STOP THE INVASION
PROTECT NEW YORK FROM INVASIVE SPECIES

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

EURASIAN BOAR

Sus scrofa

What are Eurasian boar?

Eurasian boar, also known as wild boar, feral pigs or feral swine, are a highly adaptable invasive species that negatively impact native plants and wildlife, damage agricultural crops, and act aggressively toward humans. Intelligent and prolific, Eurasian boar pose a tremendous threat to New York and have the potential to irreparably damage the state's native ecosystem. DEC's goal is to prevent them from illegally entering the state and to eradicate any free-roaming Eurasian boar.

Adult Eurasian boar with piglets

Identification

Eurasian boar have long, pointed heads with narrow snouts and erect hairy ears. Unlike most domestic pigs, their tails are long and straight, with a tuft of hair at the end. Most have large, razor-sharp tusks that point out and upward. Adults have black or brown coats that turn gray with age, and faces often peppered with white hairs. Some have a "mane" of hairs that stands up along the ridges of their backs, which is why they are sometimes called "razorbacks." Piglets are born with a striped brown and tan pattern, known as livery. As the piglets get older, their stripes fade and their coats become darker. Eurasian boar readily crossbreed with domestic pigs, resulting in a wide range of body shapes and coat colors.

Where are they located?

A number of Eurasian boar escaped from enclosed shooting facilities in New York during the 1990s and 2000s and began breeding in the wild in six counties. An eradication program implemented by DEC and the USDA's Wildlife Services has eliminated these free-ranging Eurasian boar. DEC and the USDA continue to investigate all feral swine sightings and work to keep these animals out of New York State.

Where did they come from?

Eurasian boar are native to Europe and Asia, with their range spanning almost the entirety of both continents and part of Africa. They were introduced to North America as early as 1539 as domestic pigs, and had multiple introductions in the 1800s and 1900s for hunting purposes. Considered a nuisance in the South for decades, wild boar populations have continued to expand their North American range and are now found in more than 40 states.

What damage do they cause?

Eurasian boar negatively impact the environment, agriculture and humans in many ways, including:

- Competing with native wildlife for food, and destroying habitat
- Consuming the eggs of ground-nesting birds and reptiles, as well as feeding on fawns and young domestic livestock
- Damaging yards, gardens, sensitive natural areas, and agricultural fields while rooting and wallowing. Boars can destroy acres of crops in just a few days.
- Contaminating water supplies and contributing to soil erosion

Damage to a suburban front lawn
Photo: Billy Higganbotham, Bugwood.org

- Carrying diseases that could be transmittable to domestic pigs and humans, including swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, E. coli, and leptospirosis
- Being hazardous on roadways because their eyes do not reflect headlights at night, making them hard for drivers to see
- Being aggressive toward humans and their pets and potentially harming them

What are the regulations on Eurasian boar in New York State?

To prevent Eurasian boar from entering or becoming permanently established throughout the state, the following regulations have been put into place:

- As of October 2013, it is ***illegal to import, breed, or release Eurasian boars in NYS.***
- As of April 2014, it is ***illegal to hunt or trap free-ranging Eurasian boar in NYS.***
- As of September 2015, it is ***illegal to possess, sell, distribute, trade, or transport Eurasian boar within NYS.***

Why is it illegal to hunt them?

The most efficient way to manage Eurasian boar is to trap the entire sounder (group of pigs) at one time and eliminate them then. Research and management experience has shown that hunting wild boar disperses them into smaller groups, costing more time and money to track down each individual. Eurasian boar are extremely intelligent, highly adaptable animals. Many never return to areas where they've been shot at and those that do are more suspicious, making them harder to trap in subsequent attempts.

A group of Eurasian boar is called a sounder

Hunting is also an inefficient and ineffective eradication option due to the boars' high survival and reproductive rates. Hunters would have to take 70-75% of the population each year just to stabilize their numbers. Prohibiting hunting of Eurasian boar also eliminates the incentive to illegally introduce new populations for sport hunting.

What if Eurasian boar are destroying my crops or private property?

If Eurasian boar are damaging your property, provisions in the regulations would allow you to shoot these animals with proper prior approval. Any landowner whose property is damaged by free-ranging boar should contact a DEC regional wildlife office to determine whether a permit is needed to shoot boar on their property.

What can I do?

If you believe you have seen a Eurasian boar or damage from them…

- Note the location (intersecting roads, landmarks or GPS coordinates).
- Note the number of animals seen, the date, and whether any were piglets.
- Take pictures if possible.
- Contact your local DEC office (see the DEC website for a complete list) or your local Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) by visiting: www.nyis.info.
- Report the infestation to iMapInvasives at: www.NYiMapInvasives.org.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Bureau of Wildlife
Division of Fish and Wildlife

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233
P: 518-402-8862 | wildlife@dec.ny.gov
www.dec.ny.gov

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