

# How you can help

Wherever feral swine are present they become a problem by causing damage to livestock, agriculture, property, forests and other natural areas, threatening native wildlife, and posing risks to people and pets.

- ▶ If you live in a state with no or low levels of feral swine, report any sightings, signs, or damage to the wildlife or agriculture officials in your state
- ▶ Don't relocate feral swine to new areas or transport them to other states
- ▶ Spread the word to discourage transportation and spread of feral swine



The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA, APHIS) is on the front lines in the battle with this invasive animal.

Through a coordinated national effort, APHIS is working closely with partners at the state and local levels to address the extensive damage caused by expanding feral swine populations.

## Want to learn more?

Call your state USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services office at 1-866-4USDA-WS or go to <http://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.

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## FERAL SWINE: An Overview of a Growing Problem



United States Department of Agriculture

# What are feral swine?

Feral swine, also known as wild pigs, Eurasian boar, or feral hogs, are not native to North America. They were first brought into the United States in the 1500s by early explorers and settlers as a source of food. Repeated introductions occurred thereafter, as well as breeding with escaped domestic pigs. They are a harmful and destructive invasive species whose geographic range is rapidly expanding and their populations are increasing across the nation. Over 6 million feral swine can now be found across more than 35 states.

# What do they look like?



Feral swine can be found 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 some can get twice as large. They generally have a thick coat of coarse bristly hair.

# Signs of feral swine



Rooting or digging caused by feral swine in their search for food can be extensive and cover several acres



Wallows are created by feral swine in moist areas in warmer months



Rubbing on trees often occurs after wallowing, leaving behind mud, hair, and scent



Tunnels and trails lead through thick vegetation



Tracks can easily be found in the mud near springs, ponds, and streams



Feral swine scat resembles dog feces and may contain acorns, grains, and the hair, scales, or feathers of animals they have eaten

# Why are they a problem?

Feral swine cause significant damage to property, agriculture (crops and livestock), native species and ecosystems, and historical and cultural resources. They also pose a threat to the health of wildlife, pets and other domestic animals, and humans. Currently, feral swine are estimated to cause more than \$1.5 billion in damages and control costs each year in the United States. Damages and risks to animal and human health are expected to rise as feral swine populations continue to expand across the country.

## DAMAGE TO AGRICULTURE:

Feral swine damage crops by consuming them or by their rooting, trampling, and wallowing behaviors. Feral swine can transmit diseases to domestic livestock. They can kill livestock, primarily calves and lambs. Feral swine damage pasture grasses and consume, contaminate, and destroy livestock feed. Feral swine also damage farm property, such as fences, water systems, irrigation ditches, troughs, and levees.

## DAMAGE TO NATURAL RESOURCES:

Feral swine behaviors, such as eating, rooting, soil compactions, and wallowing, all damage native plants. Their diets often overlap with those of native wildlife, which results in competition for food. Feral swine also eat invertebrates and other small animals, and destroy nests and consume eggs of reptiles and ground-nesting birds. Their preference for wet environments can cause competition with native wildlife for water during dry seasons.

## RISKS TO PEOPLE:

Feral swine can carry at least 30 diseases, and nearly 40 parasites that may affect humans, pets, livestock, and other wildlife. Feral swine can also pass on bacteria associated with foodborne illness. Collisions with vehicles and aircraft pose risks to occupants. Feral swine have been aggressive in some encounters with humans. Feral swine also may pose risks to pets, either directly through aggressive behaviors or by spreading diseases.

## DAMAGE TO CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES:

Cultural sites impacted by feral swine include national historic sites, tribal sacred sites and burial grounds, cemeteries, and archaeological sites and digs. Feral swine damage can affect the significance and integrity of historic properties through physical disturbance to structures, vegetation, and soils.

## DAMAGE TO 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 such as motorcycles, automobiles, and aircraft can cause substantial damage.

