The best way to prevent these diseases is to protect yourself from mosquito bites.

Prevent dengue by [avoiding mosquito bites](#).

Find an insect repellent right for you by using [EPA's search](#) tool.



## Announcements

### ACO Test Only Sessions

The ACO Training Program is in a transition phase with some of its policies/procedures to address reductions resulting from Senate Bill 1 during the 2021 legislative session. While also meeting core requirements set forth in Texas Health and Safety Code (TH&SC), Chapter 829.

One of the future changes is that the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Zoonosis Control (ZC) will **discontinue** conducting test-only sessions for non-DSHS students after DSHS basic courses. Instead, DSHS-approved Basic course sponsors will be developing and conducting their own tests.

The projected date for DSHS to **discontinue offering test-only sessions is 1-1-2023**. DSHS-approved basic course sponsors can develop and administer their own tests effective 10-1-22. The proposed 1-1-2023 date is to give sponsors time to prepare their tests if needed.

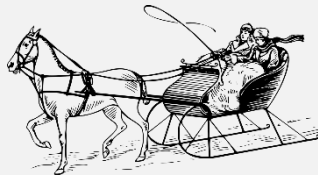


## Public Health Region 8 | Zoonosis Control

Texas Department of State Health Services  
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7430 Louis Pasteur Drive  
San Antonio, TX 78229

210-949-2000 (Main Office)  
210-692-1457 (Fax)  
210-949-2121 (24/7 Reporting Line)



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

Texas Department of State  
Health Services

## CE Opportunities

### Local Rabies Control Authority (LRCA) Seminar

Virtual Seminar on rabies laws and administrative rules. Emphasis on the role of the LRCA. DSHS approved for 4 CE hours for ACOs.

**Date:** Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Time:** 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

**Registration:** [GoToWebinar](#)

### Future CE Course Topics

If you have any suggestions or requests for future CE Course topics, please let us know by emailing us at: [Region8.Zoonosis@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:Region8.Zoonosis@dshs.texas.gov)

### For More ACO CE Course Information:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/idcu/health/zoonosis/education/training/aco/>

### ACO Manual Online

The ACO Training Manual is available for **free** on the [DSHS website](#).

Updates to the manual are posted & represented by dates in parenthesis beside each chapter.

## Contact Us:

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