



State of California
Department of Fish and Wildlife



2015 – 2016 Wild Pig Take Report

May 1, 2018

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Executive Summary

Tag return for successful pig hunters is mandatory and provides the data comprising this report. In the 2015 – 2016 hunting season, tag sales decreased 8.3 percent from the 58,288 tags sold in 2014. Furthermore, 4,223 wild pigs were reported taken, representing a 9.8 percent increase in the number of successful tags returned from the 2014 season of 3,844. A total of 53,430 wild pig tags were issued making overall successful tag return 7.9 percent. The top five counties for pig harvest were: Monterey (22.2%), San Luis Obispo (11.9%), Kern (11.3%), Mendocino (8.6%), and Tehama (7.2%). These five counties accounted for more than 61 percent of reported take.

Of the reported take, 52.2 percent (2,205) indicated a male was taken, 45.5 percent (1,922) indicated a female was taken, and 2.3 percent (96) left the gender portion of the tag blank. Dogs were reported being used on 3.9 percent (163) of returned tags. Finally, 81.5 percent (3,441) of all returned tags indicated that they hunted wild pigs on private land.



Photo Courtesy of IUCN, © Vilda- Rollin Verlinde

Introduction

The primary goal of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (Department) Wild Pig Management Program is to minimize damage to California's native plants and animals, park and recreational activities, and agricultural operations from the foraging habits of wild pigs. To attain this goal, the Department seeks to enhance hunting opportunities as a means of minimizing these threats. This program was developed in accordance with the State's policy regarding wildlife resources (Fish and Game Code Section 1801), which states the following goals:

- a) To provide for the beneficial use and enjoyment of wildlife by all citizens of the state;
- b) To perpetuate all species for their intrinsic and ecological values;
- c) To provide for aesthetic, educational, and non-appropriative uses;
- d) To maintain diversified recreational uses of wildlife including sport hunting;
- e) To provide for economic contributions to the citizens of the state through the recognition that wildlife is a renewable resource; and
- f) To alleviate economic losses or public health and safety problems caused by wildlife.

In order for the State to meet these goals, the Legislature has delegated the power to regulate the take and possession of wild pigs, among other wildlife, to the California Fish and Game Commission. The Commission, in consultation with Department staff, reviews the factors which may affect meeting the aforementioned goals.

In 1957 wild pigs became a game species in California. Wild pig hunting was regulated with annual seasons and bag limits. In 1992 wild pig license tags were established to aid in the effective monitoring of wild pig populations. In 2012, the Automated License Data System (ALDS) was implemented to further streamline the tag issuance process and give hunters the option to report take online. There are currently no daily bag or possession limits for hunting wild pigs, and the season occurs year-round. Regulations regarding hunting require the completion of a wild pig tag questionnaire including reporting of any successful takes either on a wild pig tag or online with a request that unsuccessful hunters also report on their tag questionnaire.

Summary of 2015 – 2016 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations

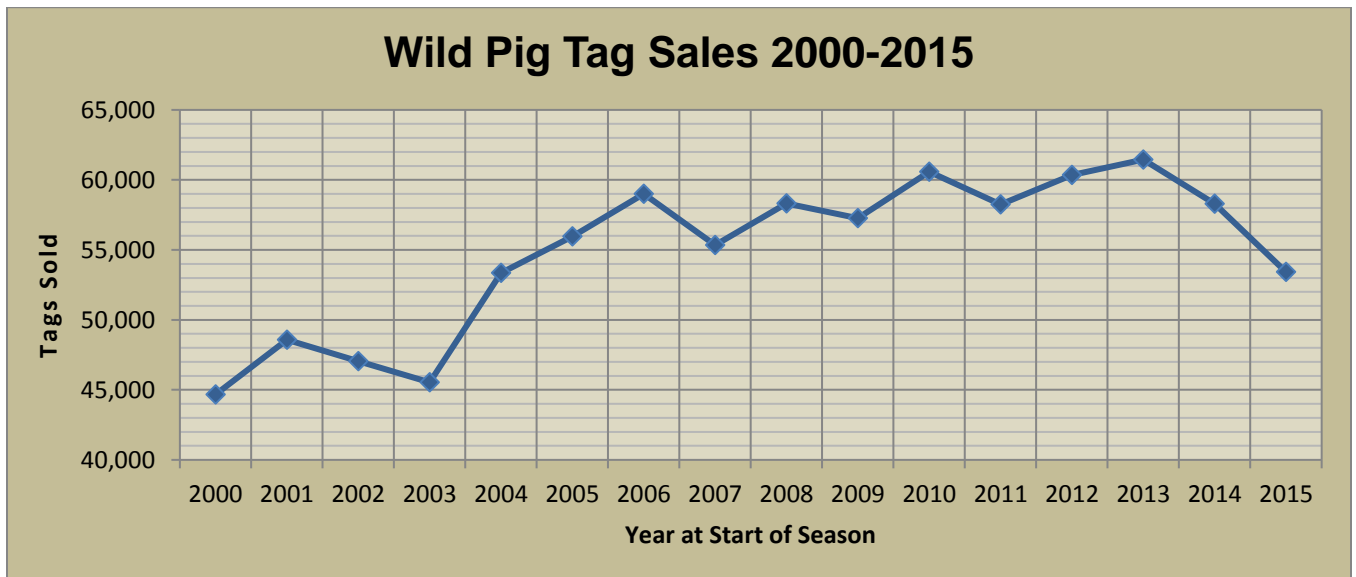
Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2015 at the start of the license year, and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2016. Individuals were able to purchase an unlimited number of tags throughout the season, and the daily bag and possession limits were also unlimited. There were no restrictions on the age or breeding status of animals that were legal for take. The use of dogs for pursuing wild pigs was also permitted. The 2015 – 2016 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

Results of 2015 - 2016 Wild Pig Hunting Season

Tag Sales

During the 2015 – 2016 wild pig season, 53,430 tags were sold (Figure 1). This was down 4,858 tags from the 58,288 tags sold the previous year, constituting a decline of 8.3 percent in pig tag sales. This total consisted of 44,082 resident tags (10.2 percent decrease), 1,051 non-resident tags (3.1% decrease), and 8,297 lifetime license tags (2.1% increase). Since the 2000 season, tag sales have fluctuated from a peak in 2013 at 61,447 tags and a low in the 2000 license year with 44,671 tags issued.

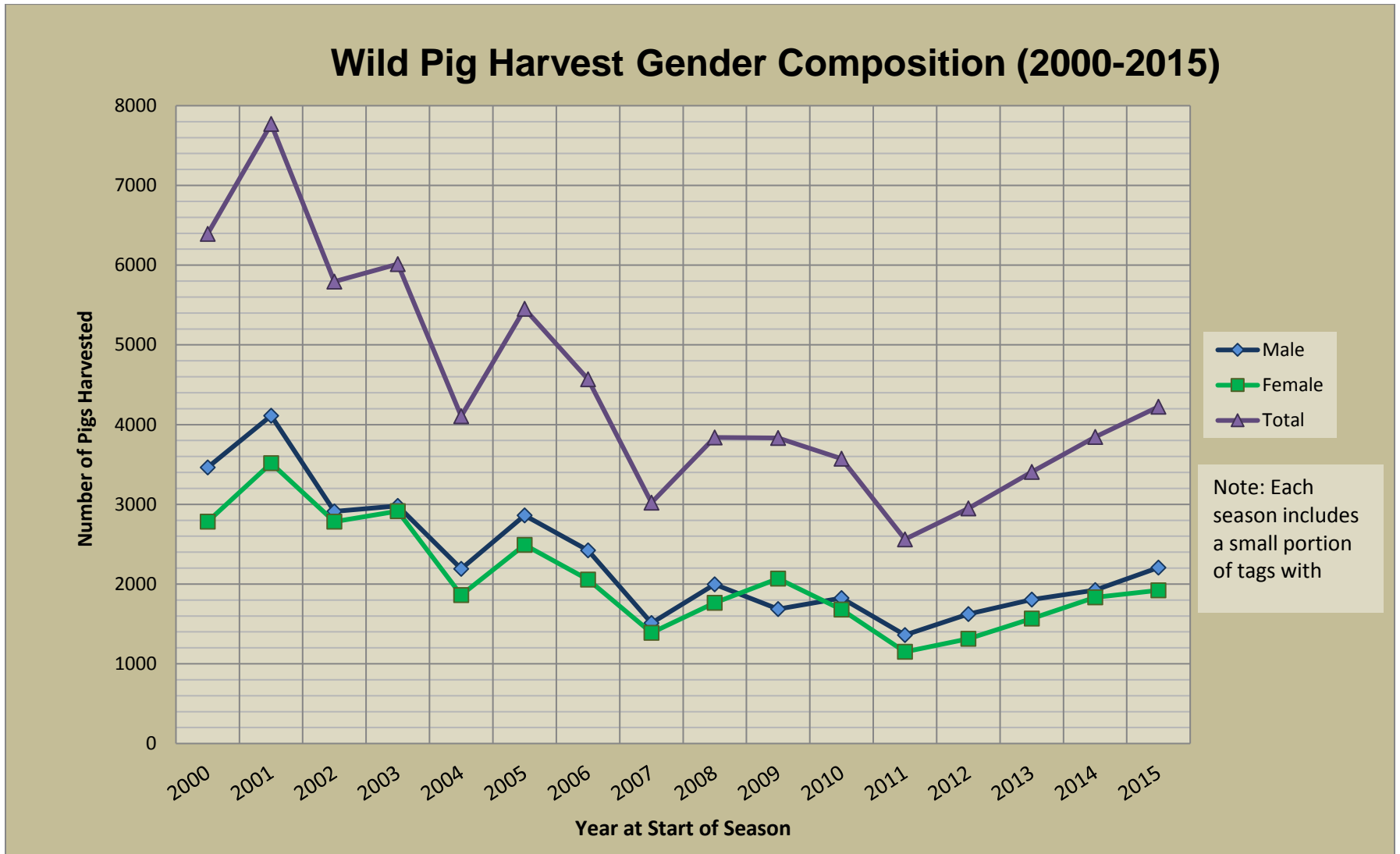
Figure 1. Wild Pig Tag Sales 2000-2015



Total Take and Sex Composition

In total, 4,223 wild pigs were reported taken (Figure 2). Overall reported take was up 9.9 percent (379) pigs from 2014 (3,844). Of the returned tags 52.2 percent (2,205) reported gender of the animal as male, 45.5 percent (1,922) as female, with the remaining 2.3 percent (96) not reporting gender. As expected, sex composition generally reflects a 1:1 gender ratio.

Figure 2. Wild Pig Harvest Gender Composition (2000-2015)



Methods of Take

California wild pig hunters are allowed several legal methods of take which are valid at any point during the season. Overall 80.3 percent (3,392) reported using a rifle, 4.4 percent (184) reported using archery equipment, 0.8 percent (33) reported using a pistol, 1.0 percent (42) reported using a shotgun, and less than 1 percent reported using a muzzleloader (6), or crossbow (27) (Figure 3). There were 539 (12.8%) takes that did not indicate method. Additionally, the use of dogs to assist in taking pigs is also a legal practice. A total of 3.9 percent (160) reported using dogs to aid in taking their pig (Figure 4).

Figure 3. 2015 – 2016 Wild Pig Harvest Method of Take

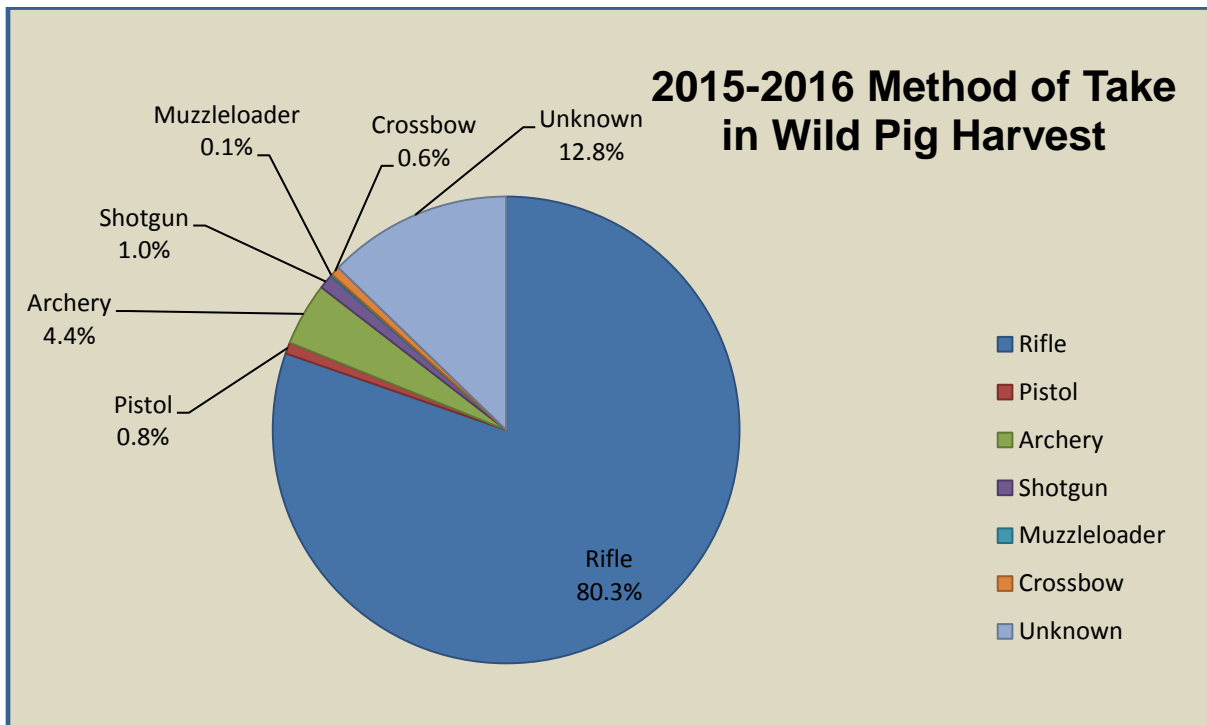
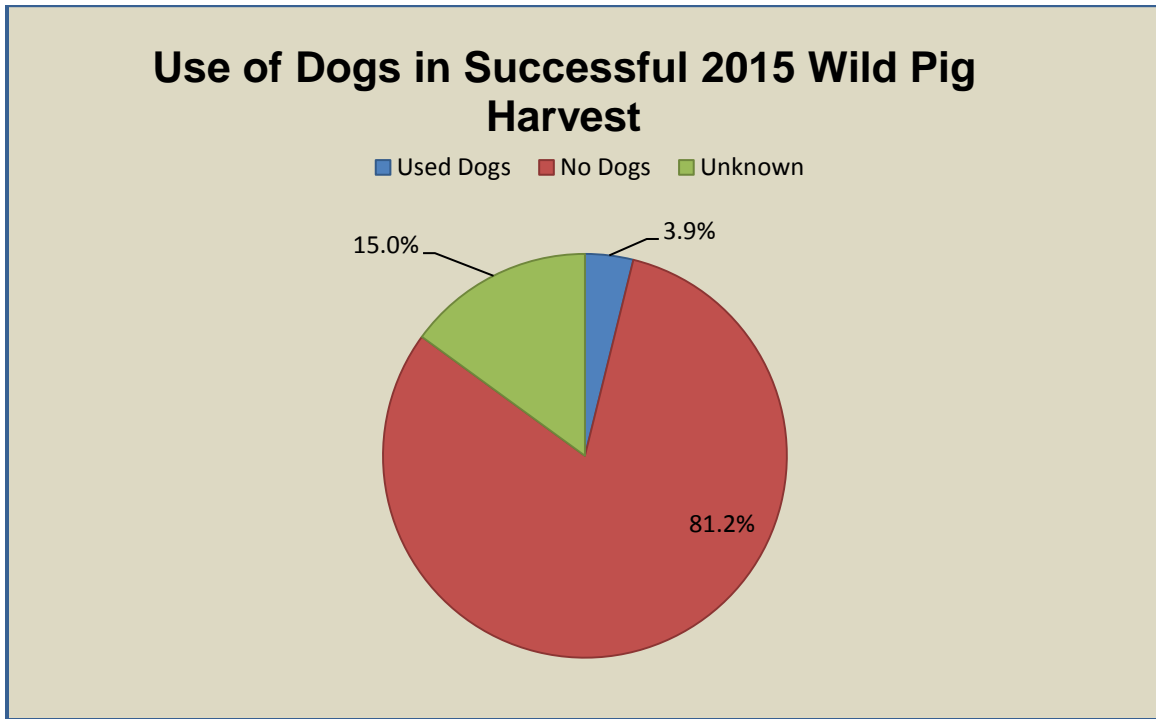


Figure 4. Use of Dogs in Successful 2015 – 2016 Wild Pig Harvest



Location of Take

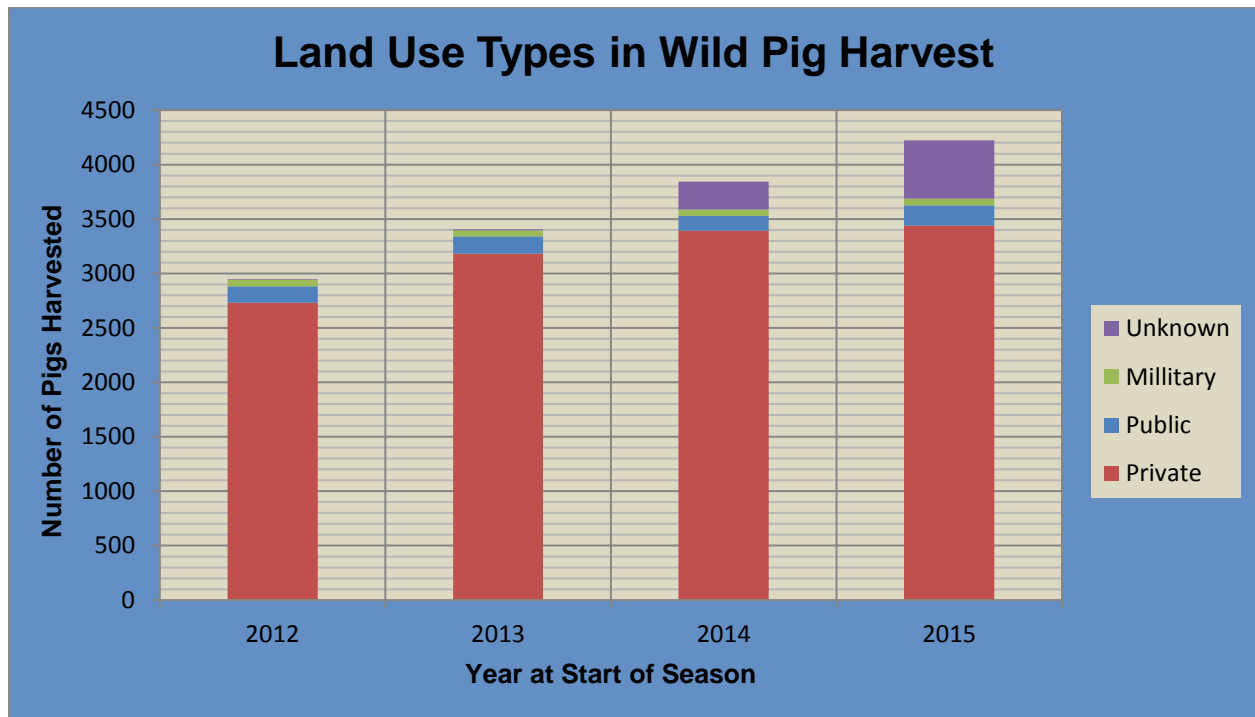
Pigs were known to be harvested in 41 of California's 58 counties in the 2015 – 2016 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 69 percent of all take reported during the 2015 – 2016 season. These six counties were: Monterey (22.2%), San Luis Obispo (11.9%), Kern (11.3%), Mendocino (8.6%), Tehama (7.2%), and Sonoma (7.2%).

Across the entire state 81.5% (3,441) of wild pigs were reported being taken on private land (Figure 5), while only 4.3% (183) were reported being taking on public land. An additional 1.5% (62) were harvested on military land, leaving 12.7% (537) unreported.

Table 1. 2015-2016 Wild Pig Take by County

County	Pigs Harvested
Alameda	38
Butte	2
Colusa	145
Contra Costa	12
Fresno	88
Glenn	101
Humboldt	45
Kern	476
Kings	8
Lake	91
Los Angeles	2
Madera	25
Mariposa	12
Mendocino	362
Merced	64
Monterey	938
Napa	57
Nevada	32
Placer	6
Riverside	7
San Benito	145
San Bernardino	1
San Diego	5
San Joaquin	11
San Luis Obispo	503
San Mateo	1
Santa Barbara	35
Santa Clara	91
Santa Cruz	5
Shasta	68
Siskiyou	2
Solano	31
Sonoma	303
Stanislaus	35
Sutter	17
Tehama	304
Trinity	7
Tulare	40
Tuolumne	2
Yolo	27
Yuba	2
Unknown	77
Total	4,223

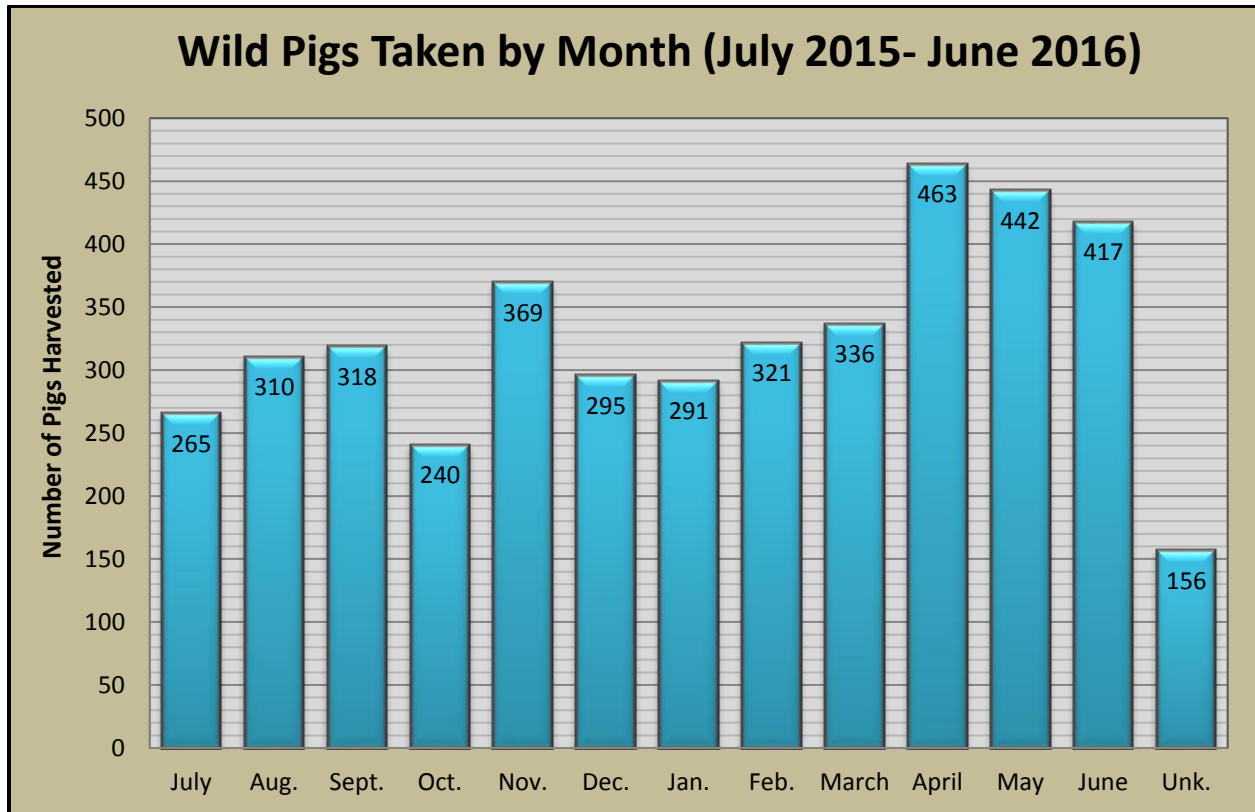
Figure 5. 2015 – 2016 Wild Pig Harvest on Land Use Types



Timing of Take

Wild pig season is continuous, year-round. Because wild pigs do not demonstrate extreme migratory or hibernating patterns, there is little in their behavior to affect availability seasonally to hunters where they occur. Localized events such as extreme hunting pressures, weather conditions, and variation in land use throughout the year can affect pig behavior, occurrence, and harvest. Throughout the State of California pig harvest hit a peak in April 2016 at 463 pigs harvested. This was likely due to favorable weather, an abundance of pigs, and increased daylight allowing for longer hunting days. All of the late Spring and early Summer months indicate a high harvest. The month with the lowest reported wild pig harvest for the 2015 - 2016 hunting season stood at 240 for the month of October 2015. There were 156 takes that did not indicate kill date (Figure 6).

Figure 6. 2015-2016 Wild Pig Take by Month



Discussion

Wild pigs occur throughout most of California and can be extremely destructive to property, especially while engaged in their rooting foraging behavior. The Department will continue to monitor wild pig take annually and adjust take regulations as necessary in order to meet the goals laid out by Fish and Game Code Section 1801.

