Impacts of Feral Hogs on Habitat and Water Quality



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Why Are Hogs Such a Problem?

- Capable of breeding year round
- Females can reproduce at 3-4 months
- Average litter size 4-6
- Life span of 9 or more years
- Few natural predators for adults
- Highly mobile which aids in distribution





Feral Hog Population Growth

* Extremely fast reproductive Potential

Negative Impacts of Feral Hogs on Habitats, Wildlife and Water

- Impact native plant communities
- Damage agricultural and urban resources
- Compete with native wildlife species
- Prey on native wildlife
- Degrade water quality
- Increase erosion
- Point source pollution
- Spread diseases







Impacts to Native Plant Community

- Destruction of wetland plants by rooting/trampling/ rubbing
- Soil disturbance encourages growth of invasive plants
- Reduces plant cover
- Can change species composition

Impacts to Agricultural and Urban Resources

- Damage hay pastures
- Destroy row crops
- Damage urban landscape





Impacts to Native Wildlife

- Compete with native species for food (acorns, invertebrates, etc.)
- Compete with native species for space
- Prey on native species and their eggs
- Spread diseases and parasites







Impacts to Soils and Water Quality

- Alter soil structure
- Soil erosion
- Increased turbidity
- Foul water sources through wallowing and defecation

Spread Human, Wildlife and Livestock Diseases

- Swine brucellosis humans/domestic swine/cattle
- Pseudorabies sheep/cattle/dogs
- Tularemia humans, rabbits
- Diseases are transmitted in feral hog fecal matter: salmonellosis, viruses, intestinal bacteria







Controlling Hog Populations

- Trapping
- Shooting
- Dogs
- Chemical toxicants?
- Fencing











In Conclusion:

- Feral hogs are an exotic species that are a destructive force across the landscape
- Negatively impact:
 - native habitat
 - agricultural and urban resources
 - native wildlife
 - water quality
- Disease vectors
- Population control is problematic yet essential to protecting important natural resources

Hogs are here to stay!!

