



Judging by the number of dogs and cats living on every reservation, its clear Tribal members enjoy their pets. The Animal Control Program makes sure these beloved family pets receive rabies



Cowboy, an Australian Shepherd, doesn't appear to like what's going on at the Big Cypress rabies clinic. Animal control and wildlife officer Alberto Rivera holds him as Sean Heron administers a rabies shot Dec. 1. (Beverly Bidney)

vaccinations and electronic microchips every year at its free rabies clinics.

A parade of pets came through the Big Cypress rodeo grounds Dec. 1 as Tribal members took advantage of updating their pets' shots and microchips at the clinic.

The Tribe enacted an animal care regulation ordinance in 2005 which mandates pet owners register their pets annually and keep vaccinations up to date. Animal control sees about 300 dogs per year at the clinics.

"We have seen a decrease over the years of bite cases," said Patrick Peck, environmental health manager. "We have about 10 cases per year, which is down from 40 or 50. It's a drastic reduction."

Peck attributes the decrease to the presence of three animal control officers, who have worked on the reservations since 2006.

The next rabies clinic will be in Hollywood in February 2018.

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