U.S. Customs and Border Protection

# *Riverine Class 18-Foot Diamondback Airboat*

FACT SHEET

Since 2001, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has used airboats to patrol and safeguard the waters of the Rio Grande River in some of the most remote locations along the southwest Texas border.

Diamondback Airboats are fabricated using marine grade aluminum and an all-welded assembly. These boats are easily maneuvered with the above-hull propeller and rudder system that allows performance in the shallowest of water conditions as well as dry land if necessary. This feature is beneficial when operating in the most extreme shallow water environments that would otherwise be impassible through the use of conventional outboard, prop-driven motors.

The airboats are assigned a crew of two Border Patrol agents who are certified in marine enforcement operations. The agents work in conjunction with land-based units to defend against terrorists and smugglers of humans, drugs and other contraband between U.S. ports of entry. These boats have also proven to be very effective while conducting search and rescue operations.

**Performance and Weights:**

- **Maximum Speed**
  35 knots (40 mph)
- **Range**
  105 nautical miles (120 miles)
- **Endurance**
  6 to 8 hours
- **Length**
  18 feet
- **Maximum Gross Weight**
  4,500 pounds

**Features:**

- Armor plating (some vessels)
- Integrated Communications System
- Cable Guard
- 496 cubic inch V8 engine