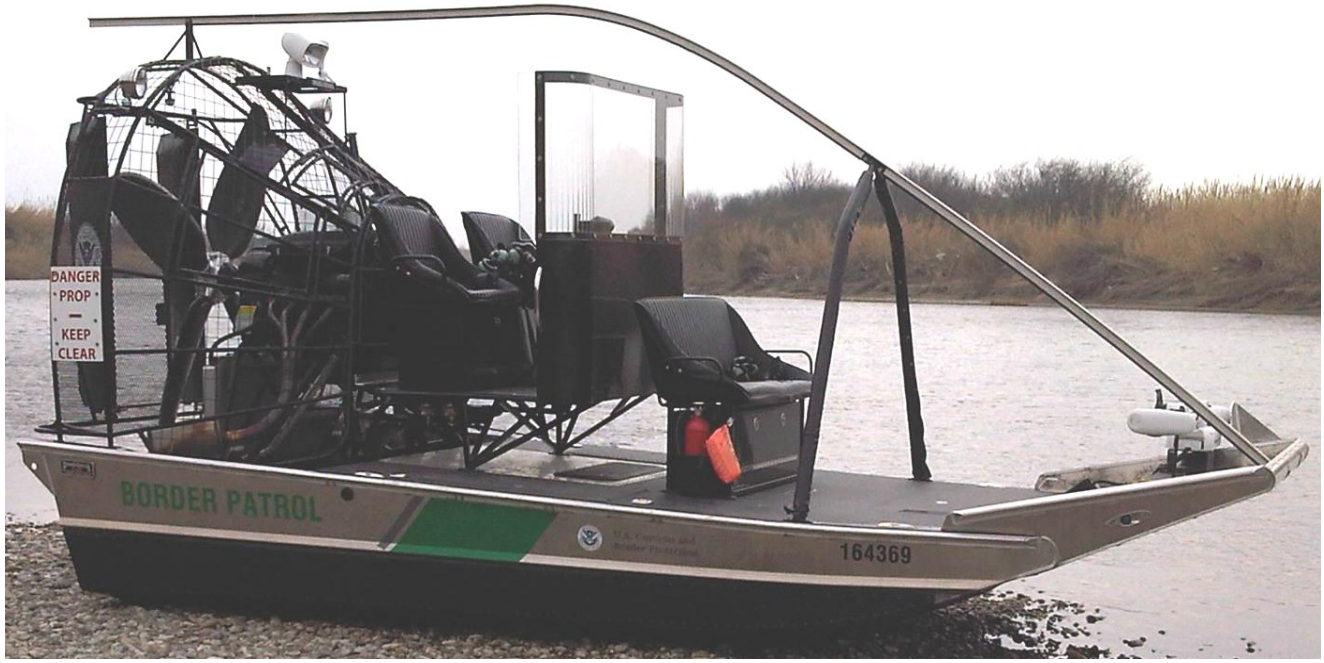
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Riverine Class 16-Foot Diamondback Airboat

FACT SHEET



U.S. Customs and Border Protection has used airboats to patrol the waters of the Rio Grande River since 2001, safeguarding some of the most remote locations along the southwest Texas border. In conjunction with land-based units, airboat crews defend against terrorists and organizations that smuggle humans, drugs and other contraband between U.S. ports of entry. These boats have also proven to be very effective in conducting search and rescue operations.

The airboats are crewed by two Border Patrol agents who are certified in marine enforcement operations. In addition to the crew, the airboats can transport three additional fully-equipped law enforcement officers.

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

The 16-foot airboat differs from CBP's 18-foot version in that the top of the hull is completely covered with aluminum decking to prevent water from swamping the boat in deepwater turns, rapid stops or other maneuvers that would allow water to wash over the deck.

Performance and Weights:

- **Maximum Speed**
  25 knots (28 mph)
- **Range**
  150 nautical miles (172 miles)
- **Endurance**
  6 to 8 hours
- **Length**
  16 feet
- **Maximum Gross Weight**
  8,000 pounds

Features:

- 496 cubic inch V8 engine