

FERAL SWINE

Heidi Hildahl, MDOL



Feral Swine in Montana


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MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK

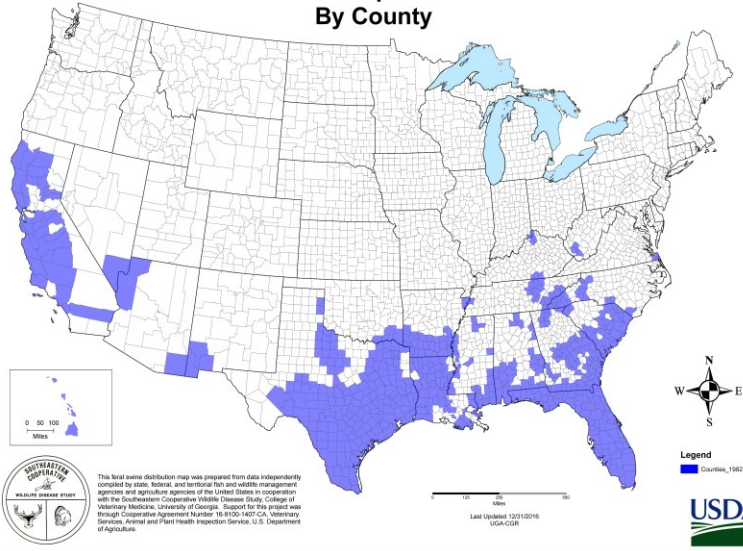




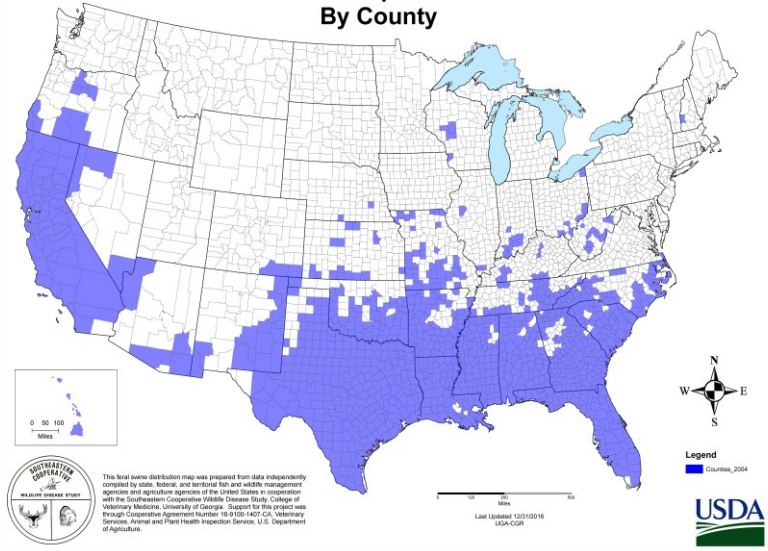
The Situation

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- A photograph of a wild pig, likely a feral pig, standing in a lush green field. The pig is dark brown with coarse, shaggy fur and a prominent snout. It is facing left. The background is a soft-focus green field.
- Feral pigs are domestic pigs that have escaped or have been released into the wild
 - True wild pigs are native to Eurasia and parts of North Africa
 - Wild pigs introduced to U.S. by Spanish Explorers in 1539

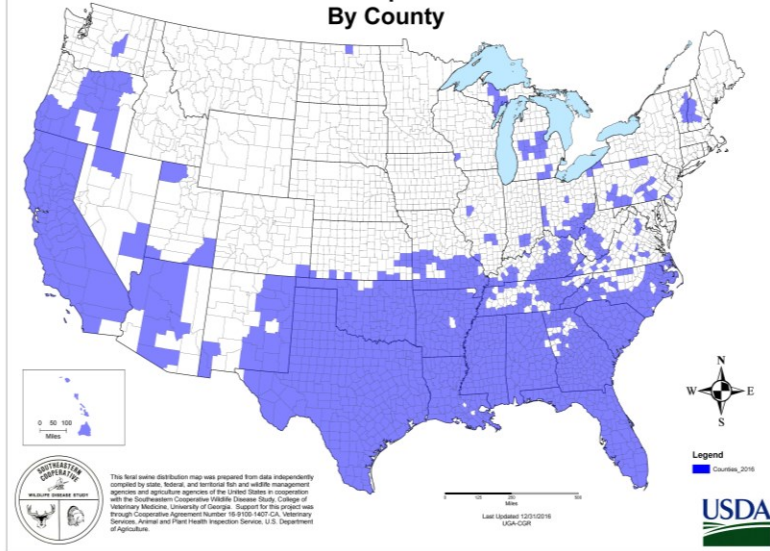
Feral Swine Populations 1982 By County



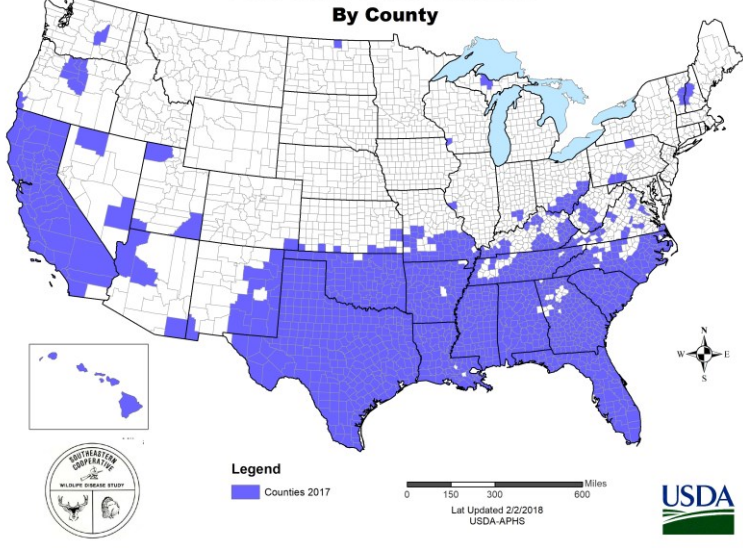
Feral Swine Populations 2004 By County



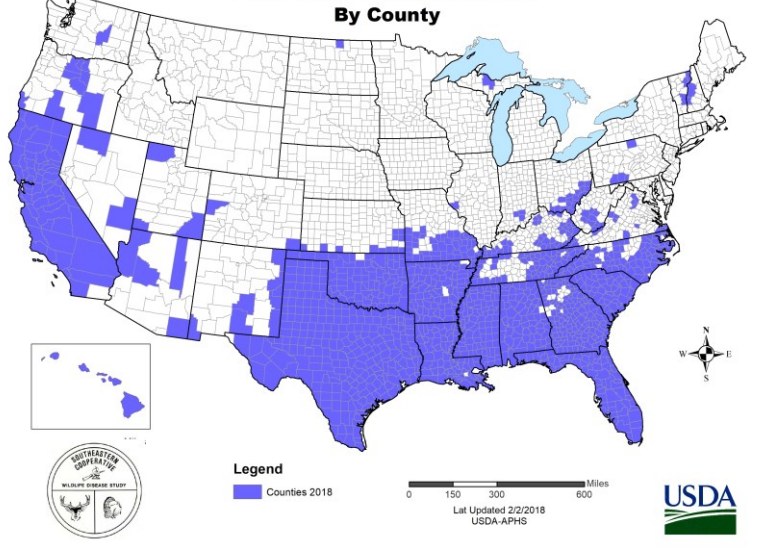
Feral Swine Populations 2016 By County



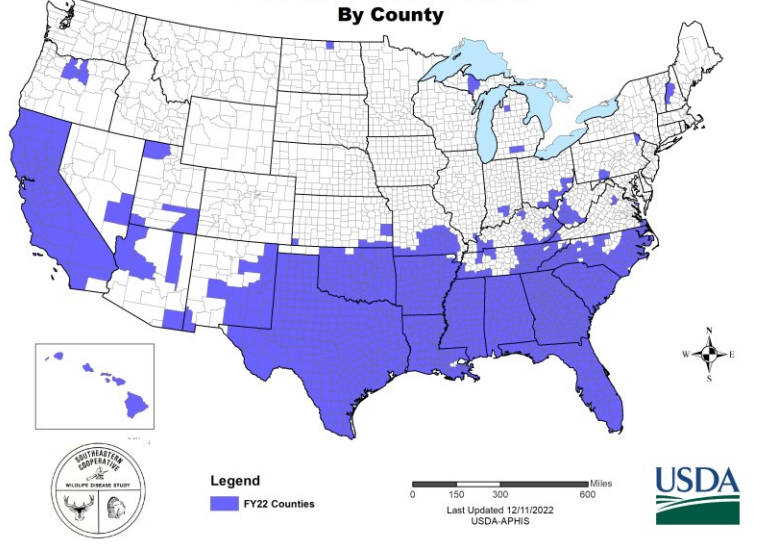
Feral Swine Populations 2017 By County

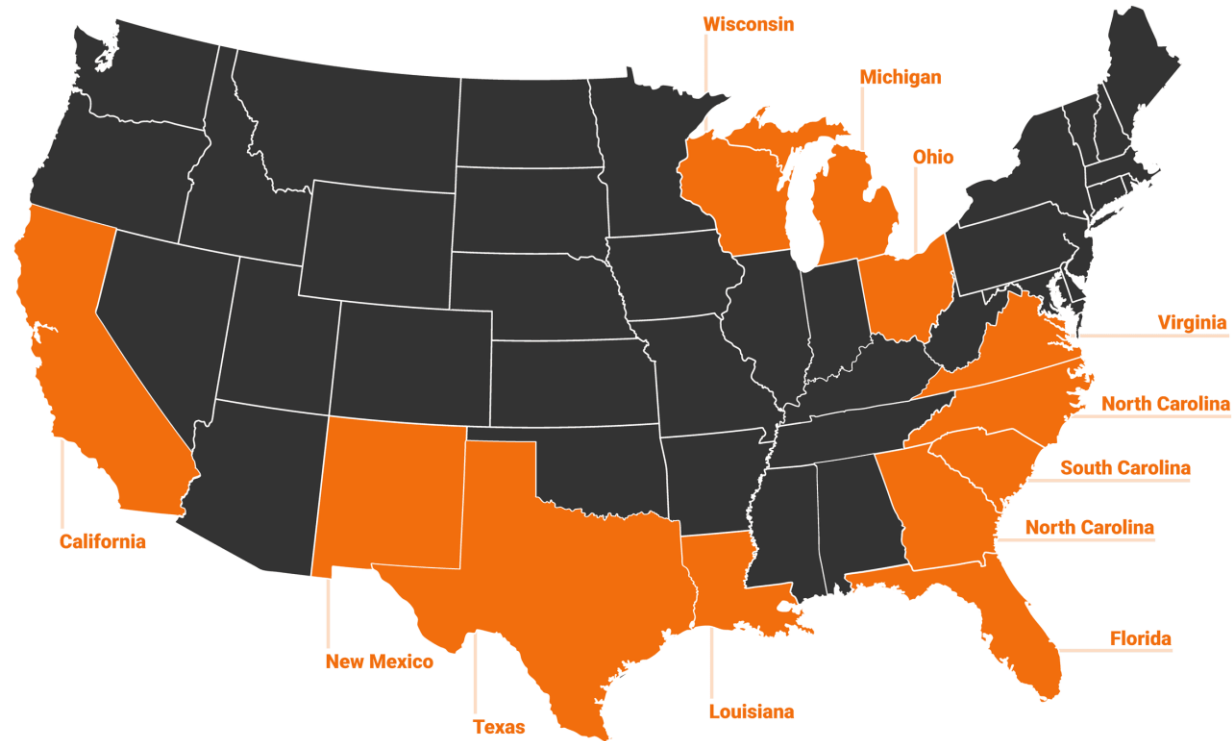


Feral Swine Populations 2018 By County



Feral Swine Populations 2022 By County





Throughout the United States, the number of wild hogs has rapidly increased over the years, which has caused this species of wild game to be much more popular to trap or hunt. Not only is it important to keep the numbers in check and help control the population, but many hunters also see hog hunting as a way to help protect their crops and properties.



Feral Hog Sounder

- Boars join the sounder to breed, but typically live alone or in small bachelor groups
- Undisturbed, sounders typically stay within a five square mile area
- Sounders are territorial, but will become cooperative if food sources are ample
- Food = Bigger sows = More piglets
- Sows can have 2 litters per year under ideal conditions



The Super Omnivore!

- They eat peanuts, corn, or other crops overnight
- They eat acorns, berries, roots, seeds, salamanders, and young lambs or calves
- They eat eggs – whether of ground-nesting birds or sea turtles
- They eat trash – landfills are all-you-can-eat buffets!

Invasive Species Profile

- Property damage
- Erosion to river/Habitat damage
- Predatory
- Consumption and destruction of field crops
- Damage to natural resources
- Able to carry or transmit 30 diseases and 37 parasites transmissible to livestock, people, pets, and wildlife



Diseases Carried by Feral Swine

Swine brucellosis (*Brucella suis*)★ 9.8%

Pseudorabies

Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory
Syndrome (PRRSv)

Swine influenza virus 14.1%

Porcine circovirus-associated diseases

Foot and mouth disease (FMD)

Classical Swine Fever (CSF)

African Swine Fever (ASF)

Tuberculosis★

Trichinellosis★ 3.5%

Leptospirosis 48.9%

Hepatitis E★

Q Fever★

Tularemia★

Toxoplasmosis★ 9%

★ *Zoonotic*

Source: Wild boars as sources for infectious disease in livestock and humans. Meng et al. 2009



Definition MCA 81-29-101

A hog, boar, or pig that appears to be untamed, undomesticated, or in a wild state or appears to be contained for commercial hunting or trapping.

North Dakota Century Code 36-26-01, “feral swine” are swine which appear to be untamed or undomesticated, appears to have reverted from a domesticated to a wild state, and is free-roaming.

Montana Regulations



Source: MDOL Staff

The following actions are prohibited:

Importing, transporting, or possessing live feral swine

Intentionally, knowingly, or negligently allowing swine to live in a feral state

Hunting, trapping, or killing feral swine or assisting in hunting, trapping, or killing feral swine

Intentionally feeding a feral swine

Expanding the range of feral swine

Profiting from the release, hunting, trapping, or killing of feral swine

Other Montana Regulations

Limits on who is allowed to control or eradicate feral swine.

Mandatory reporting to MDOL

Penalties for violations

- A fine of at least \$2,000 but not more than \$10,000 for each violation; and
- Repayment of costs incurred by a state or federal agency for the control or eradication of a feral swine as a result of the person's violation.

Funding for control and eradication

81-4-201 Animals running at large



Why Isn't Hunting Allowed in Montana?

Due to their reproductive efficiency, and movement behavior, swine cannot be effectively controlled by simple hunting practices.

- Hunting pressure that fails to eliminate all animals in a group (sounder) can result in further dispersion of animals.
- Feral swine that have been hunted learn behaviors to avoid hunting pressure making them harder to eradicate.
- Hunting fosters the development of a hunting constituency.
- All potential reports of feral swine in Montana involving live animals have been owned animals.



Source: Missouri Department of Conservation



UNITED STATES

(DEN.)



SEA

HUDSON BAY

CANADA

PACIFIC OCEAN

OTTAWA



Blaine County
07/26/2024



Hill County
09/30/2024

FERAL SWINE REPORTING

6 IN PAST 12 MONTHS

FERAL SWINE RESPONSE

Response to reports of feral swine will vary depending on the type of initial report.

- Damage consistent with feral swine
- Loose pigs outside of urban-rural interface
- Pig carcass with feral swine features

Feral Response Guidelines

1. Dept of Livestock is the authority for feral swine per MCA 81-29-101.
2. Only those entities authorized by Livestock may take feral swine on public lands.
3. Private land *landowners* or private land *lessees* may take feral swine on private lands they own or lease.
4. If FWP receives a report of feral swine the details should be recorded by FWP and relayed to the Dept of Livestock ASAP (406-444-2976) or via email to the Feral Swine Notification List.
5. If USDA Wildlife Services receives a report of feral swine, the details should be recorded by WS and relayed to the Dept of Livestock asap (406-444-2976) or via email to the Feral Swine Notification List.
6. If Livestock receives a report of feral swine, the details should be recorded by Livestock and relayed to the Feral Swine Notification List.
7. Livestock Executive Officer will relay information to Governor's office as appropriate based upon the substance and validity of the potential report.
8. Livestock will deploy to ALL reports of potential feral swine involving live animals to ensure that swine are not owned animals.
9. Authorization of FWP staff to take feral swine will be defined on a case-by-case basis. This determination will include confirmation/communication from Livestock personnel regarding the potential for stray swine in this area. Specific situations where additional authority may be proactively granted are currently being explored by Livestock.
10. USDA Wildlife Services may be authorized by Livestock to take feral swine. Livestock would initiate that communication.
11. See response scenario for additional guidance.





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