

Feral Hogs

Background, Life History

A feral hog is any hog without an ear tag or other identification that roams on public or private land without permission. They include wild boars, escaped or released domestic swine and hybrids.

Feral hog numbers in Missouri exploded in the 1990s after people began releasing them for sport hunting. Like many other nonnative species, feral hogs quickly multiply. Conservative estimates show more than 10,000 feral hogs in Missouri, with sightings in more than 40 counties. That number is quickly growing because sows can reproduce at six months and typically have two litters of 4–10 piglets each year. Their numbers can double or triple in just one year.

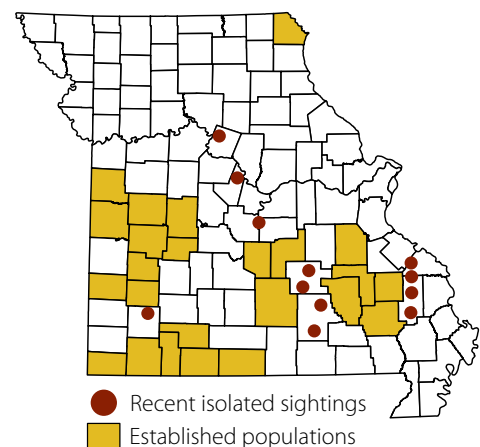
Impacts

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

Feral hogs harm native wildlife, especially deer and turkey, by eating and destroying crucial food sources such as acorns, nuts, fruits, berries and food plots. They also prey on eggs and young of ground-nesting birds, such as quail and turkey, 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 can 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.

Feral hogs may carry swine brucellosis and other diseases, which can infect humans and pets. Because their eyes don't reflect headlights, these nocturnal animals also are road hazards and cause accidents. They have attacked campers, hikers, hunters, horseback riders and pets.





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Feral hogs harm wildlife and destroy agriculture.



The Missouri Department of Conservation shoots, traps and snares feral hogs on public land. Hunters are encouraged to shoot feral hogs on sight.

Control & Eradication

The Missouri departments of Conservation, Agriculture and Natural Resources, along with the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USDA Wildlife Services are aggressively shooting, trapping and snaring feral hogs on public land and helping private landowners trap and kill them.

Hunters are encouraged to shoot feral hogs on sight. In Missouri, feral hogs may be killed in any number throughout the year. During most of the year, no permit is required and any method is allowed including baiting and the use of dogs. Special restrictions apply during the spring turkey season and fall firearms deer and turkey seasons. Resident landowners, however, on land they own and lessees on land on which they reside may use any method to take feral hogs at any time without a permit.

When you kill a feral hog, wear plastic or rubber gloves while field dressing and bury the offal to prevent the spread of disease. Do not feed raw meat or organs to pets or livestock. As with all pork, cook meat thoroughly before eating it.

Report Releases, Sightings and Kills

It is against the law to release any type of hog on public land in Missouri.

Report feral hog releases to:

Operation Game Thief—1-800-392-1111

Report a feral hog sighting or kill to:

USDA Wildlife Services—(573) 449-3033, ext. 13

or the **Missouri Department of Conservation—(573) 522-4115, ext. 3147**



Feral hogs are a road hazard.

For More Information

Visit www.MissouriConservation.org or extension.missouri.edu and search “feral hogs.”

