



MONTANA FERAL SWINE FACT SHEET



HOW WILL I KNOW IF FERAL SWINE HAVE BEEN ON MY PROPERTY?

Signs that indicate the presence of feral swine include:

- Extensive rooting or digging when searching for food like crops, roots and earthworms. Sounders can cause rooting damage that stretches for miles.
- Wallows, especially in moist areas during summer months.
- Tree rubs for scratching and scent marking.
- Trails through dense vegetation and tunnels in brush.
- Scat or droppings vary depending on what they have eaten and may contain partially digested remnants of grains and the hair or feathers of animals they have eaten.



Deer

Feral swine

Tracks that look similar to deer tracks but have a more round or circular shape and are about as wide as they are long.



Russian or European wild boar are considered the original species of feral pigs, but domestic swine can revert to a feral state in just a few generations.

Montana's law defines feral swine as any 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. [MCA 81-29-101]

Russian and European boar (and hybrids) are listed as a prohibited exotic species in Montana. [ARM 12.6.1540]



WHAT ARE FERAL SWINE?

Feral swine are an invasive, non-native species with populations spreading throughout the U.S. and Canada. Feral swine are considered one of the worst invasive species in the world.

Prolific Breeders – They can produce four to eight babies per litter and multiple litters per year.

Highly Adaptable – They can live in a variety of climates and habitats but prefer areas with an abundant supply of water and dense cover.

Devastating Impacts – They are aggressive and pose serious ecological, economic, and health threats.

Feral swine destroy habitat and agriculture land

- Wallows can affect ponds and wetlands, muddying the water and destroying aquatic vegetation.
- Fields can be trampled or stripped of crops in one night.
- They aid the spread of invasive plants.

Feral swine threatens wildlife

- Compete with wildlife for important food supplies.
- Prey on ground nesting bird eggs and young, and on some endangered species.
- Are known to actively hunt small mammals, reptiles and deer fawns.

Feral swine can spread diseases to people, pets, and livestock

- Carry diseases and parasites, such as pseudorabies, brucellosis, and tuberculosis, that can transfer to livestock and people. In livestock these diseases can cause abortion, infertility, decreased production, and high mortality in newborns animals.
- Prey on young sheep, goats and calves.

Feral swine impact the economy

- Feral swine are found in at least 39 states and cause up to \$2.5 billion in damages annually in the U.S. Costs include control efforts, agricultural production losses, and non-production losses like damage to infrastructure.

WHERE DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?



**USDA-APHIS National Feral Swine
Damage Management Program**
aphis.usda.gov



Montana Department of Livestock
liv.mt.gov
406-444-2976



Montana Invasive Species Council
invasivespecies.mt.gov
squealonpigsmt.com



FERAL SWINE CHARACTERISTICS:

- Feral swine can have large variations in appearance due to the ability of domestic swine to revert to feral or to cross breed with traditional feral swine breeds.
- Hair is coarse with long bristles.
 - Color is generally black but can be gray, brown, blonde, red or spotted. Piglets are brown and black striped for first few weeks.
 - Tail is moderately long, with sparse hair.
 - Weight for females is 77-330 pounds and for males is 130-440 pounds.
 - Elongated snout is flattened on the end and is tough and flexible.
 - Males have four extremely sharp tusks that continually grow. The upper tusks are 3-5 inches long and usually are worn or broken from use.

WHY ARE FERAL SWINE PROHIBITED IN MONTANA?

Feral swine are an invasive species that will damage crops, pastures, and waterways. They can carry diseases that spread to livestock, people, and wildlife. Because of their destructive nature, the Montana Legislature passed laws prohibiting their presence in Montana. The Montana Department of Livestock is responsible for control and eradication of feral swine in Montana.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS PERTAINING TO FERAL SWINE?

- 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
- Assisting in hunting, trapping, or killing of feral swine
- Intentionally feeding feral swine
- Expanding the range of feral swine
- Profiting from the release, hunting, trapping, or killing of feral swine.



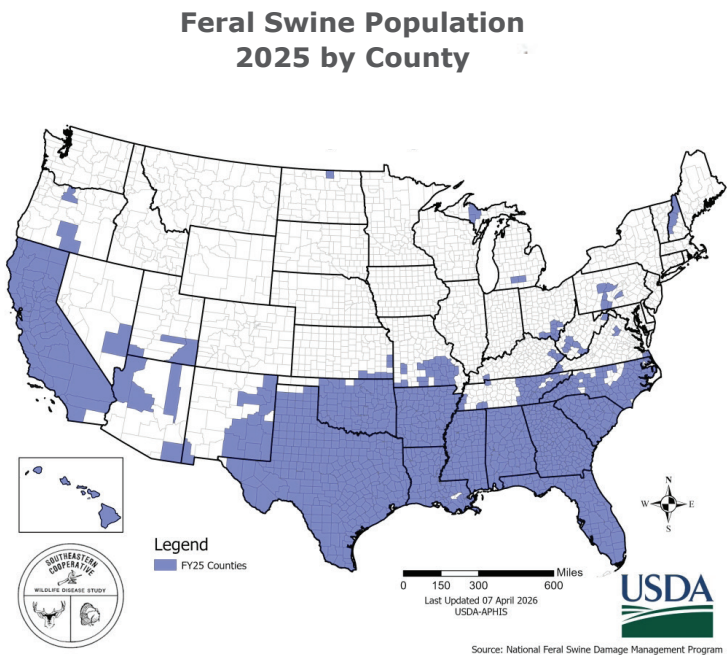
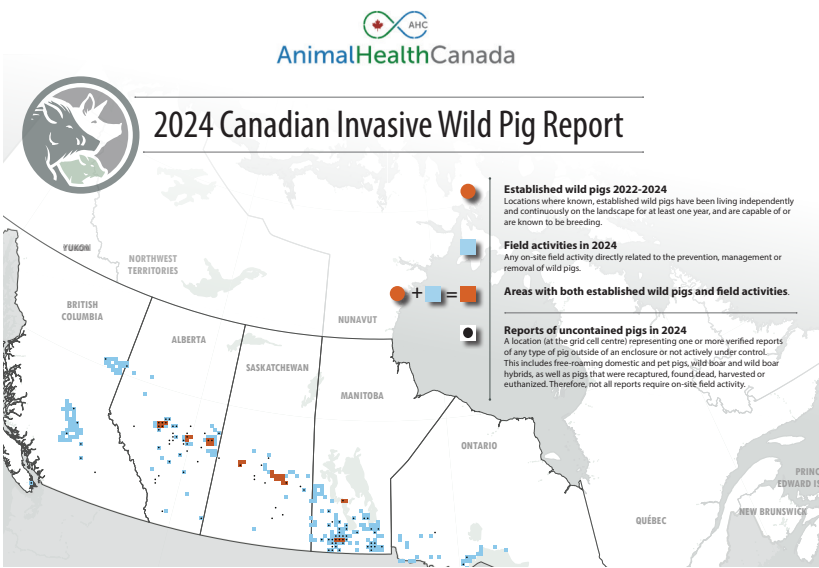
WHY IS RECREATIONAL HUNTING OF FERAL SWINE PROHIBITED IN MONTANA?

- Due to their reproductive efficiency and intelligence, swine cannot be effectively controlled by simple hunting practices.
- Hunting pressure that fails to eliminate the entire group of pigs (called a sounder) can result in further dispersal of animals.
- Feral swine that have been hunted learn behaviors to avoid hunting pressure making them harder to eradicate.
- Should a hunting constituency build, competing interests will want ongoing opportunities for hunting feral swine.
- In Montana, all reports of feral swine that involved live animals investigated by the Department of Livestock have proven to be domestically owned pigs.

WHERE ARE FERAL SWINE FOUND?

Feral swine are not native to North America. They were first brought to the U.S. in the 1500s by early explorers and settlers as a source of food. In the 1900s, European wild boar were introduced into parts of the United States for the purpose of sport hunting and into Canada to diversify livestock production.

Today, feral swine populations are a combination of escaped domestic pigs, European wild boars, and hybrids of the two. Their expansion in the North American is due to natural migration into adjacent areas and intentional movement by humans.



The Invasive Wild Pig Leadership Group is an initiative under the Pan-Canadian ASF Action Plan, coordinated by Animal Health Canada for industry, provinces, territories, and the federal government. To see the full report visit animalhealthcanada.ca/Canadian-invasive-wild-pig-report.

Feral swine occurrences reported to USDA Wildlife Services by county.

TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT FERAL SWINE

- Report any feral swine sightings, signs, or damage to the Montana Department of Livestock at 406-444-2976.
- Help spread the word to discourage others from transporting feral swine into Montana.

