

# Contending with Feral Hogs in Texas

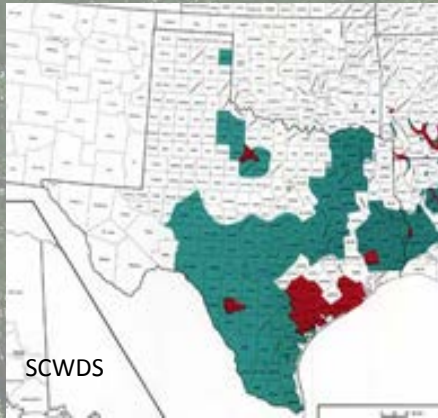
Mark Tyson, M.S.

Extension Associate

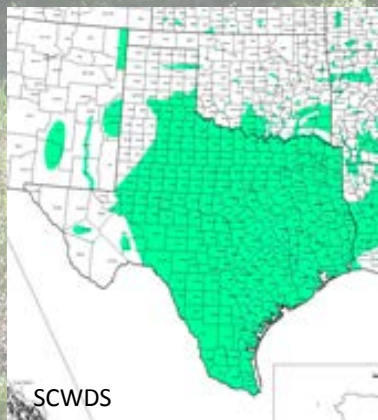
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



# Texas Distribution

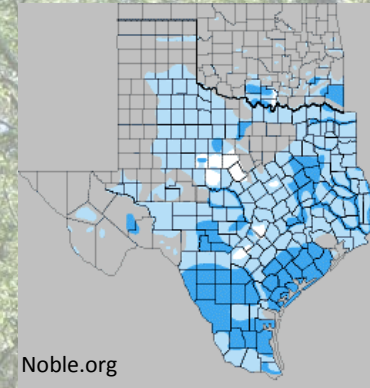


1982



2004

As of 2012, 99%  
of Texas counties  
have feral hogs



1996

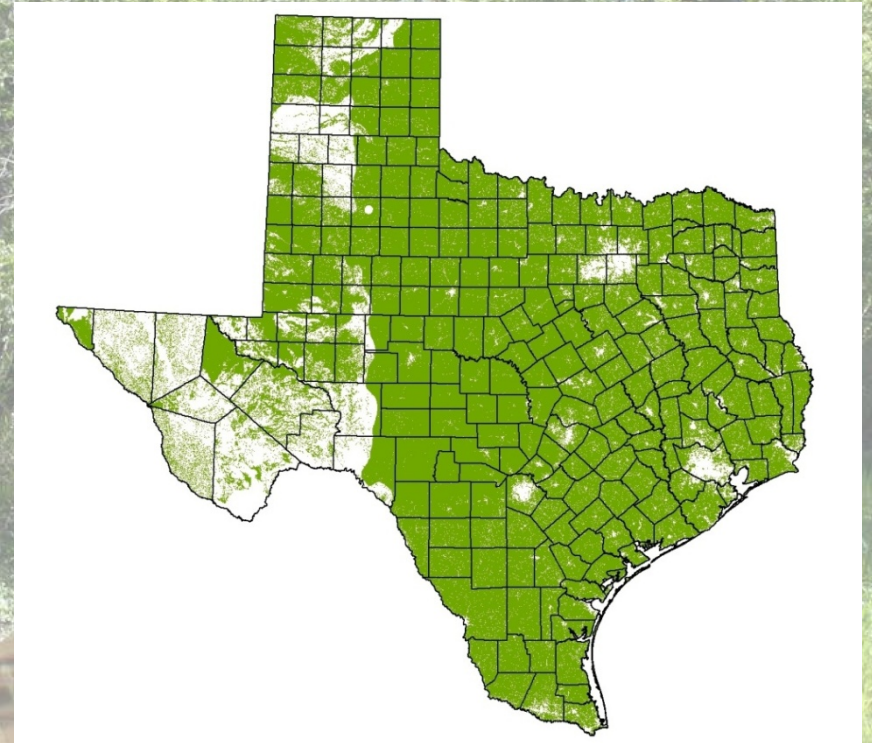


2012



# Suitable Habitat in Texas

- 134 Million Acres
- 79% of Texas
- Areas receiving less than 20 inches of rainfall are not considered suitable





# What do you think?

- What is the average litter size of feral hogs?
  - Four to Six
  - Eight to Ten
- More than you can count



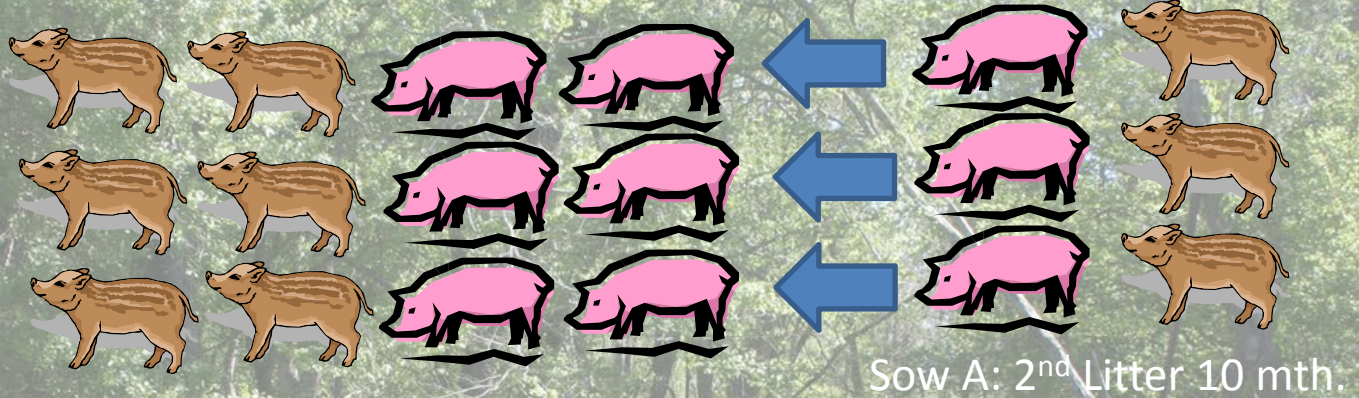


# In less than two years: 42 feral hogs can be traced back to 1 sow

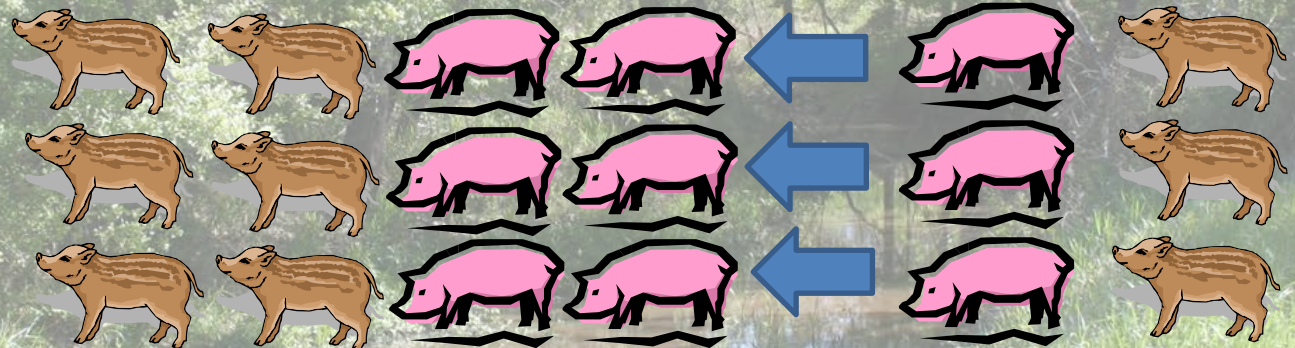
## Assumptions:

- Perfect World Scenario
- Sow A will be bred 2 months after farrowing
- Gilts will breed at 6 months of age
- 4 months gestation
- 100% Survival

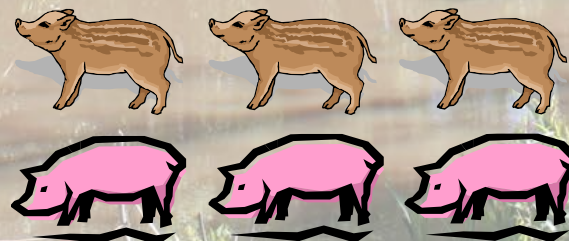
20<sup>th</sup> mth. 2<sup>nd</sup> Litter Sows Farrow



14<sup>th</sup> mth. 1<sup>st</sup> Litter Sows Farrow



Sow A: 3<sup>rd</sup> Litter 16 mth.



Sow A





# Influences on Breeding Season

- Regional photo-period
- Habitat Conditions
- Food Resources
- Precipitation
- Sows with access to quality forage had 20% more fetuses. (Barrett 1978)





# Annual Survival Rates

- 60% in South Texas
- 86% in West Texas
- Juveniles & Males have lower survival
- Average lifespan 4-5 years
- Can live up to 8 years





# Sounder Dynamics

- Can be a mixture of adults, family groups, sub-adults and piglets
- Studies have suggested a singular sow directs the sounder (Wilcox et al. 2004)
- Can vary from 2 to 50 individuals





# Home Range

- **South Texas**
  - 1483 acres (Gabor et al. 1999)
  - 890 acres (Ilse and Hellgren 1995)
- **Central Texas**
  - 1485 acres (Schlichting et al.)
- **East Texas**
  - 3905 acres for males and 1606 acres for females (Mersinger and Silvy 2007)
- **West Texas**
  - 12,355 acres (Adkins and Harveson 2007)

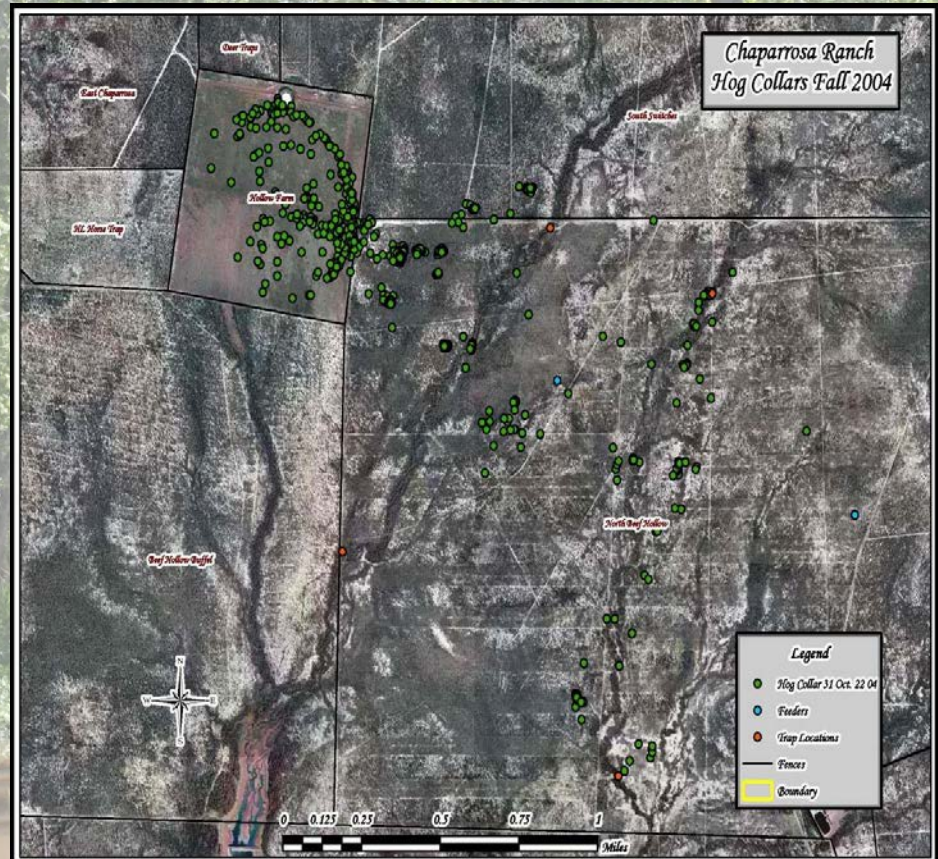




# Home Range

## Opportunistic Generalists:

- Food availability
- Population density
- Habitat quality
- Season
- Climate
- Human activity
- Social structure





# Diet

- Omnivorous
- Opportunistic feeders based on food availability
- “Will eat anything that contains a calorie” – Dr. Billy Higginbotham





# Diet

- **South Texas (Annual)**
  - 95% Vegetation  
(Ilse and Hellgren 1995)
- **South Texas (Annual)**
  - 93% Vegetation  
(Taylor and Hellgren 1997)
- **West Texas (Summer)**
  - 77% Vegetation  
(Adkins and Harveson 2006)





# Diet

- **Rolling Plains  
(Seasonal)**

- Spring: 60% Vegetation
- Summer: 49% Soft Mast
- Fall: Grain Crops & Invertebrates 61%
- Winter: 83% Vegetation  
(Lucia et al 1999)





# Feral Hogs and Water

- Feral hogs lack sweat glands.
- Thermoregulation is accomplished by:
- Wallowing
- Occupying shaded areas
- Nocturnal feeding



Campbell & Long



# Watershed Damage

## Fecal Matter:

- Increases bacteria
  - Fecal coliforms
- Increases nutrients





# Watershed Damage

- Feral hog activity can alter aquatic communities within a watershed

(Kaller and Kelso 2006)





# Watershed Damage

## Wallowing:

- Bank erosion
- Soil compaction
- Oxygen depletion
- Soured water





# Wallowing





# Wallowing





# Watershed Damage

- Droughts can concentrate feral hogs at remaining water sources
- Continuous damage can reduce water source quality for livestock, wildlife, agriculture and recreation





# Watershed Damage

## Rooting:

- Erosion of soil
- Sets back plant succession
- Soil disturbance favorable to invasive plant species which easily colonize disturbed areas





# Rooting





# Rooting





# Watershed Damage

- Fenced parcels contained 500 fire-resistant longleaf pine seedlings per acre compared to only 8 fire-resistant seedlings in unfenced areas.

(Lipscomb 1989)



Lipscomb



# Watershed Damage

- Rooting could slow tree growth by exposing soils to rapid leaching of available nutrients  
(Lacki and Lancia 1983)





# Predation

- Sows aggressively defend piglets
- Sounders practice group vigilance and defensiveness
- Mountain lions take adults
- Coyotes and Bobcats take juveniles





# Feral Hog Population Reduction

- Legal Methods in Texas:
  - Trapping
  - Snaring
  - Shooting
  - Dogs





# Pre-bating and Conditioning






# Feral Hog Population Reduction

- Once Pigs are on Bait:
- Decide to shoot or trap
  - Shoot if: A lone boar is responding
  - Trap if: Multiple hogs are responding







Bushnell  Camera Name 29.76In→ 40°F ○

02-28-2013 19:07:12 Bushnell  Camera Name 29.71In↑ 38°F ○

02-27-2013 19:18:03



Photo Camera Name 29.75In↓ 36°F ○

02-28-2013 19:32:47



Photos: Dr. B. Higginbotham











# Feral Hog Population Reduction

- Use other legal methods as “tools”
  - Strategically Shoot or Use Aerial Gunning
  - Snare in Specific Situations
  - Use Bay and Catch dogs





# Toxicants (Poison Baits)

- At this time, it is illegal to use toxicants as a control method for feral hogs
- Research is being conducted on the use of toxicants to control feral hogs





# Reporting Feral Hogs

- <http://feralhogreports.tamu.edu/>
- Help us locate areas of high activity
- Guide both management and educational efforts to reduce their impact to watersheds



# Transporting Feral Hogs

- Regulated by the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)
- TAHC regulations apply when LIVE feral hogs are moved from the location of capture





# Additional Resources

- <http://feralhogs.tamu.edu>

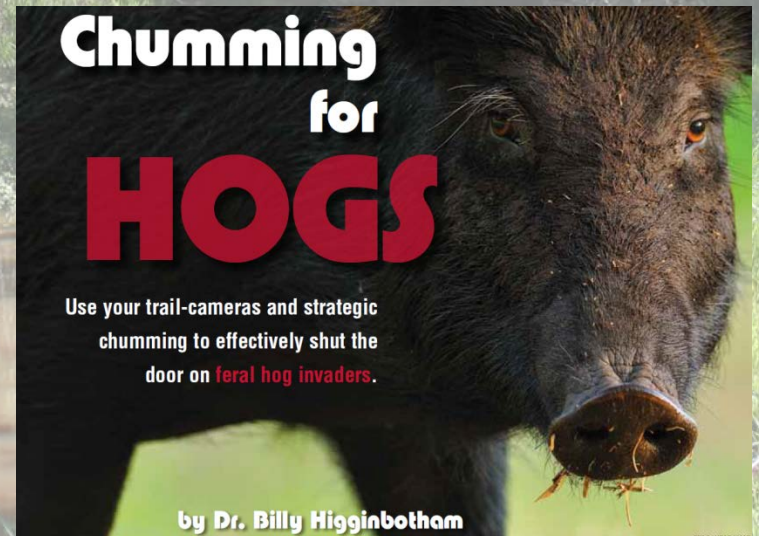
16 Publications

How-to-Articles

- <http://lshs.tamu.edu>

Feral Hog Manual

Information on bacterial  
contaminants





# Additional Resources

- Feral Hogs Community of Practice
- [http://extension.org/feral\\_hogs](http://extension.org/feral_hogs)

54 Articles

Ask an Expert

Videos

103 FAQs

4 Webinars



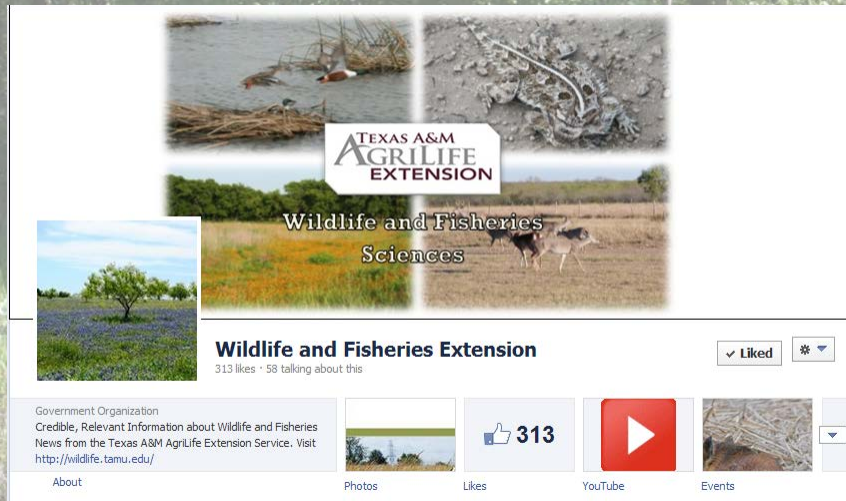
The screenshot shows the 'Feral Hogs - eXtension' website. The header includes navigation links: 'About eXtension', 'Ask an Expert', 'Campus', 'eXtension.org', 'Learn', and 'Search'. Below the header, a banner reads: 'These resources are brought to you by the Cooperative Extension System and your Local Institution'. The main content area features the 'TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION' logo and the 'PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY Cooperative Extension Program' logo. A search bar is located on the right. The main heading is 'Feral Hogs', followed by the subtitle 'Biology, management, and control of invasive feral hogs'. Below this, a featured article titled 'Perceptions of Feral Hogs in the U.S.' is displayed, accompanied by a photo of feral hogs. To the right, a sidebar contains a section 'In The News...' with several news items, including 'Sutton County Winner of 2012 Texas Hog Out Challenge' and 'Feral Hogs Running Wild throughout Oklahoma'. A pagination bar at the bottom shows '1 2 3 4 5 Next'.



# Additional Resources

- Like us on Facebook:
- **WFSCEXTENSION**

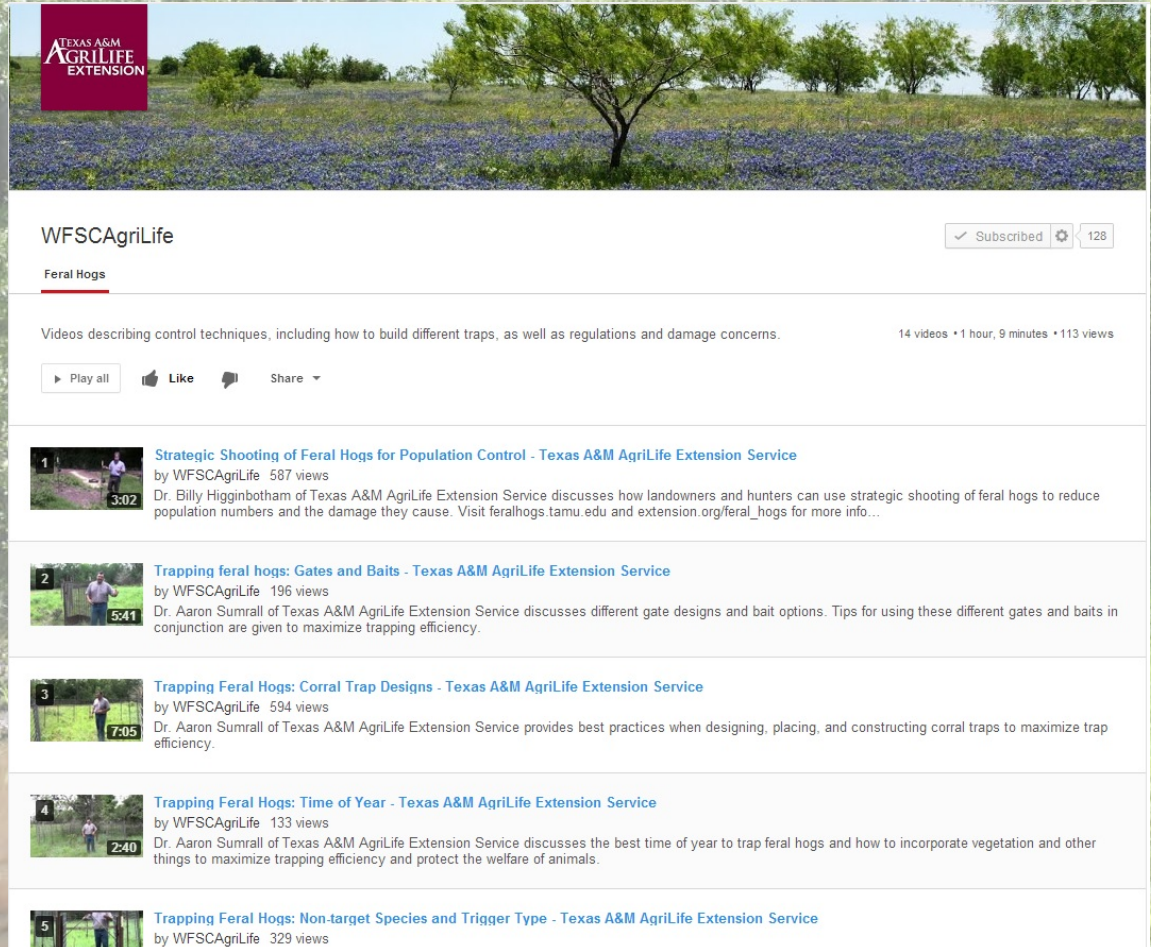
**FeralHogCoP**





# Additional Resources

- Subscribe to our YouTube Channel
- WFSCAgriLife
- 14 Feral Hog Mgmt. Videos



The image shows a screenshot of a YouTube channel page for "WFSCAgriLife". The channel banner features a landscape with a field of purple flowers and trees, with the "TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION" logo in the top left corner. The channel name "WFSCAgriLife" is displayed, along with a "Subscribed" button and a subscriber count of 128. Below the channel name, the playlist "Feral Hogs" is highlighted. A description states: "Videos describing control techniques, including how to build different traps, as well as regulations and damage concerns." It also shows "14 videos • 1 hour, 9 minutes • 113 views". Interaction buttons for "Play all", "Like", "Share", and "Comment" are visible. Five video thumbnails are listed, each with a title, channel name, view count, and a brief description.

**TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION**

**WFSCAgriLife**  128

**Feral Hogs**

Videos describing control techniques, including how to build different traps, as well as regulations and damage concerns. 14 videos • 1 hour, 9 minutes • 113 views

[▶ Play all](#) [Like](#) [Share](#)

- 1 Strategic Shooting of Feral Hogs for Population Control - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
by WFSCAgriLife 587 views  
Dr. Billy Higginbotham of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service discusses how landowners and hunters can use strategic shooting of feral hogs to reduce population numbers and the damage they cause. Visit [feralhogs.tamu.edu](http://feralhogs.tamu.edu) and [extension.org/feral\\_hogs](http://extension.org/feral_hogs) for more info...
- 2 Trapping feral hogs: Gates and Baits - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
by WFSCAgriLife 196 views  
Dr. Aaron Sumrall of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service discusses different gate designs and bait options. Tips for using these different gates and baits in conjunction are given to maximize trapping efficiency.
- 3 Trapping Feral Hogs: Corral Trap Designs - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
by WFSCAgriLife 594 views  
Dr. Aaron Sumrall of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides best practices when designing, placing, and constructing corral traps to maximize trap efficiency.
- 4 Trapping Feral Hogs: Time of Year - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
by WFSCAgriLife 133 views  
Dr. Aaron Sumrall of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service discusses the best time of year to trap feral hogs and how to incorporate vegetation and other things to maximize trapping efficiency and protect the welfare of animals.
- 5 Trapping Feral Hogs: Non-target Species and Trigger Type - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
by WFSCAgriLife 329 views



Wild Wonderings - Windows Internet Explorer

http://wild-wonderings.blogspot.com/

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Per Diem Rates Look-Up  
http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120

Wild Wonderings Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service

Sidebar

Urban Feral Hogs: Con...

Land Management Res...

The Five Footed Feral H...

Range and wildlife man...

Riparian grazing works...

New native grassland...

Chronic Wasting Disea...

New Feral Hog Reporti...

Pre-baiting and Condi...

Riparian Areas and Wil...

New videos showcase...

QuailMasters class dat...

Third round of Trinity Riv...

Urban Feral Hogs: Concern, Challenges and Control

By:

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Photos By:

Linda Tschirhart-Hejl, Jared Timmons & Dr. James Cathey

Urban wildlife is coming more into the spotlight these days thanks to a critter scientifically known as *Sus scrofa*, the feral hog. With a name like that one may think this creature is from another world, and actually that is quite true. Feral hogs can be traced back to the old world and are not native to North or South America. They were said to be introduced to the U.S. mainland in 1539 by Hernando De Soto when he landed off the coast of Florida. After occupying the mainland for the last 474 years feral hogs have been quite successful in expanding their populations in both rural and urban areas.















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