

NOT WANTED = Michigan Feral Swine

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and the Michigan Department for Natural Resources and Environment has requested MSU Extension staff to help distribute the following information in order to protect Michigan's residents, property, agricultural industry and our great outdoors. This information was written by Tom Guthrie Extension Educator with the Pork team.

What is a feral swine?

Feral swine (*Sus scrofa*) is defined as a free-ranging pig and is considered to be an exotic animal that is a public nuisance. The appearance of feral swine may vary greatly as they are believed to be derived from several sources which may include: the wild European boar, escaped domestic swine and/or hybrids of the two types.

Goal for Michigan: COMPLETE REMOVAL of feral swine.

Current Law in Michigan

New law in Michigan as of June 1, 2010 allows individuals to pursue and harvest feral swine at any time. House Bill 5822 (H-2) enacts Section 4a of Public Act 328 of 1976, which concerns animals running at large, to do the following:

- Declare that swine running at large on public and/or private property are a public nuisance.
- Permit a local animal control officer or a law enforcement officer to kill a swine running at large on public or private property.
- Permit a person with a concealed pistol permit or a valid hunting license to kill a swine running at large on public property.
- Permit the property owner or other authorized person to kill a swine running at large on private property. The land owner does not need a hunting license.

*Note: If you plan to pursue and harvest feral swine it is imperative that you follow all regulations of the respective open hunting season in which you may be pursuing feral swine. For open seasons and regulations, you may view the most current Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide. <http://www.michigan.gov/dnr>

Distribution

Feral swine have been identified in 40 states ranging from California to New Jersey and from Texas to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In Michigan, feral swine have been reported in 68 of the 83 counties. To view a map with feral swine locations, visit www.michigan.gov/feralswine.

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Validated Concerns in regard to Feral Swine

Disease

It has been reported that feral swine may carry at least 30 viral and bacterial diseases in addition to a minimum of 37 parasites that affect people, pets, livestock and wildlife (Hutton et al., 2006).

Reproduction - The time to take action is now

Feral swine are very efficient reproducers and are capable of breeding at 6 months of age. The gestation period of a sow is around 115 days. Furthermore, dependant on conditions, a female is capable of having 2 litters of piglets per year with anywhere from 4 to 12 piglets per litter. The young are typically born with a 1:1 male to female sex ratio (Taylor, 2003).

Food sources

Feral swine are omnivores, meaning that they will eat both plant and animal matter. It is safe to say that feral swine are opportunistic feeders and will eat just about anything that they can get their mouth around. Therefore, feral swine are directly competing for food sources with livestock and wildlife. Food sources may depend on what is seasonable available and may range from a variety of agricultural crops including: corn, wheat, soybeans to acorns, grasses, fruits, vegetables, roots, insects, snails, earthworms, reptiles, birds, eggs, carrion (dead animals), as well as live mammals given the opportunity.

Armed and Damaging

Feral swine can be relatively aggressive when confronted, especially if the animal is a boar or a sow with piglets. Therefore, caution should be used when confronting feral swine. Additionally, feral swine can be extremely destructive to the environment and ecologically sensitive habitats. Behaviors such as rooting, tramping, digging and wallowing near water leads to bank erosion, muddying of water, creating algae blooms, and potentially destroying aquatic vegetation, therefore lowering overall water quality.

Sightings, Harvests and Feral Swine Traps

In order to monitor the situation, please report all feral swine sightings, kills, and damage using the contact information below:

Julie Rose, DNRE at 517-336-5030 or Rosej3@michigan.gov

Tim Wilson, USDA Wildlife Services at 517-336-1928, Wildlife Services has feral swine traps available to loan to landowners wishing to trap feral swine on their property.

Michigan Department of Agriculture: 1-800-282-3939 - press "4" for the Animal Industry Division

Additional information such as feral swine reporting forms, maps of feral swine sightings and harvests and many other resources may be found at <http://www.michigan.gov/feralswine>.

Resources:

Hutton, T., DeLiberto, T., Owen, S., and B. Morrison. 2006. Disease risks associated with increasing feral swine numbers and distribution in the United States. Report for the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Wildlife and Fish Health Committee.

Taylor, R. 2003. The Feral Hog in Texas. Texas Parks and Wildlife.