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## Feral Swine

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Feral swine, also known as feral hogs, wild pigs and assorted other names that can't be printed, are very much on the minds of conservationists in the state of Michigan.

Currently the DNRE estimates that there are 3,000-5,000 feral swine running loose and free in Michigan. Feral swine have been sighted in every county of the state. Released and/or escapees from captive wild boar ranches throughout the state, these non-native swine species have the potential to wreak ecological, economic and agricultural havoc throughout our state. Capable of reaching 500+

pounds, these creatures breed prolifically. Once a female reaches maturity at 7-8 months of age, she is capable of producing up to 1,000 young within five years.

Feral hogs are considered omnivores, meaning that they will eat most anything in their path. They tend to feed at night, in groups, and can decimate acres of a farm field or vegetable plot in one night. They eat ground-nesting birds, fawns, small animals, frogs, dogs, cats and anything else they can catch. Feral swine are smart animals, have keen senses of smell and hearing, and better eyesight than you can imagine. They are also known carriers of pseudo-rabies which is a huge threat to the state's multi-million dollar domestic swine industry.

According to current state law, you may shoot a feral swine during any hunting season in the state of Michigan as long as you have a valid hunting license or a concealed pistol permit. In fact, you are encouraged to do so.

Currently, feral swine are considered a "nuisance" species by the state of Michigan, but there is a movement afoot to seek their designation as an "invasive" species. If so designated, further importation of feral swine into Michigan may be prohibited and a system of regulating the currently unregulated captive feral swine operations in the state will be put in place. The director of the DNRE may sign an Executive Order to do so and there is also legislation currently pending which may accomplish the same objective. Public comment is currently being sought by both the DNRE and the Natural Resources Commission. A Swine Biodiversity Work Group consisting of stakeholders from agricultural, sporting, captive feral swine breeders, hunting ranch operators and others has also been assembled to address this issue. When the Natural Resource Commission meets in November, the Work Group will present its recommendations.

If you are concerned about the presence of feral swine in the forests and fields of our state and want to see that everything that can be done is done to eradicate them, you need to make your feelings known to the NRC an/or the DNRE.

This is a conservation, agricultural and wildlife management issue which should be based on science, not politics.

For more information on feral swine in Michigan, visit the DNRE's web site at [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370\\_12145\\_55230---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12145_55230---,00.html)

The website includes a form to report sightings, maps, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

A short overview from Jackson County MSUE:

<http://msuejackson.blogspot.com/2010/07/not-wanted-feral-swine-in-michigan.html>

Article from MUCC

[http://www.mucc.org/index.php/hot-button/comments//dnre\\_mda\\_work\\_with\\_stakeholder\\_groups\\_to\\_provide\\_recommendations\\_for\\_contro](http://www.mucc.org/index.php/hot-button/comments//dnre_mda_work_with_stakeholder_groups_to_provide_recommendations_for_contro)

An opinion piece from *Simply Outdoors*:

<http://www.simplyoutdoors.net/2010/09/17/michigans-pig-fight-takes-a-turn/>