



Photo United States Department of Agriculture



Feral Swine



Damage to an access road done by feral swine. Photo: Karan A. Rawlins, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org



An adult feral hog. Photo: Texas Wildlife Services.

What Are They?

While feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*) may look similar to domestic pigs, they are much more destructive. They were brought to the United States as domestic pigs from Europe and Asia. Over time, some have escaped or were released intentionally, creating free-ranging feral swine populations. As prolific breeders, they can produce four to eight babies per litter. Feral swine are highly adaptable, but prefer habitats with an abundant supply of water and dense cover. They are aggressive and pose serious ecological, economic, and health threats.

Are They Here Yet?

There are no known established populations in Washington, though feral pigs have been reported and removed in the past. In Idaho, biologists have eradicated a small population in the Bruneau Valley and have no known established populations. Oregon officials estimate that as many as two hundred feral swine are in the state, most having invaded from California where feral swine exist in all but two counties.

Why Should I Care?

Feral swine are aggressive animals that may be extremely destructive to fields, fences, and facilities. Their wallows can affect ponds and wetlands, muddying the water and destroying plants that live in the water. They can strip a field of crops in one night and pose a threat to ground-nesting birds and some endangered species. Feral swine also can transmit diseases and parasites, such as pseudorabies, brucellosis, and tuberculosis, to livestock and people.



What Are Their Characteristics?

- Feral pigs exhibit wide variation in color and size.
- Their hair is coarse with long bristles, and the color ranges from black, gray, brown, blonde, or red to spotted combinations. Generally, they are black.
- The tail is moderately long, with sparse hair.
- On average, females weigh between 77–330 pounds. Wild boars weigh from 130–440 pounds.
- The elongated snout is tough, flexible, and flattened on the end. The males have four tusks that grow continually and can be extremely sharp. The upper tusks are 3–5 inches long and usually are worn or broken from use.



Feral swine adults and piglets. Photo: Billy Higginbotham, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Bugwood.org.

How Can We Stop Them?

Feral swine are listed as deleterious exotic wildlife by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and are considered illegal under state law. It is unlawful to import, hold, possess, propagate, offer for sale, sell, transfer, or release feral swine.

What Should I Do If I Find One?

Report immediately via the WA Invasives mobile app or reporting web form at <https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/report-a-sighting/>.