

How You Can Help

Wherever feral swine are, they become a problem, threatening livestock, agriculture, property, forests and other natural areas, native wildlife, and public health and safety.

- **Report any feral swine sightings**, signs, or damage to wildlife and agriculture officials in your State. This is especially important if you live in an area with very few or no feral swine.
- **Don't relocate feral swine** to new areas or transport them to other States.
- **Spread the word** to discourage others from transporting and spreading feral swine to new areas.



About Our Work

Wildlife Services, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), is conducting a national program to manage the damage caused by invasive feral swine through the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program. Our main goal with this program is to protect agricultural and natural resources, property, animal health, and human health and safety by reducing feral swine damage in the United States and its territories. Through a coordinated national effort, we work closely with partners at the Federal, State, and local levels to address the extensive damage caused by feral swine populations.



Want To Learn More?

Call the USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services program in your State at **1-866-4-USDA-WS** or go to **www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/stopferalswine** to learn more about the problems caused by this invasive animal, as well as to seek advice and assistance in dealing with feral swine.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Program Aid No. 2195a
Revised May 2020



FERAL SWINE:

An Overview of the Problem

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

What Are Feral Swine?

Feral swine (also called wild pigs, Eurasian boar, or feral hogs) are a harmful and destructive invasive species. They are not native to North America. Early explorers and settlers first brought feral swine into the United States in the 1500s as a source of food. The number of feral swine grew further after that; they were introduced repeatedly in different areas of the country and also started crossbreeding with escaped domestic pigs. Today, approximately 6 million feral swine can be found across more than 31 States.

What Do They Look Like?

Feral swine come in many different sizes and colors because of their extensive crossbreeding. Some look like pure Russian or Eurasian wild boars, while others look more like domestic pigs. Adults weigh from 75 to 250 pounds on average, but can get twice as large as that. They generally have a thick coat of coarse, bristly hair.



Signs of Feral Swine



Property damage and destroyed vegetation from rooting or digging; can be extensive and cover several acres



Wallows (wide, shallow holes) in moist areas in warmer months



Rubbing marks on trees and fence or power line posts (often occur after wallowing, leaving behind mud, hair, and scent)



Tunnels and trails through thick vegetation



Feral swine "scat" (resembles dog feces and may contain acorns, grains, and animal hair, scales, or feathers)



Tracks in the mud near springs, ponds, and streams

Why Are They a Problem?

Feral swine cause major damage to property, agriculture (crops and livestock), native species and ecosystems, and cultural and historic resources. In fact, this invasive species costs the United States billions each year in damages and control costs. Feral swine also threaten the health of people, wildlife, pets, and other domestic animals.

AGRICULTURE

Feral swine damage crops and destroy land with their feeding, rooting, trampling, and wallowing behaviors. They can spread diseases to livestock and even attack and kill them, mainly calves and lambs. Feral swine also degrade pasture grasses; eat, contaminate, and destroy livestock feed; and damage farm property, such as fences, water systems, irrigation ditches, troughs, and levees.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Feral swine behaviors, such as eating, rooting, compacting soil, and wallowing, all damage native plants. Feral swine also compete with native wildlife for food, eat invertebrates and other small animals, and destroy nests and consume eggs of reptiles and ground-nesting birds. Because feral swine prefer wet environments, they can also compete with native wildlife for water during dry seasons.

HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Feral swine can carry at least 30 diseases and nearly 40 types of parasites that may affect people, pets, livestock, and wildlife. They can also transmit foodborne illnesses, such as *E. coli*, toxoplasmosis, and trichinosis. Feral swine have been aggressive in some encounters with people and may also threaten pets. And, when in roadways or at airports, feral swine can cause car accidents and aircraft collisions, posing direct risks for public safety.

PROPERTY

Feral swine destroy landscaping, damage fences and other structures, and otherwise reduce the aesthetic value of private properties, public parks, and recreational areas. Because of their large size, collisions with vehicles and aircraft can result in costly property damage.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Other resources affected by feral swine include national historic sites, tribal sacred sites and burial grounds, cemeteries, and archaeological sites and digs. Feral swine damage structures, destroy vegetation, and disturb soil and land. This can seriously degrade the significance and historic integrity of these sites.

