

Feral Swine

Feral swine or hogs belong to the Suidae family and are descendants of escaped or released pigs. Feral swine look similar to domestic hogs, but typically have thicker hair and longer tusks. Any free-ranging swine that does not have an ear tag is considered feral. Feral swine are more active at night and generally travel in family groups consisting of multiple adults and piglets. Feral swine are known for having a high reproductive output and for causing serious damage to the landscape, very quickly. This combination of factors makes them a very undesirable feral species to have in North Carolina.

What kind of damage is caused by feral swine? Feral swine can cause extensive damage to property through rooting and wallowing. This damage can cause decreased property values, poor water quality, and decreased vegetative diversity. In addition to property damage, feral swine can decimate crops and orchards through consumption, rooting, and wallowing if left unchecked.

Can a WCA write a depredation permit? A WCA can issue a depredation permit for feral swine. Alternatively, agents who possess either a hunting or trapping license could obtain a “Feral Swine Trapping Permit” from the NCWRC which would allow them to trap feral hogs without issuing a depredation permit. For information on the Feral Swine Trapping Permit please visit <https://www.ncwildlife.org/Licensing/Other-Licenses-Permits/Feral-Swine-Trapping-Permit>.

Can they be relocated? Feral swine cannot be relocated, and if trapped, they must be euthanized inside of the trap.

What can I do with sick or injured feral swine? There is no rehabilitation for feral swine. Because feral swine are undesirable and cause extensive damage, it is preferred that all feral swine regardless of health be euthanized.

Are there any safety concerns? When threatened or approached, feral swine can charge people creating potentially dangerous situations. Additionally, feral swine have tusks that are capable of impaling people if contact is made when charging. Swine also have very strong jaws that can deliver serious bite wounds. Caution should be taken when attempting to trap or hunt these animals.

Non-lethal Options:

- Exclusion
 - Fencing can be installed to prevent swine from accessing agricultural or crop areas when damage is occurring. However, because feral swine are invasive and cause extensive damage, it is preferred that lethal methods be used to control damage.

Lethal Options:

- Hunting
 - Feral swine may be hunted year-round with a state hunting license. However, a landowner is not required to purchase a hunting license to hunt on his/her own property.
 - There are no bag limits.
 - Swine may be taken at night, and artificial lights and electronic calls are allowed on private lands.

- Trapping
 - Feral swine may be trapped year-round with proper license/permitting (either a depredation permit, or the combination of a feral swine trapping permit and a trapping or hunting license)
 - Only box and corral traps are legal for trapping feral swine
 - Traps must be constructed in a manner such that non-target animals can be easily released or escape without harm.
 - Feral swine must be euthanized inside of the trap and cannot be removed from the trap while alive.
 - In addition to having a weather-resistant permanent tag with trapper contact info, feral swine traps are also required to display the trapping permit number.
 - A permit is required to trap feral swine. Agents who possess either a hunting or trapping license can obtain a “Feral Swine Trapping Permit” from the NCWRC which would allow them to trap feral hogs without issuing a depredation permit.