



Feral Hogs

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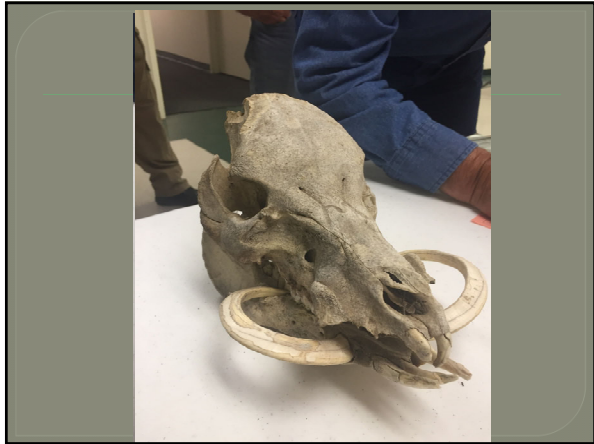
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Interbreeding

- Domestic swine
 - In North America by early 1500's
 - Food source for early settlers
 - Allowed to range freely
- Eurasian wild boar
 - Introduced to TX in 1930's
 - Released / escaped from Bexar co. and Calhoun co.
- Hybrid of the two



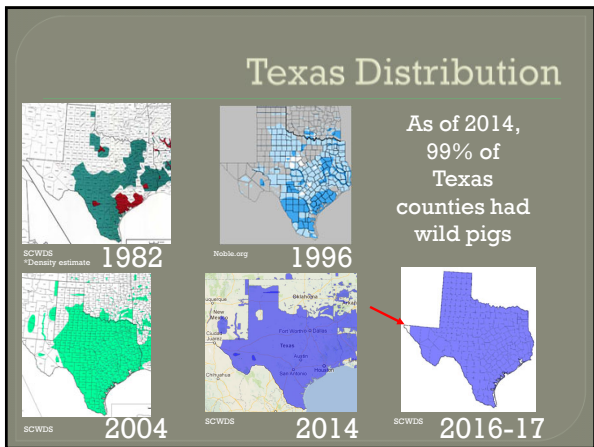
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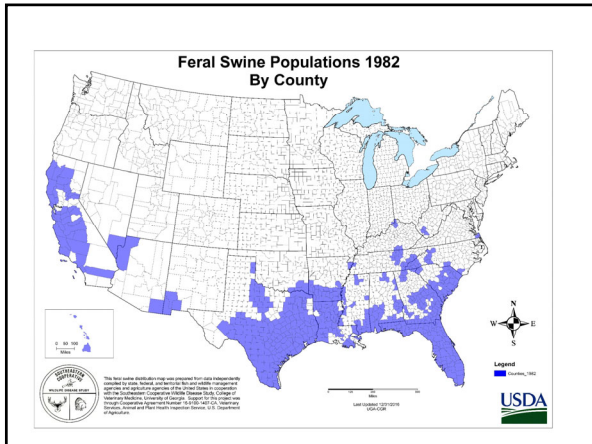
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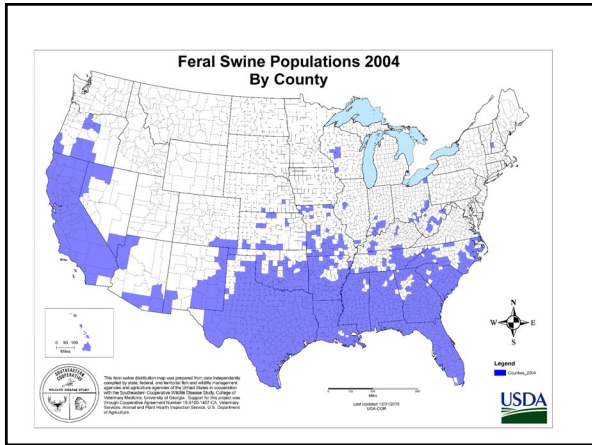
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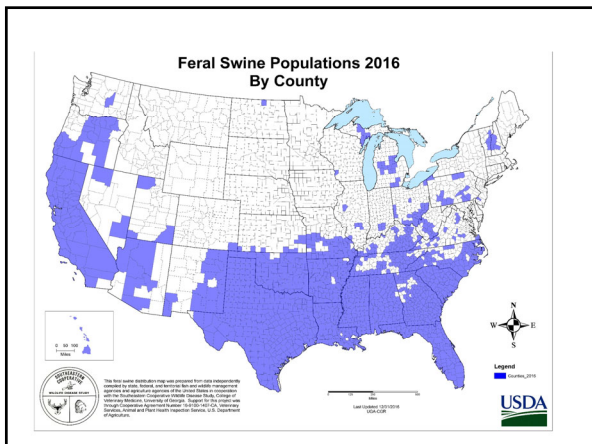
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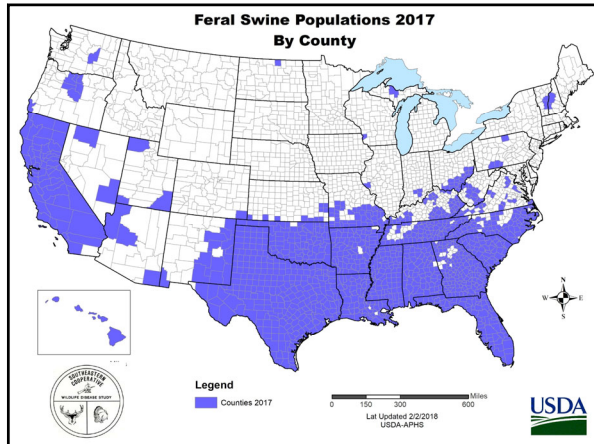
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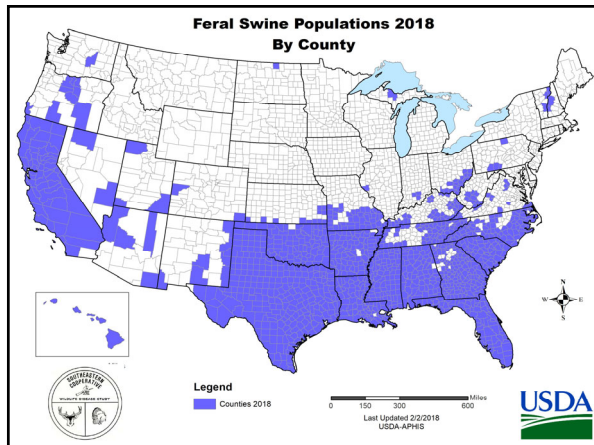
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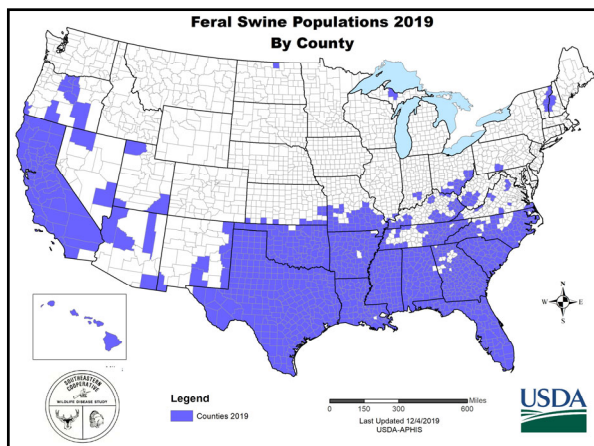
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Research suggests there are now an estimated

5.3 Million +
wild pigs in Texas.

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Reproduction: Sows

- *“The most reproductively successful large mammal worldwide”*
- Sexually viable at 6-10 months of age
- Multiple litters per year
- Gestation is 115 days allowing 2 litters per year (typically 1.5 litters per year)
- 4-6 piglets per litter



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Reproduction: Sows

- Polyestrous - In heat every 18-24 days until bred
- Adults produce larger litters than yearlings (Taylor et al. 1998)
- Multiple paternity



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In less than 2 years

42 pigs can be traced to one sow

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Annual Survival Rates

- 60% in South Texas
- 86% in West Texas
- Juveniles & Males have lower survival rate
- Can live up to 8 years
- Average lifespan 4-5 years



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Social Structure

- Solitary Males**
 - Compete For
 - Breeding Opportunity
 - Food Resources
- Sounders**
 - Matrilineal Kinship
 - Mature females their litters
 - Groups can be large (50+)



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Predation???



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Situation Under Control?

- Need to remove 66% annually just to maintain current populations
- Currently remove about 29% of the population annually
- No

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They all need water!!!



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Why is Water So Important?


- Wild pigs lack sweat glands
- Thermoregulation is accomplished by:
 - Wallowing
 - Occupying shaded areas
 - Nocturnal feeding



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Water Quality Impacts

- Loss of riparian vegetation
- Increased runoff and sedimentation
- Bacterial contamination
 - E. Coli (fecal coliforms)
- Watershed impairment





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Ecological Impacts

- Wallowing & Rooting
 - Increase in invasive species such as Chinese Tallow tree
 - Decrease in large seeded natives like oak and hickory species
- Rubs – can girdle or wound trees




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Wildlife Impacts

- Kill/eat wildlife
 - Ground nesting birds
 - Fawns
- Destroy habitat
- Compete with native species for resources like water, food, and habitat



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Wildlife Impacts



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Livestock Impacts


- Disease Transmission
 - Pseudorabies, Foot Rot
 - Brucellosis, and others
- Depredation
- Competition for resources



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Economic Impacts

- Over \$1.5 billion across US annually
- \$52 million in Texas
- Texas landowners spend \$7 million



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Feral Hog Damage



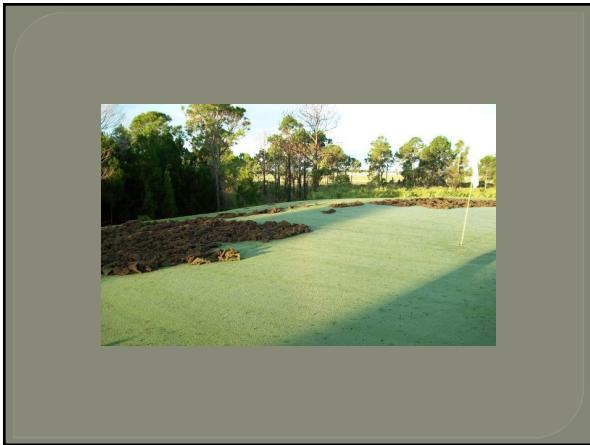
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Health & Safety Concerns

- Carry 20+ diseases, including over a dozen zoonotic diseases
 - Brucellosis, tuberculosis, anthrax, foot and mouth disease, and salmonellosis



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Intelligence

- Highly intelligent and adaptable
- Easily "educated"
 - Avoid traps
 - Nocturnal
 - Difficult to pattern
- Respond quickly to pressure

Raccoons are saddle breaking feral hogs and riding them into battle against the possums. The media probably won't cover this.



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Top 6 Most Intelligent Animals



Source: List25.com

Photo Credit: List25.com

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Legal Status of Feral Hogs

- Feral Hogs are not game or non-game
- Free ranging livestock
- Considered exotic livestock (fall under ownership of landowner and not the state)
- Landowners or their agents are allowed to harvest feral hogs on their property without a hunting license if feral hogs are causing damage
- No license required
 - (SB 317 by Sen. Bryan Hughes (Mineola), passed during the 86th Texas Legislature)

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Legal Status of Feral Hogs

- Exotic species (feral hogs) may be hunted throughout the year
- No closed season or bag limit
- Aerial gunning is allowed.
 - Permit from TPWD
 - Land Owner Agreements
- Suppressors (silencers) on firearms are legal
- Spotlight hunting or night vision is allowed, but contact your game warden ahead of time

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Current Legal Options for Control

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension promotes an integrated approach to Feral Hog Management utilizing all suitable legal means.
- ***“References to company names, commercial products or trade names are made for information purposes only. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service does not endorse companies or products and no discrimination is intended.”***


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Legal Options

- Trapping
- Snaring
- Shooting
- Aerial Gunning
- Trained Dogs
- Contraceptives
- Chemical Control/Toxicants???



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Trapping

DISADVANTAGES

- Time intensive
- Materials Cost

ADVANTAGES

- Highly effective
- Capture large groups
- Transport and sale of live pigs
- Combine with other methods

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Trap Size vs Portability

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Box Trap

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BOX TRAP Doors



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Gate Choices



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Corral Traps

- Gate (or funnel)
- Utility panels
 - No corners
- 4' t-post spacing
- 5' panel height



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Wexford Trap



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Pre-baiting

- Generally increases the success of any effort to reduce populations
- Train pigs to bait, *then* trap or shoot



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Selling & Moving Feral Hogs

- Why Move Them?
- Who Regulates
 - Texas Animal Health Commission
- Movement
 - Can be sold to approved buying stations.
 - Can be released on preserves for hunting.
 - Males ONLY! (Boars or Barrows)
- More Information
 - https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_FeralSwine.pdf

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Snaring

- Pros:
 - Inexpensive
 - Easy to Deploy
 - Effective
 - Very effective when deployed after aerial control.
- Cons:
 - Possibility to Kill Non-targets
 - Single-Use Item (Can't be reused)
 - Only Kill 1 at a Time

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Shooting

- Low harvest method
- Success can be increased through use of:
 - Silencers/Night vision
 - Multiple Shooters
 - Semi-automatic Weapons
- Effective method for pressuring hogs
- Legal Considerations




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Aerial Gunning

- Highly effective but very expensive
 - \$800 - \$1000+ Hr.
- Potentially remove large numbers at a time.
- Require permit and a licensed pilot.
- Texas Parks & Wildlife: LOA Required



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Trained Dogs


- Baying Dogs
- Holding Dogs
- Pig dispatched by hunter
- Low harvest method
- Legal considerations:
 - Dog damage
 - Access
- Effective for pressuring pigs out of an area



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Remotely Triggered Traps

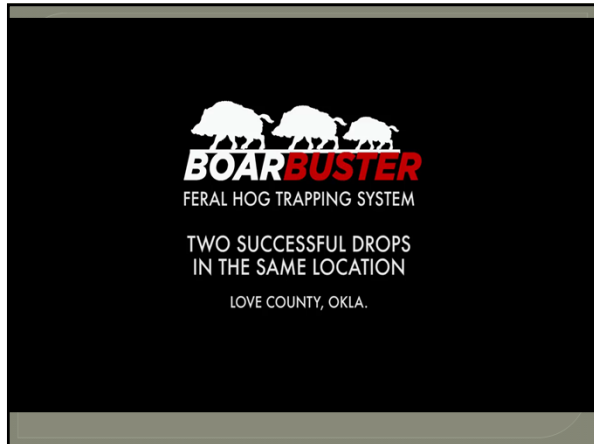
- Vs. Traditional
- Relatively expensive
- Can be triggered with
 - Remote control
 - Cell phones
 - Computers
 - Other electronic devices
- Many are integrated with cameras



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Chemical Control



- 1 toxicant labeled by the EPA for use in the USA
 - Active Ingredient: Warfarin
- NOT AVAILABLE IN TEXAS or ANY OTHER STATE**
- Extension has not evaluated yet**
- Not Labeled
 - Sodium Nitrite
 - Humane
 - rapid depletion of oxygen to the brain and vital organs.
 - Death by Methemoglobinemia occurs within 1.5 hours in feral hogs (Cowled et al. 2008a).
 - Currently has an Experimental Use Permit and being Field Tried
- Contraceptives
 - HogStop - High gossypol feed targeting male reproduction

Cowled, B.D., P. Elsworth, and S.J. Lapidge. 2008. Additional toxics for feral pig (Sus scrofa) control: identifying and testing Activated blebs. Wildlife Research 35:653-662.

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Safety

- Wild Pigs can be aggressive
- Cornered and injured animals are more prone to attack
- Run 30 mph and jump 3 feet
- Wild pigs carry disease and a wound from a tusk could become heavily infected
- Human/pig disease and vehicle interaction, while still low is higher than pig attack events

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Safety

- Documentation does exist though of attacks!
- Generally, occur in hunting scenarios with dogs
- Getting between a sow and her litter or sounder
- Wild pigs tend to flee rather than fight
- Unprovoked attacks are very rare
 - 5 to 7 fatalities reported in the media each year

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Any Questions?

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