

# IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING FERAL SWINE



## 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.

## Why are they a problem?

This invasive species:

- Contaminates water supplies
- Destroys crops, pastures and timber resources by consumption, rooting and trampling
- Disrupts, displaces or preys on wildlife, including threatened or endangered animals
- Threatens the health and safety of people and domestic livestock across the country
- Degrades wildlife habitat and other environmentally and culturally sensitive areas
- Displaces and competes with native wildlife for food and cover
- Displaces game animals such as white-tailed deer and turkeys
- Carries at least 30 diseases and almost 40 parasites that can affect people, pets, livestock, and wildlife



## 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. This invasive species can reach 3 feet in height and 5 feet in length. Males have larger heads and tusks than females. Feral swine reproduce rapidly. Females begin breeding at about eight months and can produce two litters of four to 12 piglets every 12-15 months. The females (sows) and their young travel in family groups, called sounders. Sounders can include a few to as many as 30 pigs. The adult males (boars) eventually split off from the sounder and become solitary. Feral swine are usually active at night, and are rarely seen during daylight hours. The best way to identify whether feral swine are active in your area is to look for signs of damage.



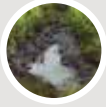
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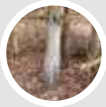
## Signs of feral swine



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



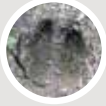
Wallows are created by feral swine in moist areas in warmer months



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



## How you can help

Wherever feral swine are present they become a problem, causing damage to livestock, agriculture, property, forests and other natural areas, and threaten native wildlife.

- ▶ If you live in a state with no or low levels of feral swine, report any sightings, signs, or damage to the wildlife and 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

## Want to learn more?

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.

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, and to seek advice and assistance in dealing with feral swine.

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