

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry



Courtesy Jolene Daley

Invasive Wild Pigs in Ontario:

What you need to know and what you can do

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With input from: Bree Walpole, Sr. Policy Advisor – Fish & Wildlife Policy (NDMNRF)

Big Bug Day, Stratford ON - December 8, 2021

What are wild pigs?

- All swine (*Sus scrofa*) of any breed outside a fence:
 - Escaped Eurasian wild boar
 - Escaped domestic pigs
 - Hybrids
- Wild pigs can look just like domestic pigs
 - Pink / thin hair
 - Spotted, striped
 - Dark / thick hair
 - 200 lbs – 400+ lbs

Pigs are not native to North America.



Pigs in the wild are an INVASIVE SPECIES.



Eurasian wild boar



Pot bellied pig

Photo Credit: Kevin Shelp

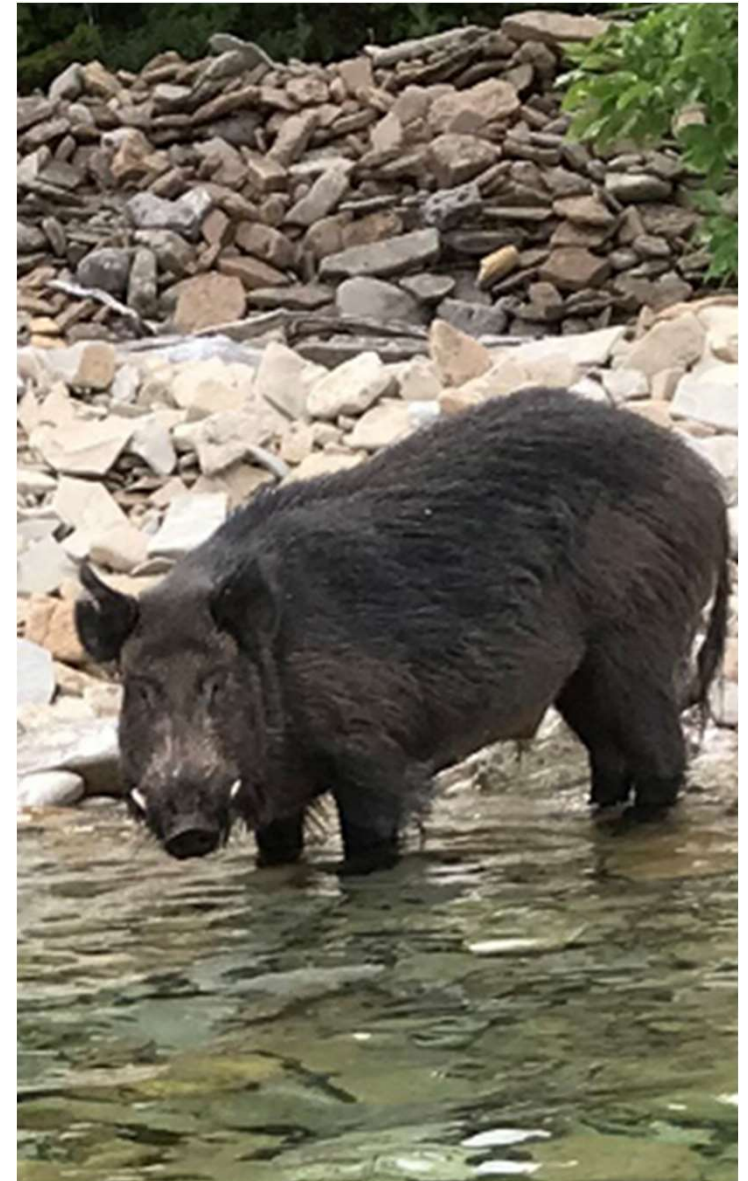


Domestic pigs

Wild Pigs: Why do we care?

“Wild pigs are one of the most prolific invasive mammals on Earth and cause extensive damage to agricultural crops, native ecosystems, and livestock and are reservoirs of disease.”

(Kost and Brooks 2017)



Eurasian wild boar in Midhurst District
Photo: Robert Bourne

The Wild Pig Problem

Risk to plant agriculture

- Annual cost for damage and control in US estimated at >\$1.5 billion
- Destroy both crop and ground through rooting, trampling, wallowing



Risk to animal agriculture and people

- Can be extremely aggressive
- Will kill calves / goat kids / lambs / white tail deer
- Harass other livestock



Risk to natural ecosystems

- Rooting , trampling, wallowing
- Competition for resources
- Predators
- Environmental impacts (e.g., water quality)

The Wild Pig Problem

Disease transmission risk

- Top diseases of concern in US
 - Brucellosis*
 - Pseudorabies
 - Tularemia*
 - Classical swine fever (CSF)
- Other concerns
 - Influenza*
 - Leptospirosis*
 - Circo, PRRS
 - Bovine TB*
 - ***African swine fever (ASF)***
 - *Foot & mouth disease (FMD)*

*also zoonotic disease risk



Courtesy R. Brook, UofSask

The Wild Pig Problem

Keys to success of wild pigs:

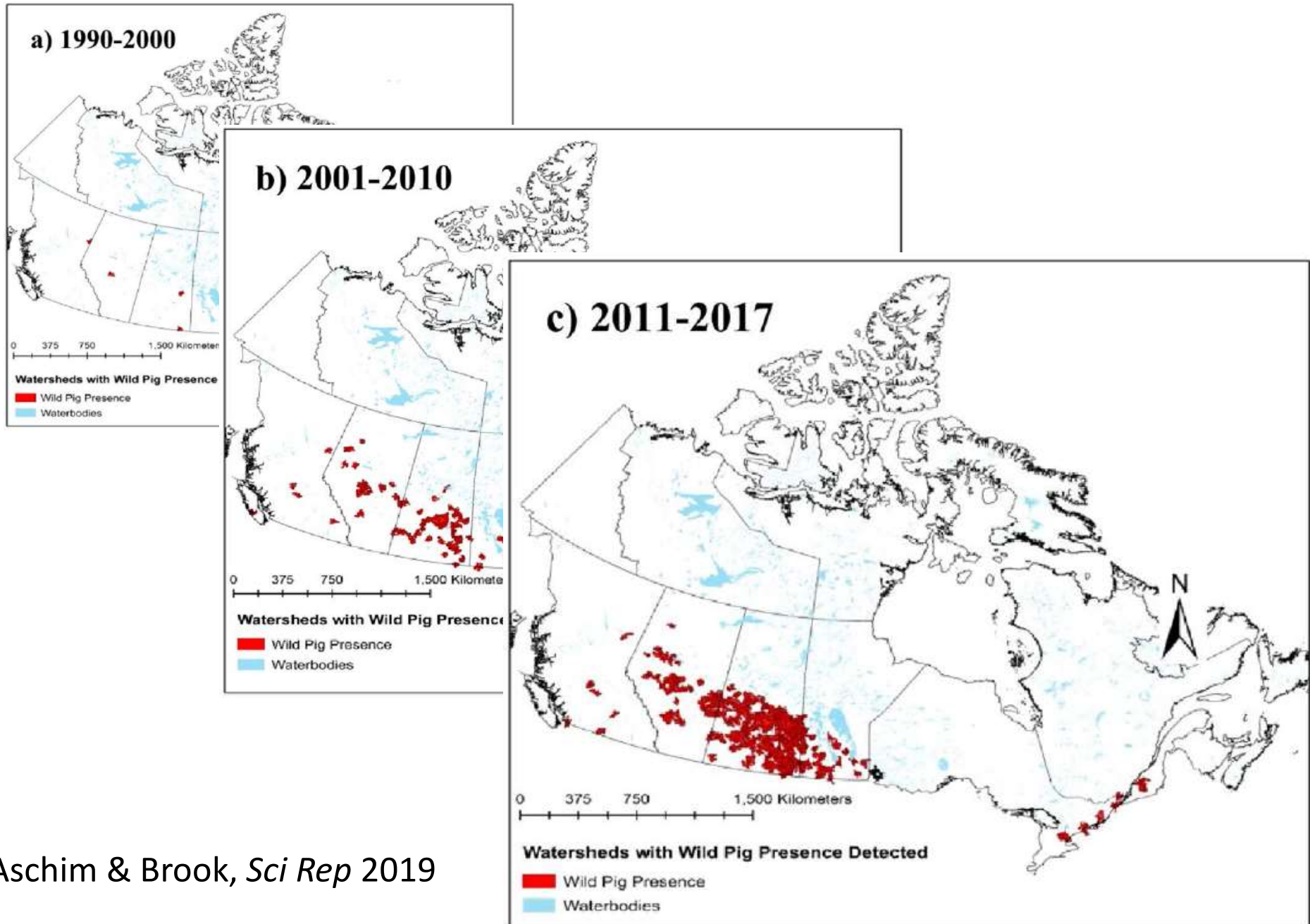
- High reproductive rates
- Early sexual maturity
- Opportunistic diet
- Long life span
- Elusive (nocturnal), highly mobile
- Highly adaptive, habitat generalist
- Few to no natural predators
- Extremely intelligent

Very difficult to eradicate once established!



Wild pigs in Guelph District, ON
(now recaptured)
Photo: Bryan Izzard

Where Are Wild Pigs in Canada and Ontario?



Aschim & Brook, *Sci Rep* 2019

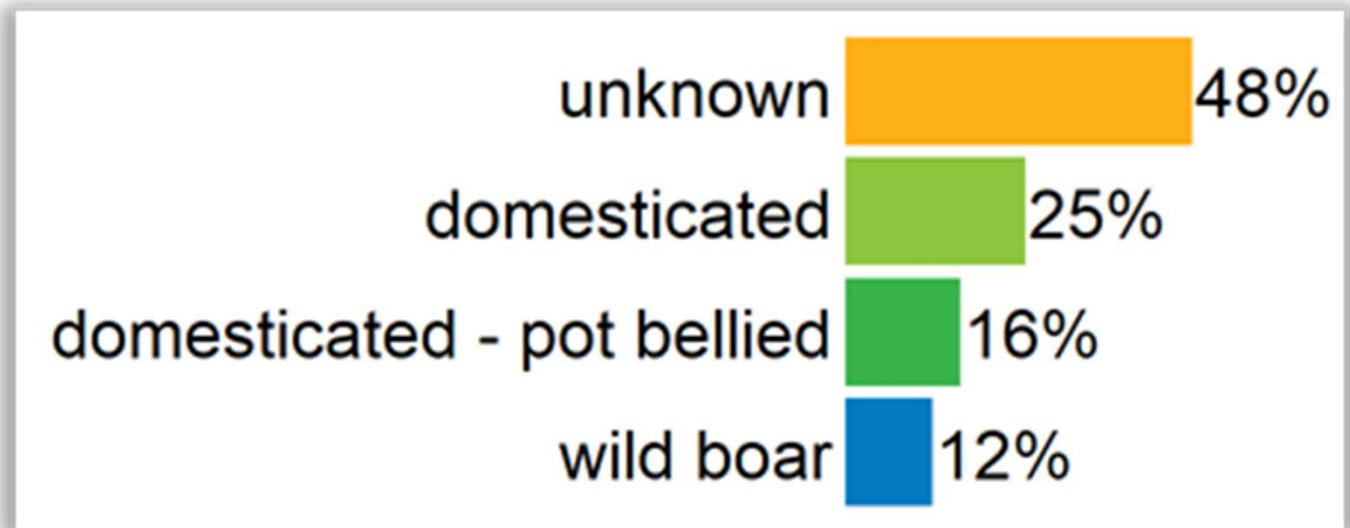


In Ontario, report wild pig sightings to NDMNRF: wildpigs@ontario.ca or 1-833-933-2355

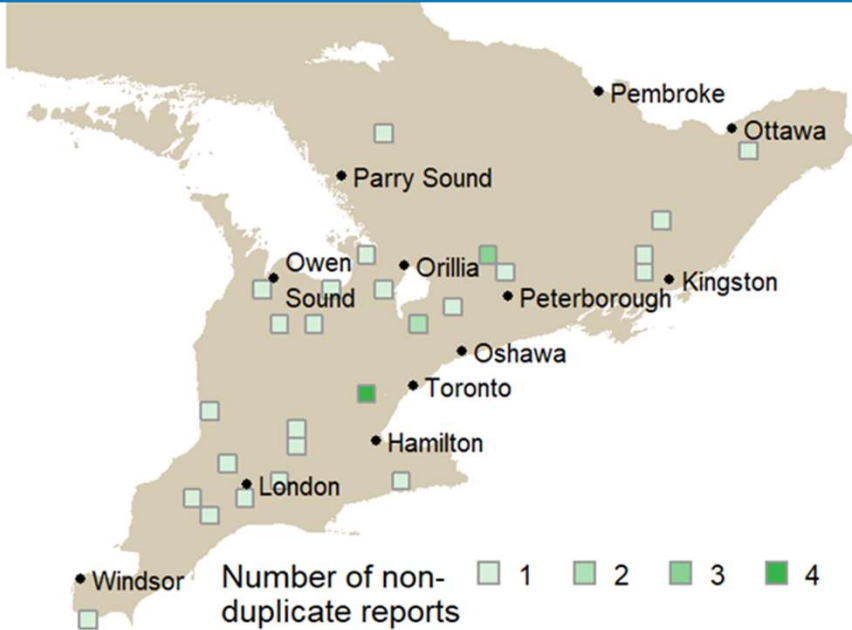
The NDMNRF receives reports of all types of wild pigs:

- domestic pigs loose on the road
- trail camera footage of wild boar
- pot bellied pigs that have wandered away from home or been abandoned
- and more...

Reported between
Oct 2018 - Sep 2020
but observed as
early as 2011



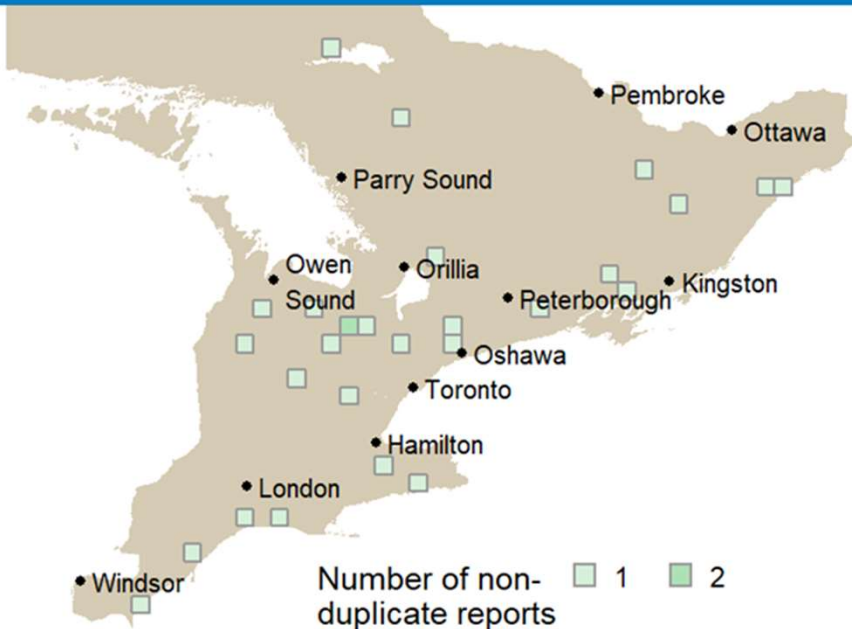
Domesticated



Some wild pigs are **domesticated** animals that have recently escaped. Many have likely returned to their farms.



Domesticated – pot bellied



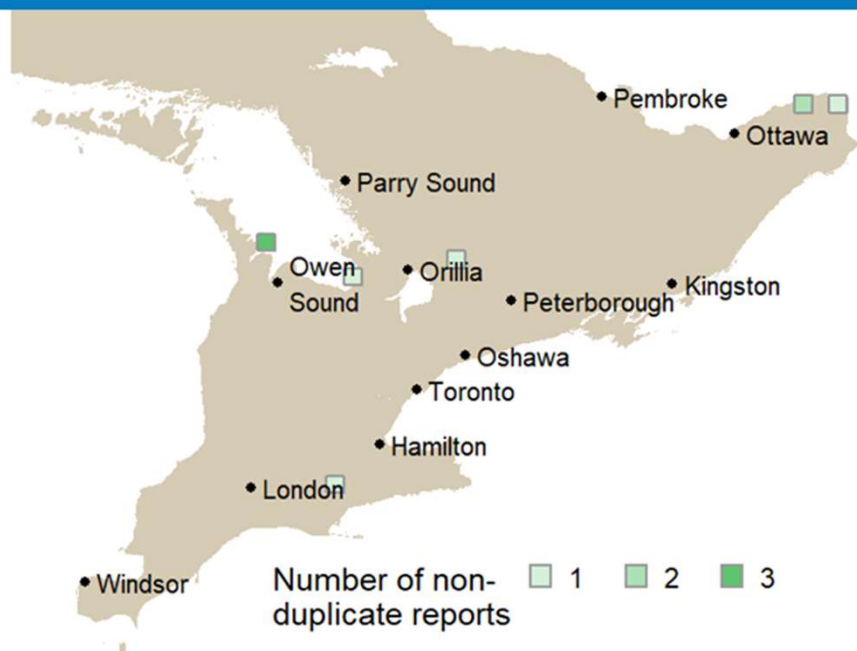
Many of the sightings MNRF receives are **pot bellied pigs**. While they can become feral, some sightings turn out to be animals that have wandered from home.



Where are wild pigs in Ontario?

Reported between **Oct 2018 and Sept 1, 2020** but observed on the landscape as early as 2011

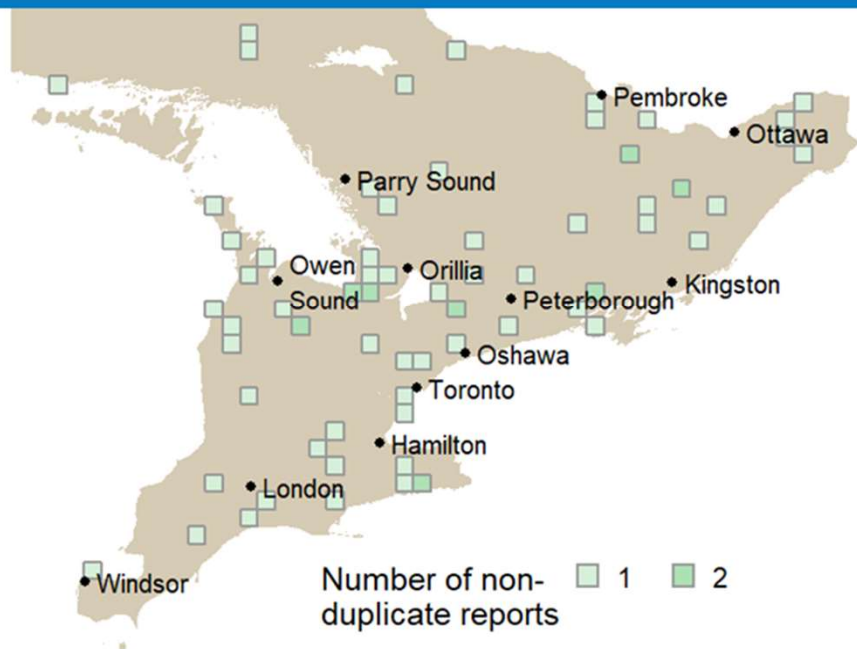
Wild boar



Some sightings appear to be **wild boar**, and these are a priority for investigation. Many of these sightings are close to wild boar farms.



Unknown



When we do not have a photo, we cannot determine what type of pig is reported. These sightings could be of domestic pigs, pot bellied pigs, wild boar, or hybrids.



Where are wild pigs in Ontario?

Reported between **Oct 2018 and Sept 1, 2020** but observed on the landscape as early as 2011

What are we doing to prevent wild pigs?

Communications

- NDMNRF
 - Social media campaign
 - Media matte articles
 - Infosheets (revised)
- Ongoing collaboration within and between governments, relevant agencies, stakeholders and partners to leverage expertise and resources
 - Fencing for outdoor pig production (OMAFRA)
 - Dealing with escaped livestock in your community (OMAFRA)
 - An introduction to small scall pig farming in Ontario (Ontario Pork)
 - Guide to pet pig ownership (Swine Health Ontario)





Ontario MNRF
@ONresources

HUNTERS - Did you know that in the prairie provinces and many US states, wild pigs compete with, prey on, and spread diseases to native game species?

You can help us protect species such as white-tailed deer and wild turkey by reporting wild pig sightings to wildpigs@ontario.ca



North Pickering having a hog of a time with wild boars on the loose

By [Frazer Snowdon](#) • Global News

Posted November 15, 2021 3:54 pm



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Environment

Ontario Continues Fight Against Invasive Wild Pigs

Feral hogs spotted in Burlington

Liz Braun

Nov 23, 2021 • 17 hours ago • 1 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



No sooner are wild pigs spotted out east in Pickering than reports come in from Burlington that the feral oinkers have also been seen in parts west. PHOTO BY TWITTER/CONSERVATION HALTON /TORONTO SUN

Ontario

What are we doing to prevent wild pigs?

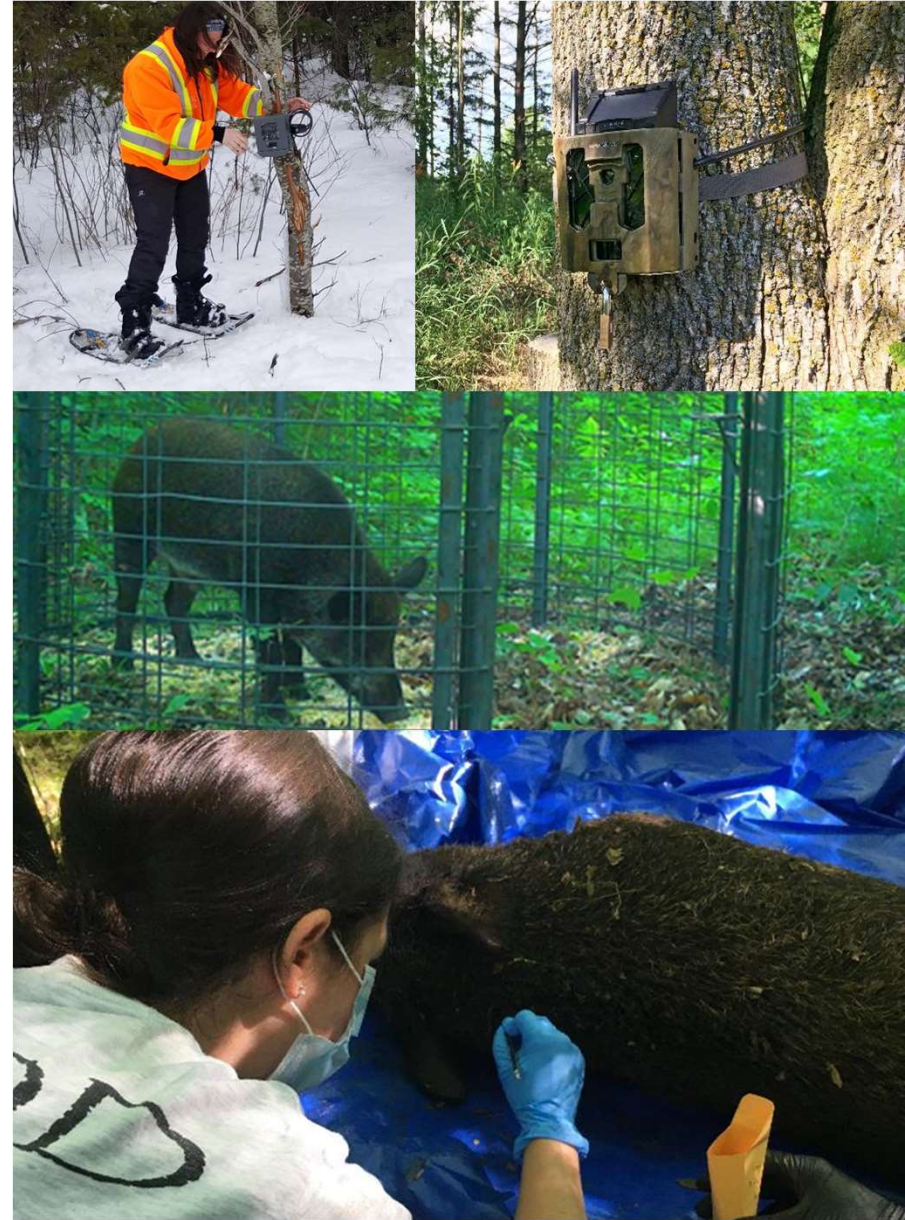
Research & Management

Research

- Sightings and communications
- Sources of wild pigs in Ontario
- Risk model for ASF

Wild pig monitoring and removal

- Collecting sightings of wild pigs
wildpigs@ontario.ca
- On the ground assessment & follow-up
 - Speak with residents
 - Baited trail cameras
 - Trap and remove wild pigs





Wild pigs in Peterborough District, photo: M. Anderson, OMAFRA

What are we doing to prevent wild pigs?

Policy and Regulations

Goal: Prevent the establishment of invasive wild pigs in the province
Ontario's Strategy to Address the Threat of Wild Pigs and
Regulatory change under the *Invasive Species Act*

- Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) will be regulated as an invasive species
 - Release of any pigs into the environment will be prohibited (all escapes must be reported)
 - Live Eurasian wild boar and hybrids will be phased out of Ontario over two years
 - Hunting wild pigs will be prohibited (exceptions for protection of property)
- **Effective date: January 1, 2022**
- Strategy available at <https://www.ontario.ca/wildpigs>

What are we doing?

Support for Eurasian wild boar (EWB) producers

- Anyone who possesses EWB or hybrids on January 1, 2022 is eligible for a two-year transition period, until December 31, 2023
 - Must notify NDMNRF by March 1, 2022
- **EWB Transition Assistance Initiative** (under CAP)
 - Will provide eligible farmers with financial support to shift to other forms of production (e.g. heritage swine, other livestock, crops)
 - To participate in the initiative, farmers need to:
 - Have EWB as of October 19, 2021
 - Have a Farm Business Registration number for 2020 or 2021
 - Have a valid Premises ID
 - Completed applications due January 14, 2022



Midhurst District, (euthanized Eurasian wild boar) NDMNRF

What To Do If You See A “Wild Pig”

OMAFRA infosheet: Dealing with Escaped Livestock in Your Community

Report to the animal owner, if known

- Always the first/best option

Report to municipal animal control

- Not all municipalities can/will deal with a pig, but let them know anyway

Report to OMAFRA or Ontario Pork

Report to NDMNRF – wildpigs@ontario.ca

- Provide as much info as possible
- Include a photo if you can

If necessary to protect property, remove the pig humanely

- Safe capture and/or euthanasia



Wild pigs in Aurora District, Photo: Roger Prestwood

- If there is imminent danger or injured animal in distress (e.g. aggressive, or on roadway)
- Report to police or call 911

Take home messages

- Wild pigs are an invasive species in Ontario
 - *They do not belong here*
- Wild pigs are an “ecological train wreck” waiting to happen
 - Risks to people
 - Risks to livestock agriculture (especially swine)
 - Risks to plant agriculture
 - Risk to entire ecosystems (plants, wildlife, habitats)

NOW is the time to PREVENT wild pigs from becoming established in Ontario.



Wild pigs in Peterborough District,
Photo: Anderson, OMAFRA

Take home messages

Have you seen an **Invasive Wild Pig?**

any pig outside of a fence

Please report your sightings to
wildpigs@ontario.ca

or

1-833-933-2355

For more information visit:

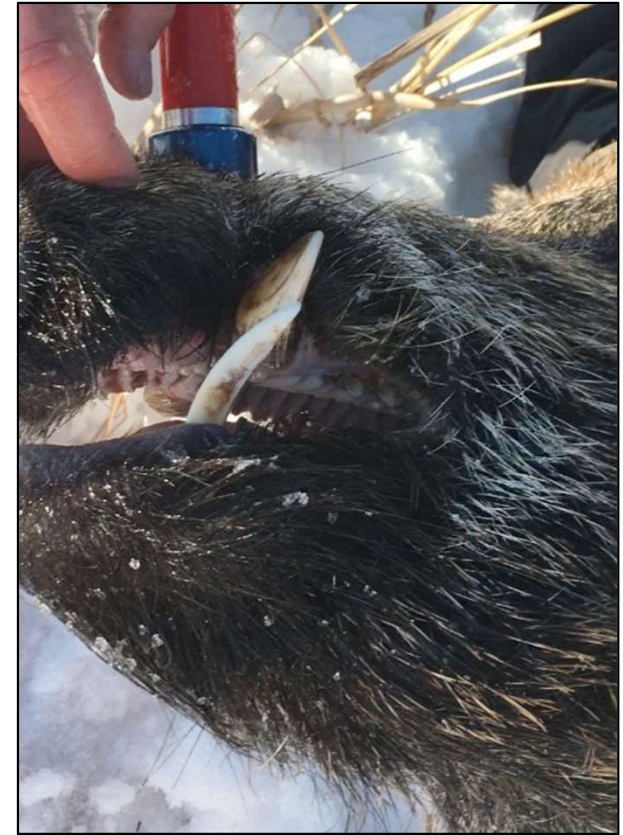
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/reporting-wild-pigs-ontario>



Wild pigs in Peterborough District,
Photo: Anderson, OMAFRA



Courtesy R. Aschim, UofSask



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