Knowing If Feral Swine Are in Your Area

Feral swine damage is often caused at night when the animals are most active. The best way to tell if feral swine are active in your area is to look for common signs of rooting, rubbing, wallowing, tracks, and trails.

Reducing Feral Swine Damage

Experts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) are working in collaboration with State, local, and tribal officials to reduce the threats caused by feral swine to our country’s livestock, native ecosystems, and human and animal health. You can help be part of the solution.

To learn more about feral swine and the diseases they carry, visit these Web sites.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/brucellosis www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis
- National Feral Swine Mapping System, University of Georgia http://swine.vet.uga.edu/nfsm

Distribution of Feral Swine Over Time

Feral swine are quickly spreading across the United States due to natural population growth, illegal movement by sports hunters, and escapes from domestic swine operations. Experts estimate their numbers at over 5 million animals nationwide.

Feral swine are often forage alongside livestock and eat grains, mineral blocks, and other items intended for cattle. APHIS animal health experts are concerned that such close contact can result in the transmission of disease from feral swine to livestock and people.

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Feral Swine: Damage and Disease Threats

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APHIS Wildlife Services toll free at 1-866-4USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297) for assistance in dealing with feral swine.

Do not relocate feral swine without the proper permits. It is illegal in most States to trap and move feral swine.

If you raise domestic pigs, take adequate biosecurity measures at your facility to prevent the accidental release of domestic pigs or the interaction between feral swine and domestic pigs.

Report feral swine activity to the proper wildlife and agriculture officials in your State. You may also call APHIS Wildlife Services toll free at 1-866-4USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297) for assistance in dealing with feral swine.

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Feral swine often forage alongside livestock and eat grains, mineral blocks, and other items intended for cattle. APHIS animal health experts are concerned that such close contact can result in the transmission of disease from feral swine to livestock and people.

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Feral swine are an invasive species. They are not native to the United States and should not be confused with the collared peccary (peccari), a native pig-like mammal of the Southwest. Today’s feral swine are descendants of domestic swine that were first introduced to the United States in 1539 by Spanish explorers. Following their arrival, it was common practice for settlers to allow their domestic swine to roam freely. These escaped domestic swine and hunters introduced true Eurasian wild boar into certain areas where their bloodlines mixed with domestic swine. Due to their extensive crossbreeding, feral swine often vary in appearance and can be mistaken for domestic pigs.

The Cost of Feral Swine Damage

It is estimated that feral swine in the United States cause more than $1.5 billion in damages and control costs each year. For example, rooting and wallowing activities cause property damage and erosion to river banks. Feral swine eat and destroy field crops such as corn, milo, rice, watermelon, spinach, peanuts, hay, turf, and wheat. They are also excellent predators and, when given the opportunity, prey upon young livestock and other small animals, such as ground-nesting birds.

In addition, their rooting activities destroy native vegetation, and invasive plants often re-vegetate damaged areas, reducing native plants and grasses. Their wallowing activities can contaminate water supplies and impact water quality. These animals have also been known to destroy livestock and game fences and consume livestock feed, minerals, and protein supplements.

An Invasive Species

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