

# **The Center for Human Identification**

University of North Texas & University of North Texas Health Science Center

## **Texas Border Region: Analysis and Identification of Unidentified Human Remains**

TX Missing Persons DNA Database  
Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology

**UNT** | **HEALTH**  
**SCIENCE CENTER**

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED GENETICS

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CENTER FOR HUMAN IDENTIFICATION

## UNT Center for Human Identification, TX Missing Persons DNA Database

Summary of DNA Casework for <u>Unidentified Human Remains, State of Texas</u> 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*	Total
Statewide submissions for DNA analysis of unidentified remains cases	135	170	179	194	238	135	1051
Submissions from unidentified remains cases recovered in Texas Border Counties**	41	52	69	76	111	47	396
DNA Associations leading to identifications in Texas Border Counties**	4	1	3	8	16	13	45

\* Six month period, ending 6/30/2015

\*\* 32 Counties designated as "Border Counties" by the TX Dept. of State Health Services according to the LaPaz Agreement of 1983, which defines a border county as one that is within 100 Kilometers of the U.S./Mexico border

### Notes regarding cases submissions and identifications for DNA cases arising from the Texas border counties:

- **19** of the associations have been made between remains recovered near the border and Family References submitted to the UNT Center for Human Identification by foreign consulate offices (Mexico, Honduras, Brazil, Guatemala).
- **11** of the associations have been made between remains recovered near the border and Convicted Offender profiles within CODIS (Texas, Louisiana, New Jersey, Federal)
- The Nueces County Medical examiner continues to serve additional counties near the border, submitting samples for **52** cases over the period, 2010 through June 2015.
- The Webb County Medical Examiner continues to serve additional counties near the border, submitting samples for **242** cases over the period, 2010 through June 2015. Of these, **126** have occurred within the past 18 months. Additionally, the Medical Examiner has actively worked with the foreign consulate offices to provide family reference samples when possible.

UNT Center for Human Identification, TX Missing Persons DNA Database

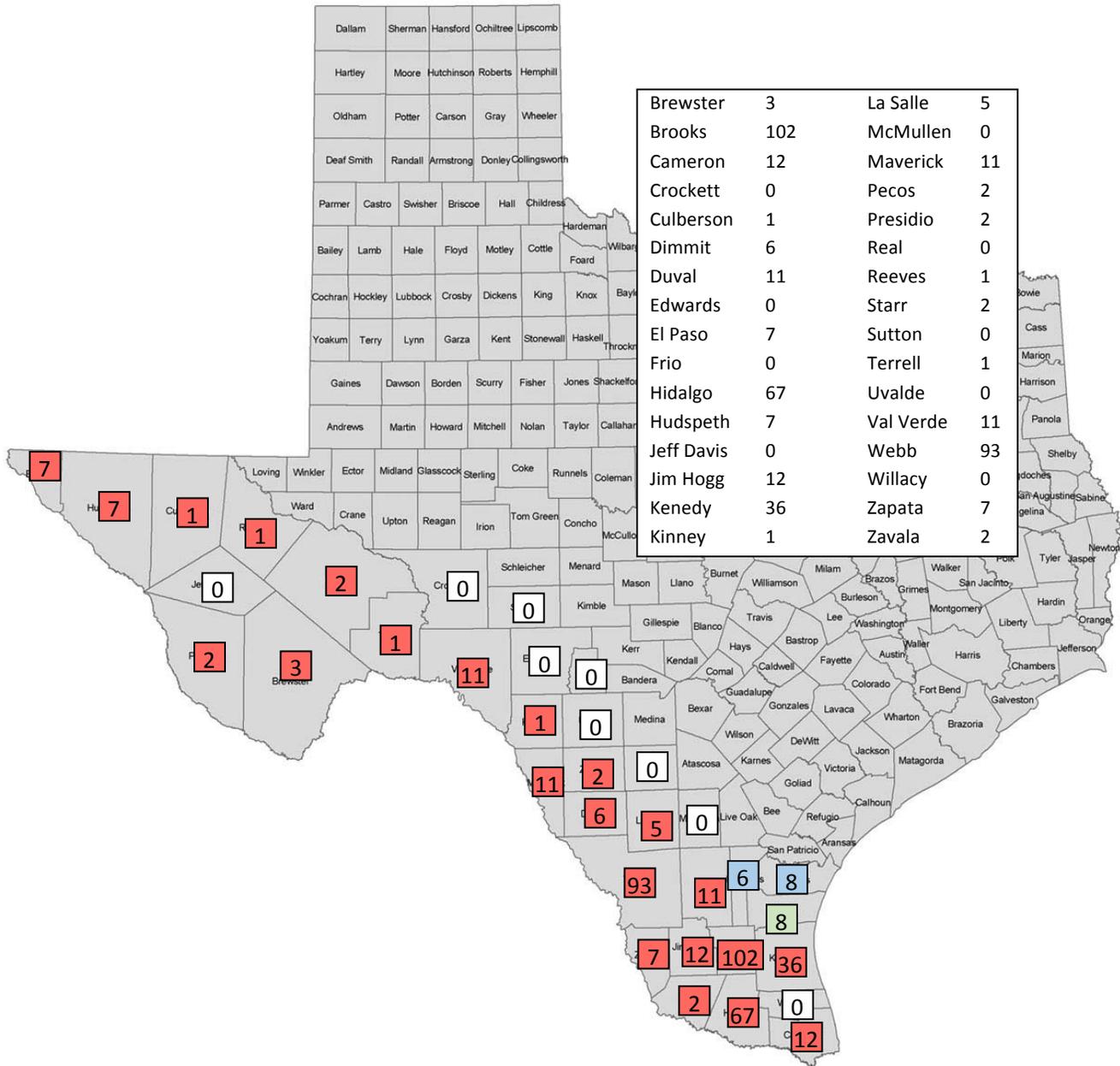
Unidentified Remains Submissions for DNA analysis, Texas Border Counties* 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015							
County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 (6 months)	Total
Brewster				3			3
Brooks		1	1	11	60	19	92
Cameron	5		2	1	1	3	12
Crockett							0
Culberson	1						1
Dimmit	1	2	2		1		6
Duval	2	4	2	1	2		11
Edwards							0
El Paso	4		2	2	3		11
Frio							0
Hidalgo		7	33	21	5	1	67
Hudspeth	1			2	3	1	7
Jeff Davis							0
Jim Hogg			1	1	5	5	12
Kenedy	5	8	3	5	12	3	36
Kinney	1						1
La Salle		1	1	3			5
McMullen							0
Maverick	2	1	3	3	1	1	11
Pecos		1			1		2
Presidio	1			1			2
Real							0
Reeves		1					1
Starr	1	1					2
Sutton							0
Terrell	1						1
Uvalde							0
Val Verde	3	1	1	3	2	1	11
Webb	12	21	16	17	14	13	93
Willacy							0
Zapata		2	2	2	1		7
Zavala	1	1					2
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>396</b>

Unidentified Remains Submissions for DNA analysis from Counties in TX Senate District 20 near the defined Texas Border Counties* 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015							
County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 (6 months)	Total
Jim Wells			1	1	4		6
Nueces		4	1	2	1		8

\*32 Counties designated as "Border Counties" by the TX Dept. of State Health Services according to the LaPaz Agreement of 1983, which defines a border county as one that is within 100 Kilometers of the U.S./Mexico border.

# UNT Center for Human Identification, TX Missing Persons DNA Database

## Unidentified Remains Submissions for DNA analysis, Texas Border Counties\* with additional Counties from Senate District 20 & 27, 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015



\*32 Counties designated as "Border Counties" by the TX Dept. of State Health Services according to the LaPaz Agreement of 1983, which defines a border county as one that is within 100 Kilometers of the U.S./Mexico border.

**UNT Center for Human Identification, Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology**

<b>Summary of Forensic Anthropological Casework for Texas State Agencies, 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015</b>							
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015*</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total cases submitted to the Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>528</b>
<b>Total cases analyzed by the Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>499</b>
Cases determined to be non-human and not medicolegally significant	11	28	27	24	25	13	128
Cases determined to be human but not medicolegally significant (archaeological/historical)	7	15	5	9	5	1	42
<b>Total Cases determined to be medicolegally significant</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>329</b>
Medicolegally significant cases positively identified by the CHI-LFA	2	10	4	8	6	1	31
Medicolegally significant cases with perimortem skeletal trauma**	7	12	10	10	7	6	52
<b>Medicolegally significant cases classified as "Presumed Border Crossers"</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Field search and/or recovery efforts</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Court Testimony</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

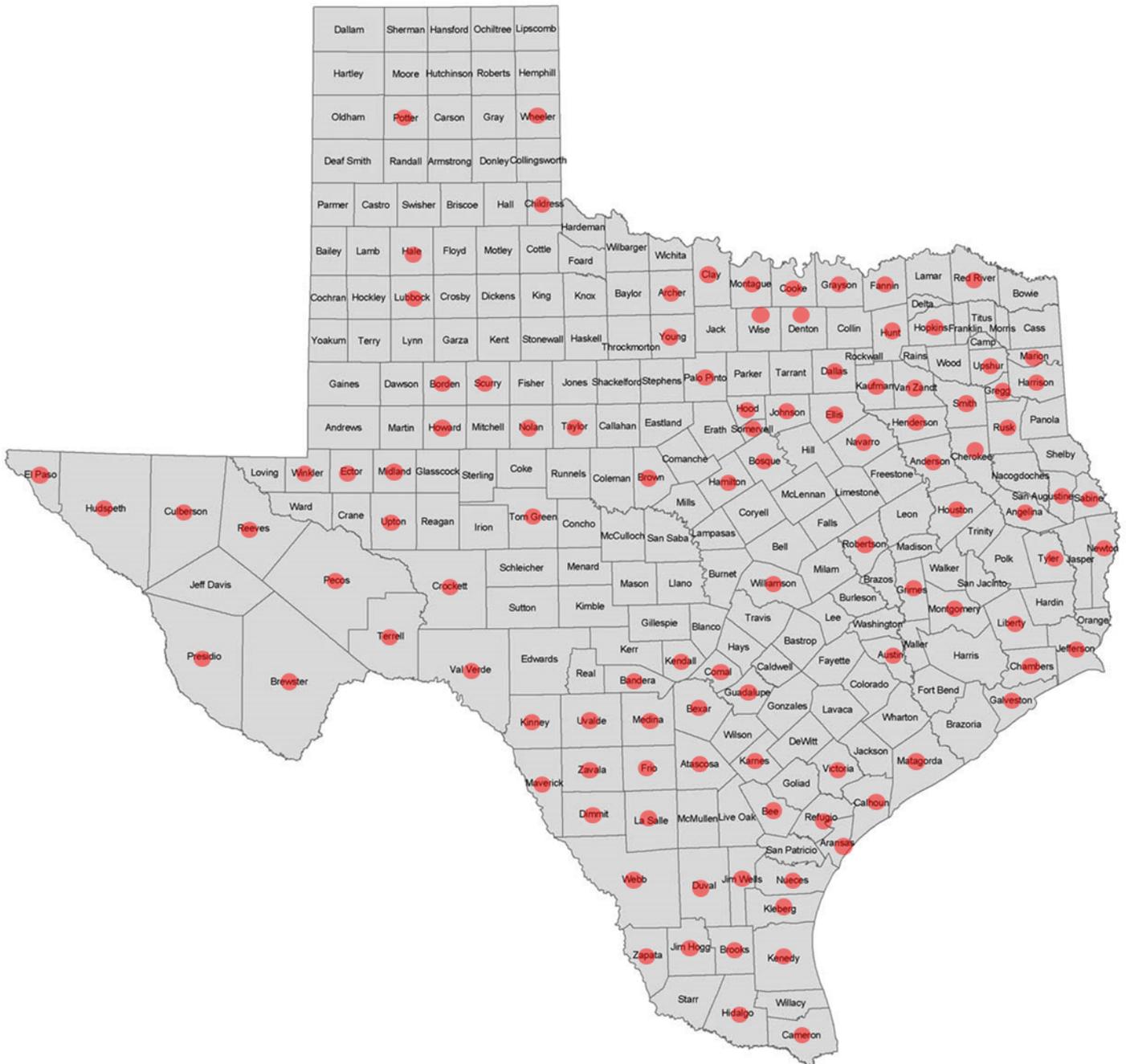
\* Six month period, ending 6/30/2015

\*\* This number does not reflect the true incidence of perimortem trauma in these decedents which is likely to be much higher. The underestimation of perimortem trauma in anthropological cases is due to the incomplete and/or scavenged nature of skeletal remains in many cases and, the fact that not all trauma involves the hard tissue of the skeleton.

<b>Current Backlog of Cases:</b>
<b>30 Texas cases are pending analysis, 28 of which come from the defined border region.</b>
<b>Nineteen of these cases are classified as presumed border crossers (12 Brooks, 1 Hudspeth, 1 Kenedy, 3 Maverick, 2 Webb)</b>

# UNT Center for Human Identification, Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology

## Forensic Anthropological Casework, Texas Counties Served (105) 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015



UNT Center for Human Identification, Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology

<b>Summary of Forensic Anthropological Casework recovered within Texas Border Counties* 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015</b>							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015**	Total
<b>Total cases submitted to the Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology</b>	24	31	35	43	59	44	236
<b>Total cases analyzed by the Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology</b>	24	39	32	38	55	44	232
Cases determined to be non-human and not medicolegally significant	1	1	2	3	1	2	10
Cases determined to be human but not medicolegally significant (archaeological/historical)	3	2	1	2	1	1	10
<b>Total Cases determined to be medicolegally significant</b>	20	36	29	33	53	41	212
Medicolegally significant cases positively identified by the CHI-LFA	2	6	0	1	2	1	12
Medicolegally significant cases with perimortem skeletal trauma***	3	4	4	2	3	4	20
<b>Medicolegally significant cases classified as "Presumed Border Crossers"</b>	8	15	19	23	44	33	142
<b>Field search and/or recovery efforts</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Court Testimony</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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\*\* Six month period, ending 6/30/2015

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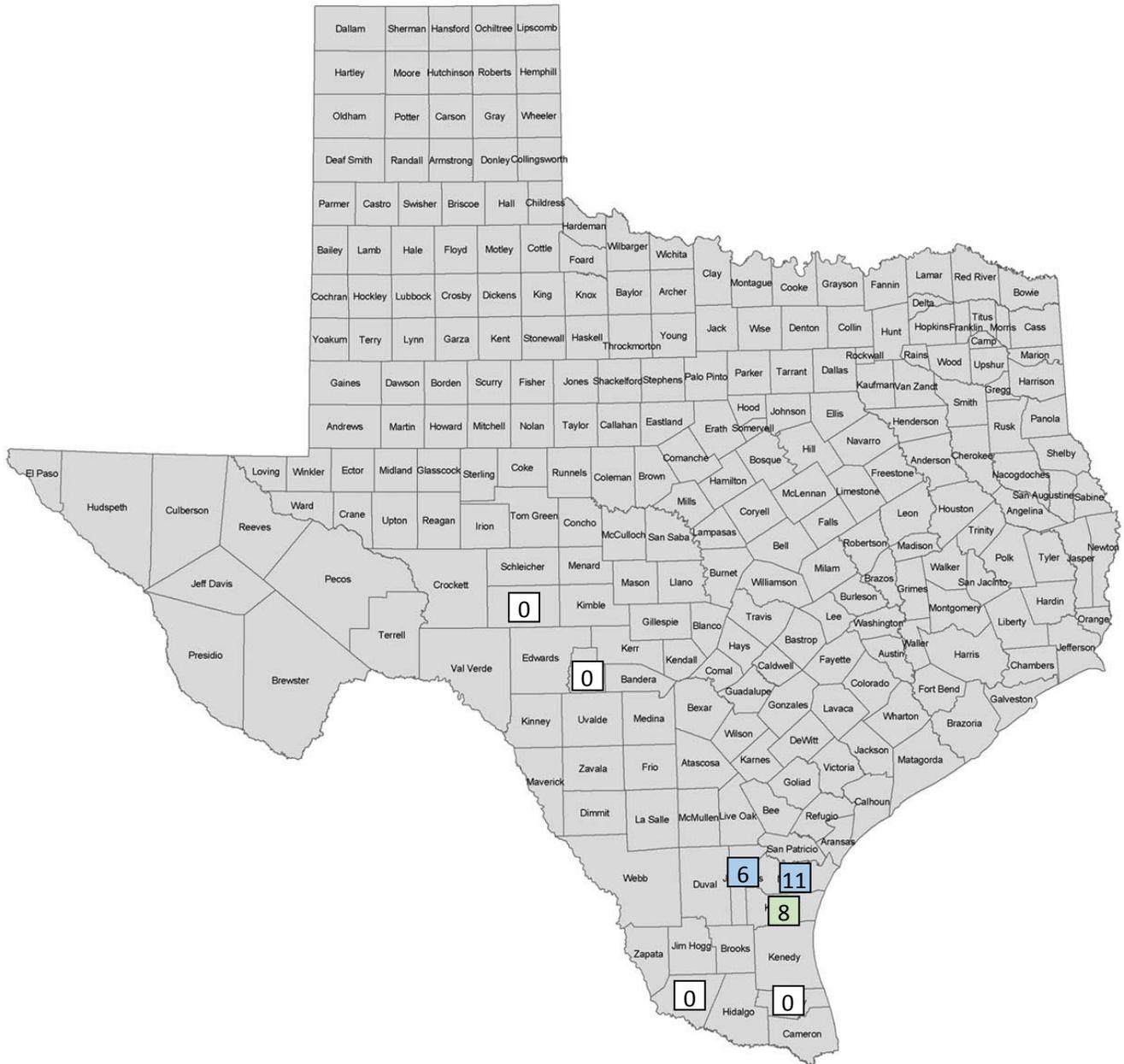
Forensic Anthropological Submissions recovered within <u>Texas Border Counties</u> *							
1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015							
County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 (6 months)	Total
Brewster				1			1
Brooks				13	24	21	58
Cameron	2	3	4	4	3	3	19
Crockett					1		1
Culberson	1						1
Dimmit		1	2				3
Duval	1	2	1	1	2		7
Edwards							0
El Paso	3	2	1	1	4	1	12
Frio						3	3
Hidalgo		1	5	3	1	2	12
Hudspeth	1			3	2	1	7
Jeff Davis							0
Jim Hogg			2	2	4	3	11
Kenedy	4	3	2	4	4	1	18
Kinney		1	1				2
La Salle		1	2				3
McMullen							0
Maverick	2	2	1	1		3	9
Pecos	1				1	1	3
Presidio				1			1
Real							0
Reeves		1					1
Starr							0
Sutton							0
Terrell	1				1		2
Uvalde							0
Val Verde			1		2		3
Webb	7	12	13	9	9	4	54
Willacy							0
Zapata	1	1			1	1	4
Zavala		1					1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>236</b>

Forensic Anthropological Submissions by Counties in TX Senate District 20 near the defined Texas Border Counties*							
1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015							
County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 (6 months)	Total
Jim Wells		1	1		3	1	6
Nueces	1		2	2	3	3	11

\*32 Counties designated as "Border Counties" by the TX Dept. of State Health Services according to the LaPaz Agreement of 1983, which defines a border county as one that is within 100 Kilometers of the U.S./Mexico border.

**UNT Center for Human Identification, Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology**

**Forensic Anthropological Submissions recovered within Texas Border Counties\* with additional Counties from Senate District 20, 1/1/2010 through 6/30/2015**



\*32 Counties designated as “Border Counties” by the TX Dept. of State Health Services according to the LaPaz Agreement of 1983, which defines a border county as one that is within 100 Kilometers of the U.S./Mexico border.

## UNT Center for Human Identification, Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology

### Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology: Background and policies relevant to border cases

- The laboratory has a longstanding commitment to supporting Texas border counties and has provided forensic analyses to Texas agencies at no cost since 1988.
- The laboratory works closely with medical examiners and forensic pathologists in the border region (Webb County Medical Examiner, Nueces County Medical Examiner, Valley Forensics in Hidalgo County, Cameron County Forensic Pathology, and the El Paso County Medical examiner) to provide anthropological services to their offices and any additional counties they serve.
- Cases submitted to the Center for Human Identification's Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology are analyzed in a secure forensic laboratory setting and are not utilized for any student instruction or experimental research. The laboratory is restricted access space, limited to the Center for Human Identification staff.
- The laboratory has a strict policy prohibiting discussions with the media regarding submitted casework. As active death investigations, control of information regarding these forensic cases resides with the submitting agency and/or the medicolegal authority.
- While cases presumed to be associated with border crossing are tracked, there is no distinction made between cases arising on the border and cases from other regions of Texas regarding analysis. ALL cases are considered open medicolegal death investigations and treated as such.
- Findings provided to investigators or medicolegal entities in formal anthropological reports allow for the accurate completion of investigative databases such as NamUs and NCIC.
- Samples from ALL unidentified remains are removed and forwarded to the Center for Human Identification's DNA laboratory for analysis and inclusion in the CODIS Missing Person's DNA Database as mandated by TX law (Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 63)
- All applicable cases include dental x-rays and photographs, providing a record that may be used to make a dental identification should a proposed identification in the future include antemortem dental records.
- All cases are peer reviewed and signed by at least one anthropologist who is board certified by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology.
- Following analysis, the laboratory provides an option of archival storage of skeletal cases in a secure evidence facility pending identifications at no cost to Texas agencies. The service serves a number of purposes:
  1. Preservation of the remains pending an identification
  2. Submitting agencies do not incur the cost of interring the remains in a public cemetery.
  3. Remains are readily available if additional DNA samples are needed or other analyses are requested
  4. Re-analysis to confirm a proposed identification is possible and does not require an exhumation.
  5. Once an identification is made, the remains may be released immediately and will not require the time, expense, or possible confusion associated with an exhumation following a public burial.