

WHAT MAKES FERAL HOGS DANGEROUS?

Feral hogs compete directly with livestock as well as game and nongame wildlife species for food. However, the main damage caused to livestock and wildlife is indirect destruction of habitat and agriculture commodities. Rooting and trampling activity for food can damage agricultural crops, fields, and livestock feeding and watering facilities. Often wildlife feeders are damaged or destroyed. They also destabilize wetland areas, springs, creeks and tanks by excessive rooting and wallowing.



Compete directly with livestock!

In addition to habitat destruction and alteration, hogs can destroy forestry plantings and damage trees. While not active predators, wild hogs may prey on fawns, young lambs, and kid goats. If the opportunity arises, they may also destroy and consume eggs of ground nesting birds, such as turkeys and quail.



Feral hogs are aggressive beasts.

WHAT IS AN INVASIVE SPECIES?

A species, population or gene of plants, animals, bacteria, virus or other organisms that has been moved through human activity to a place which is outside its natural geographical area of distribution. Species, populations and genes of plants, animals and micro-organisms are being transported rapidly and in increasing amounts between different areas and parts of the world with the conscious or unconscious help of man. They are thus helped to cross a barrier - a sea, a mountain ridge, a river system - they cannot cross on their own. Some of the non-indigenous (alien or invasive or introduced or immigrant) species also manage to become established in the new environment. The effects of an introduction can never be fully predicted, but one knows from experience that getting rid of a species once it is established and robust is practically impossible.



Feral hogs have sharp teeth.

According to a very general rule of thumb, about 10 percent of the introductions made result in actual establishments of species, and about 10% of these establishments cause more or less serious problems. The risk of non-indigenous species being spread and established is, generally, considered to be higher in aquatic environments than in terrestrial ones. Introductions can be intentional or unintentional. Intentional introductions are usually made for reasons of economic benefit or scientific research. Unintentional introductions can occur when species are transported into a new environment by accident, maybe due to carelessness or ignorance.



Feral hogs are non-indigenous to America.

CHARACTERISTICS

Feral hogs may appear basically the same as domestic hogs and will vary in color and coat pattern. A mature feral hog may reach a shoulder height of 36 inches and weigh from 100 to over 400 pounds. The extreme larger hogs are generally not far removed from domestication. Males are generally larger than females. European wild hogs are about the same size; however, their legs and snouts are usually longer and they have a larger head in proportion to the body. Their body is covered with long, stiff, grizzled colored hairs, long side whiskers, a longer straighter tail, and a nape on the neck giving the European hog a razorback, sloped appearance.



Feral younglings.

The crossing of European and feral hogs often produces an offspring with some European characteristics. Feral hogs are more muscular than domestic hogs, and have very little fat. Additionally, the hairs of European appearing hogs and their hybrids frequently have multiple split ends. The young are born a reddish color with black longitudinal stripes. As they mature, the coat color becomes predominantly dark brown or black.

Hogs have four continuously growing tusks (two on top, two on bottom) and their contact causes a continuous sharpening of the lower tusks. They have relatively poor eyesight but have keen senses of hearing and smell.



Feral hogs generally have four tusks.

SIGNS OF WILD HOG

Because feral hogs are largely nocturnal, the visible signs they leave behind are often all there is to indicate their presence. These signs include wallowing, rooting, rubs, crossings, trails and scat (droppings). Wallows are found in muddy areas and are made where hogs root and roll in the mud. They do this to cool off and also the mud protects their skin from the sun and insects. Rubs are then made when hogs scratch or rub themselves on tree trunks, telephone poles, fence posts, and rocks leaving a noticeable sign with mud and hair often left clinging. The height of the rub often indicates the size of the hog.



Results of feral hogs wallowing.

Rooting is easily recognized because it looks as if the soil has been plowed. Most often rooting takes place over a large area. Some rooting holes can be as much as three feet deep, which possibly could cause vehicle damage. A hog track is similar to a deer track except the toes are more rounded and wider in comparison to length. Hog hair is easily distinguished from other mammals and may be found at fence crossings and rubs. Scat appears very much like that of a small calf, being dropped in several small piles, which is very distinct from deer pellets or predator cord-like droppings.



Feral hogs rooting in an open field.

Types of Hogs

PYGMY HOG

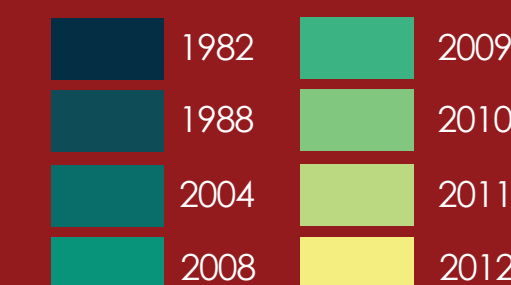
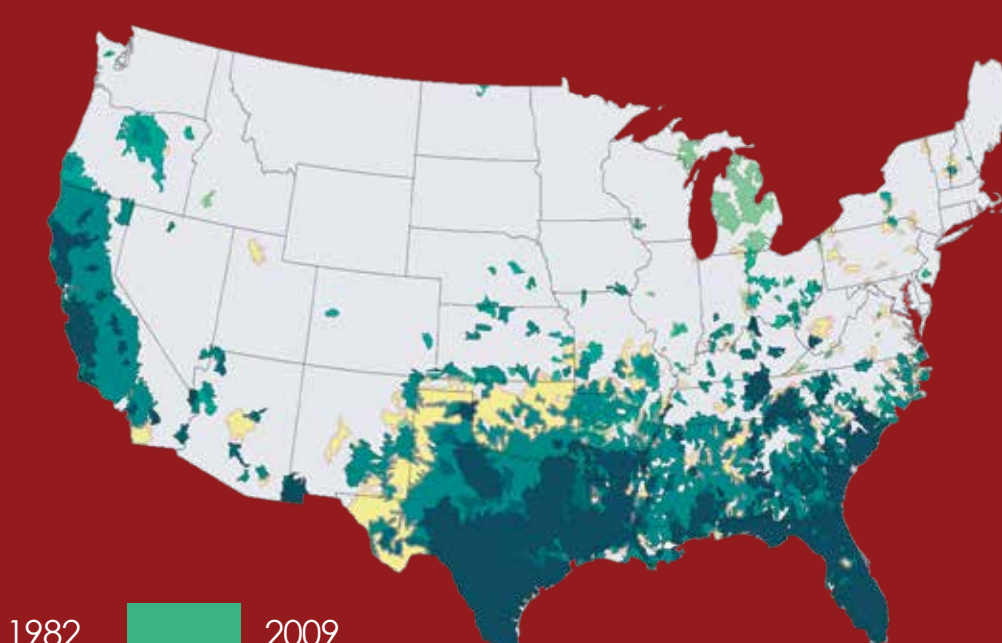
14 - 22 LBS

FERAL HOG

165 - 400 LBS

YORKSHIRE PIG

600 - 1000 lbs



United States map showing the invasion of feral hogs since 1982

HISTORY

Early Spanish explorers probably were the first to introduce hogs in Texas over 300 years ago. As colonization increased, hog numbers subsequently increased. They provided an important source of cured meat and lard for settlers. During the fight for Texas independence as people fled for safety into the United States or Mexico, many hogs escaped or were released. It was not until the mid 1800s when hostilities between the United States and Mexico ended that settlers once again began bringing livestock back into Texas. The livestock included hogs that ranged freely. Many escaped, contributing to the feral population.

In the 1930s, European wild hogs, "Russian boars," were first imported and introduced into Texas by ranchers and sportsmen for sport hunting. Most of these eventually escaped from game ranches and began free ranging and breeding with feral hogs. Because of this crossbreeding, there are very few, if any, true European hogs remaining in Texas. Feral hogs are unprotected, exotic, non-game animals. Therefore, they may be taken by any means or methods at any time of year. There are no seasons or bag limits, however a hunting license and landowner permission are required to hunt them.

The International Wild Pig Conference is the only forum in the world that provides federal, state, and private stakeholders a venue to discuss biological, financial, and social implications specific to wild pig subsistence in our ecosystems.

HOGS GONE

WILD

WILD PIG CONFERENCE

APRIL 17-21 2016