

Feral Hogs

Background, Life History

A feral hog is defined as any hog, including Russian and European wild boar, that is not conspicuously identified by ear tags or other identification and is roaming freely on public or private land without the manager's or landowner's permission.

Feral hogs became a problem in Missouri in the mid-1990s when people began intentionally releasing them to establish populations for hunting opportunities. Like many other nonnative species, feral hogs multiply quickly. Sows can reproduce at 6 months of age and typically have two litters of four-10 piglets each year. Consequently, feral hog numbers can double or triple in just one year.

Impacts

Left unchecked, feral hogs will continue to spread throughout Missouri, causing millions of dollars in agricultural, environmental, and property damage.

Feral hogs harm native wildlife, including deer and turkey, by eating and destroying crucial food sources such as acorns, nuts, fruits, berries, and food plots. They also prey on the eggs and young of ground-nesting birds, such as quail and turkey, and also on fawns and other small animals. Their rooting and wallowing destroy fragile natural areas, erode soil, and foul streams and springs, which can smother aquatic life.

In a single night feral hogs can destroy acres of pasture, hayfield, cropland, and gardens. They also damage orchards and tree farms, raid livestock feeders, and foul water supplies. They kill young livestock and spread diseases such as swine brucellosis, pseudo-rabies, leptospirosis, swine fever, and foot-and-mouth disease. A disease outbreak from feral hogs could devastate Missouri's pork and other livestock industries.

Some feral hogs carry swine brucellosis and other diseases that can infect humans and pets. Because their eyes don't reflect headlights, these nocturnal animals also are road hazards and cause accidents.





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Feral hogs harm wildlife and destroy natural communities, water sources, agriculture, and pastures.



The Missouri Department of Conservation and its partners use a variety of techniques to eliminate feral hogs on public land, and on private land when requested.

Eradication

The Missouri Department of Conservation, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services, and other partners are aggressively working to eradicate feral hogs from public land. In addition, they are helping private landowners trap and kill hogs on their property, when requested.

Hunting is a great tool to manage native wildlife populations, but feral hogs are not wildlife and their elimination is necessary. Other states with hog problems have shown that hunting actually increases feral hog numbers and distribution because of illegal releases of hogs into the wild for hunting opportunities. Feral hogs have a high reproductive rate and travel in large groups called sounders. Hog hunting removes one or two hogs at a time, and the remaining hogs scatter to new areas, become more difficult to trap, and quickly replace those that are removed. Thus, no progress is made toward removing the entire population. The Conservation Department and its partners monitor sounders for weeks to track their movements and place large, baited, remotely activated traps that can catch the entire sounder at once. Because these trapping efforts are far more effective than hunting, the Department has banned the take of feral hogs on all lands owned, managed, or leased by the Department.

Report All Hog Sightings

Report all feral hog sightings or releases by visiting mdc.mo.gov/feralhog or call **573-522-4115 ext. 3296**.

Need help removing hogs on your property?

Contact us at the website or phone number above for assistance.



For More Information

Visit mdc.mo.gov/feralhog or tinyurl.com/je3rcl3

