

*BIOLOGY, LEGAL STATUS, CONTROL MATERIALS, AND
DIRECTIONS FOR USE*

Wild Pig

Sus scrofa

Family: Suidae



Introduction: Wild pigs in the United States are referred to by many names, mainly because of their mixed ancestry. Wild pigs are not native to the United States. They were first introduced to the United States in 1500's by European settlers. Many years later, sport hunters introduced true Eurasian wild boars into certain areas of the United States. The feral swine population that exists today is a combination of domestic, escaped, or neglected domestic swine.



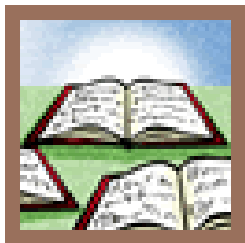
Wild pigs are highly adaptable, prolific animals. Wild pigs are environmental and agricultural pests. They cause damage to the environment through wallowing, rooting for food and selective feeding. They destroy habitat for native plants and animals and spread environmental weeds. Feral pigs destroy crops and pasture and they potentially may spread exotic diseases should there be an outbreak. Thus, wild pig control requires a sustained and integrated approach, which may include various forms of exclusion, fencing and cage traps, plus ground shooting, trained hunting dogs, and aerial hunting (where legal). Check State laws and regulations concerning feral or wild pig hunting permits

In California, feral pigs were restricted to a few coastal counties prior to the 1950s (Mansfield 1986). As of 1994, the feral pig population was estimated at 133,000 and animals were present in 49 counties (Waithman et al. 1999). The northern and central coast regions of California host 81.7% of the state's feral pigs, who depend on permanent water sources and prefer oak (*Quercus* spp.) woodlands (Sweeney and Sweeney 1982, Waithman et al. 1999). Very dry conditions limit range expansion into eastern and southeastern portions of California. However, recent viticultural trends in low lying mountain ranges in Central California have allowed feral pig populations to increase.



Identification: Wild pigs, because of their varied ancestry come in all shapes and colors from gray, red, black, blond, spotted and belted. Some look like domestic pigs, others resemble wild boars. All have small eyes, large, triangular ears and a long snout ending in a large, round nose. Wild pigs have a thick coat of coarse, bristly fur; some are able to erect the fur along their spine, lending them the common name "razorback." Most wild pigs have longer bristles than their domestic ancestors. Wild pigs are about 3 feet in height, 5 feet in length and weigh over 400 pounds.

However, most sows average 110 pounds and most boars average 130 pounds. Boars have four sharp tusks that grow continuously, often reaching 5 inches before they break or become worn from use. The bottom tusks make formidable weapons. Boars use them for defense and to establish dominance.



Legal Status: Wild pigs are classified as game animals by the California Department of Fish and Game. When wild pigs are encountered while in the act of inflicting injury to, molesting, or killing, livestock they may be taken immediately by the owner of the livestock or the owner's employee if the taking is reported no later than the next working day to the department of Fish and Game and the carcass is made available to the Fish and Game department.

In cases other than above, any owner or tenant of land or property that is being damaged or destroyed or is in danger of being damaged or destroyed by wild pigs may apply to the department of Fish and Game for a permit to kill any such animals. In addition, where applicable, landowners can hunt wild pigs to reduce populations after obtaining a hunting license and wild pig hunting tags. Currently, the wild pig hunting season is year-round. Consult the Fish and Game Hunting regulations for further information.

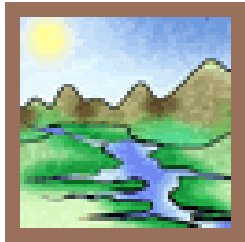


Damage: Wild pigs damage field crops through rooting and consuming barley, corn, milo, watermelons, rice, peanuts, pastures and hay. They also damage vineyards, tree seedlings in reforestation projects and landscape plantings. They are known to prey on young sheep and goats. Damage to livestock production occurs through damage and destruction to feeding facilities and fences, creation of wallows and fouling of water sources, and destruction of pasture grasses and forage. Currently, diseases of wild pigs in California appear to pose little threat to domestic livestock with exceptions of [Brucellosis](#) and [Pseudorabies](#). Damage to turkey production has also been caused by destruction of pens with the birds escaping, feeders destroyed, and turkey feed consumed.



Range: Wild pigs are reportedly distributed in over 30 California counties primarily in the oak woodland and chaparral areas of the state. Currently surveys are being conducted by the California Department of Fish and Game to map their distribution range through the hunting tag program.

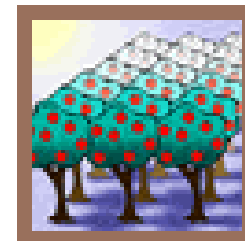
Wild Pig



Habitat: Wild pigs prefer dense cover provided by overgrowth in river bottoms, bottomlands, conifer and hardwood forests, and in other remote areas where human activities are minimal. They are found in areas of livestock production where forage, moisture and cover are present.



Biology: Wild pigs are intelligent and are very adaptable to changing conditions. With sufficient food sources they are capable of doubling their population in four months. They can breed at 6 months and can have 1 to 2 litter's per year. The litter size can range from 4 to 6 piglets with 13 piglets being reported as a high. Their primary predators are humans and in some areas of the state mountain lions. In addition to agricultural products, they consume acorns, underground plant materials, invertebrates and other herbaceous plants.



Damage Prevention and Control Methods:

Exclusion: Fencing can be used to exclude wild pigs from causing damage. The fence should be constructed from heavy posts and wire. Fencing in this manner can be very expensive and is not cost effective for large areas. Electric fencing has been documented as being effective, but again somewhat impractical for large areas.

Habitat Modification:

None

Frightening:

No methods have proven effective

Fumigants:

None registered.

Repellents:

None are registered

Toxic Baits: Currently there are no toxicants registered for use on wild pigs.

Trapping: Trapping is cited as being the most effective way to control wild pigs. Individual traps can be constructed so they are stationary or portable. Corral type permanent traps with a one way gate can also be constructed, but must be of sturdy construction to contain the trapped animals. To obtain maximum results, the traps should be pre-baited with fresh bait such as grains, (barley, corn, oats), fermented corn mash, carrion, vegetables or fruits. The success of any baiting program will vary with seasonal changes, availability of natural food sources (acorn masts), agricultural crops and presentation.

Hunting: The use of sport hunting to reduce the wild pig populations and thus reduce their damage is widespread in California. Farmers throughout the state are encouraged by California Fish & Game to allow hunters onto their property for "hunts". Hunting is not always an option due to the proximity of residents, livestock, liability restrictions and other considerations that include the season, weather conditions, etc. Removal of large numbers of wild pigs is limited by the bag limit restrictions imposed by hunting regulations. All hunters must be licensed.

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