

# Identifying and Reporting FERAL SWINE

## 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, their geographic range is quickly expanding as their populations continue increasing nationwide. 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 consuming, rooting, and trampling
- Threatens domestic livestock, with major economic losses for producers
- Disrupts, displaces, and preys on wildlife, including threatened or endangered animals
- Degrades wildlife habitat and other environmentally and culturally valuable areas
- Displaces native wildlife, including game animals, and competes with them for food and other resources
- Poses many risks for public safety and human and animal health



## 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 may grow to be 3 feet tall and 5 feet long. They generally have a thick coat of coarse, bristly hair. Male feral swine typically have larger heads and tusks than females.

Feral swine reproduce rapidly. Females, or sows, begin breeding at about 8 months and can produce 2 litters of 4–12 piglets every 12–15 months. 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



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



Tracks in the mud near springs, ponds, and streams



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



## 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.



## Want To Learn More?

Wildlife Services, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, is on the front lines in the battle with this invasive animal.



Manage the Damage  
Stop Feral Swine

If you have questions or need help dealing with feral swine, call us at **1-866-4USDA-WS** or go to **[www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/stopferalswine](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/stopferalswine)**.

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