



## Abandoned Crab Trap Removal Program – Feb 2020

## Mid Coast Bay systems – Matagorda, San Antonio, Aransas Bays

Summary	Traps removed			Program Effort 2020	
	2018	2019	2020	Boats	People
San Antonio	997*	710	1249	41	108
Aransas	52	74	243	12	33
Matagorda / Lavaca	54	17	140	15	23
Note: Lavaca	0	0	87	6	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1103</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>1632</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>164</b>

\*post Harvey

## Comments

- Overall, an outstanding effort--nearly double last year!
- What went well?
  - Boat and volunteer signup and follow-thru were better than last year.
    - Lavaca Bay Foundation mobilized
  - Weather: 9 of 10 days with workable weather
  - Aerial recon on closure Friday extremely helpful in finding traps
    - Used a larger plane- Cessna 172 which provided more room and comfort
    - Flew Matagorda Bay in addition to San Antonio / Espiritu Santo and Aransas
  - Participation of Dallas Zoo with support by Bay Flats Lodge and funding by Texas SeaGrant
  - Collector App proved field efficient, once trained and signed in
    - Training materials by Brigid very helpful
    - ~70% of traps collected were marked
  - Added drop-off bins at Seadrift Marina and Swan Point proved necessary
  - Use of Austwell Community Center for lunch and restroom helpful (arranged by GBRA)
  - Celebratory Party fun!
- What needs improvement?
  - Increase utilization of Collector App
    - Signups for Collector App user ID's difficult due to poor understanding by volunteers and late signup
    - Improved utilization can guide search efforts late in the closure when trying to ensure all traps spotted from the air are retrieved.
    - Increase specificity of data collected, eg entrapment released. Waiting on results of analysis for additional suggestions.
  - Aerial Recon
    - Continue use of Cessna 172 for SA and Aransas Bays
      - Add a second observer to improve comprehensiveness and accuracy of survey
      - Suggest pilot / observers adjust flight path based on observations and judgment.
      - Mark actual flight path by monitoring with handheld GPS.
      - Carry extra batteries
      - Discuss pros/cons of attempting to differentiate floats / no floats.
    - For Matagorda Bay, concentrate on western segments
  - Trap disposal management: improve handling once collected. Count? Crush? Recycle?
  - Add bin at ANW Refuge
  - Add wire cutters to basic supplies, also tarps
  - Pre-closure engagement of commercial crabber to reduce traps abandoned in-place
  - Earlier creation of aerial recon maps to allow marking by boat from volunteers in Fall
  - Enforcement of ANW Refuge closure of marsh areas that are prone to dereliction due to winter low tides
  - Early signup and commitment by volunteer boats helpful to planning process, but how to achieve?
  - Improve Aransas Bay communication of volunteer groups: FlatsWorthy, MANERR, CCA, Keep Aransas Beautiful
  - Determine how best to track volunteer routes to measure comprehensiveness of search: GPS or phone app?

- Consider flying marsh and open bay at end to assess what is missed

**Please advise Allan if you have additional comments or suggestions.**

- What next?
  - John Pistone with International Crane Foundation will analyze Collector data: whose traps? where? how retrieved? entrapment?
  - Allan will draft a more detailed report of program to serve as starting point for next year's effort.
  - Allan will write letter to each SA Bay crabber informing of number of traps collected and seek in engage in discussion about how to reduce trap dereliction.
- Thank you sponsors :
  - GBRTtrust obtained grants from HEB & Citgo
  - Dallas Zoo
  - Texas SeaGrant
  - In-kind
    - USFW / ANWR – data collection
    - ICF - data analysis
    - Texas SeaGrant- sponsored Dallas Zoo boats
    - Bay Flats Lodge – provided Dallas Zoo lodging
    - Pilots: Glenn Priddy and John Sterling
    - Aerial Spotters: Brent Ortego and RJ Shelly
    - TPWD- trap disposal bins, gloves, tarps
    - City of Port Lavaca – disposal bins
    - USFW, International Crane Foundation, GBRA, LNRA for boats/crews
    - Individual private Boat Captains and volunteers
    - Program management:
      - San Antonio Bay Partnership
      - Lavaca Bay Foundation
      - FlatsWorthy / Mission Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve
      - Matagorda Bay Foundation

Texas Sea Grant Crab Trap Clean-up Video: [YouTube](#)

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