



State of California

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Wild Pig Take Report 2016 - 2017



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Executive Summary

Tag return for successful pig hunters is mandatory and provides the data comprising this report. In the 2016 – 2017 hunting season, tag sales decreased 2.2 percent from the 53,430 tags sold in 2015. Furthermore, 4,637 wild pigs were reported taken, representing a 8.9 percent increase in the number of successful tags returned from the 2015 season of 4,223. A total of 52,256 wild pig tags were issued making overall successful tag return 8.9 percent. The top six counties for pig harvest were: Monterey (24.0%), Mendocino (9.1%), San Luis Obispo (9.0%), Sonoma (8.0%), Kern (7.7%) and Tehama (7.5%). These six counties accounted for about 65 percent of reported take.

Of the reported take, 53.1 percent (2,461) indicated a male was taken, 45.3 percent (2,099) indicated a female was taken, and 1.7 percent (77) left the gender portion of the tag blank. Dogs were reported being used on 5.5 percent (255) of returned tags. Finally, 83.5 percent (3,872) of all returned tags indicated that they hunted wild pigs on private land.



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 reducing 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 use of 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 reporting of any successful take on a wild pig tag with a request that unsuccessful hunters also report on their tag.

Summary of 2016 – 2017 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations

Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2016 at the start of the license year, and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2017. 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 2016 – 2017 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

Results of 2016 - 2017 Wild Pig Hunting Season

Tag Sales

During the 2016 – 2017 wild pig season, 52,256 tags were sold (Figure 1). This was down 1,174 tags from the previous year, constituting a decline of 2.2 percent in pig tag sales. This total consisted of 42,942 resident tags (2.6 percent decrease), 1,041 non-resident tags (1.0 percent decrease), and 8,273 lifetime license tags (0.3 percent decrease). 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.

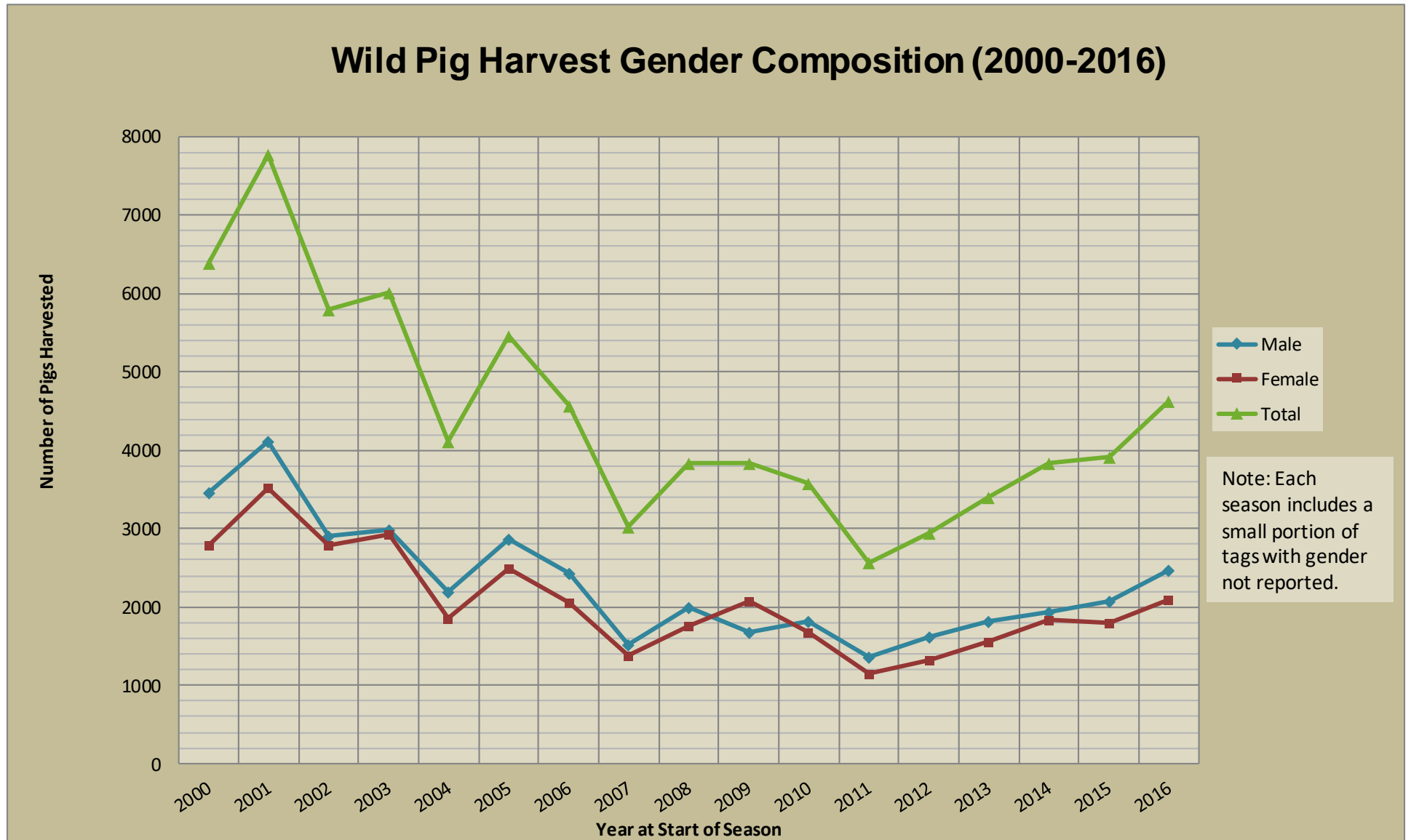
Total Take and Sex Composition

In total, 4,637 wild pigs were reported taken (Figure 2). Overall reported take was up 414 pigs from 2015. Of the returned tags, 53.1 percent (2,461) reported gender of the animal as male, 45.3 percent (2,099) as female, with the remaining 1.7 percent (77) not reporting gender. As expected, sex composition generally reflects a 1:1 gender ratio.

Figure 1. Wild Pig Tag Sales 2000-2016



Figure 2. Wild Pig Harvest Gender Composition (2000-2016)



Methods of Take

California wild pig hunters are allowed several legal methods of take which are valid at any point during the season. Overall 81.4 percent (3,774) reported using a rifle, 5.5 percent (253) reported using archery equipment, 1.3 percent (60) reported using a pistol, 1.4 percent (64) reported using a shotgun, and less than 1 percent reported using a muzzleloader (8), or crossbow (13) (Figure 3). There were 465 (10.0%) takes that did not indicate method. Additionally, the use of dogs to assist in taking pigs is also a legal practice. A total of 5.5 percent (255) reported using dogs to aid in taking their pig (Figure 4).

Figure 3. 2016 – 2017 Wild Pig Harvest Method of Take

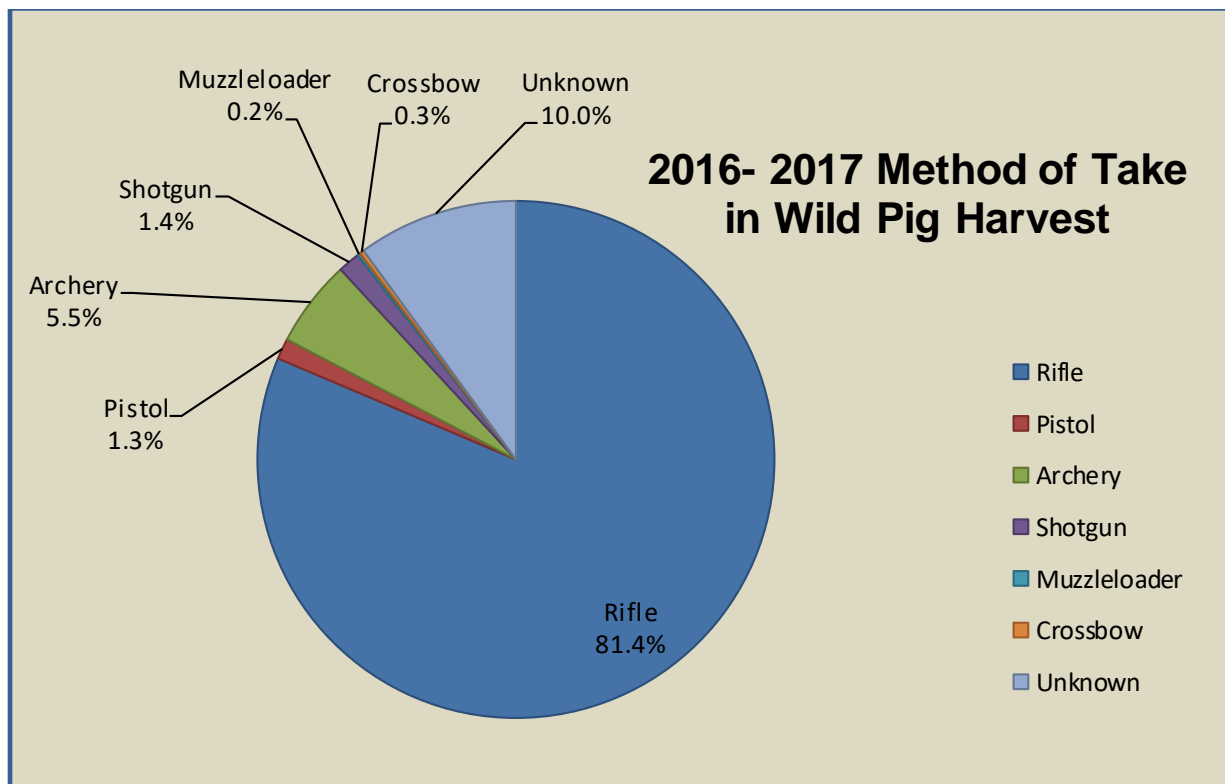
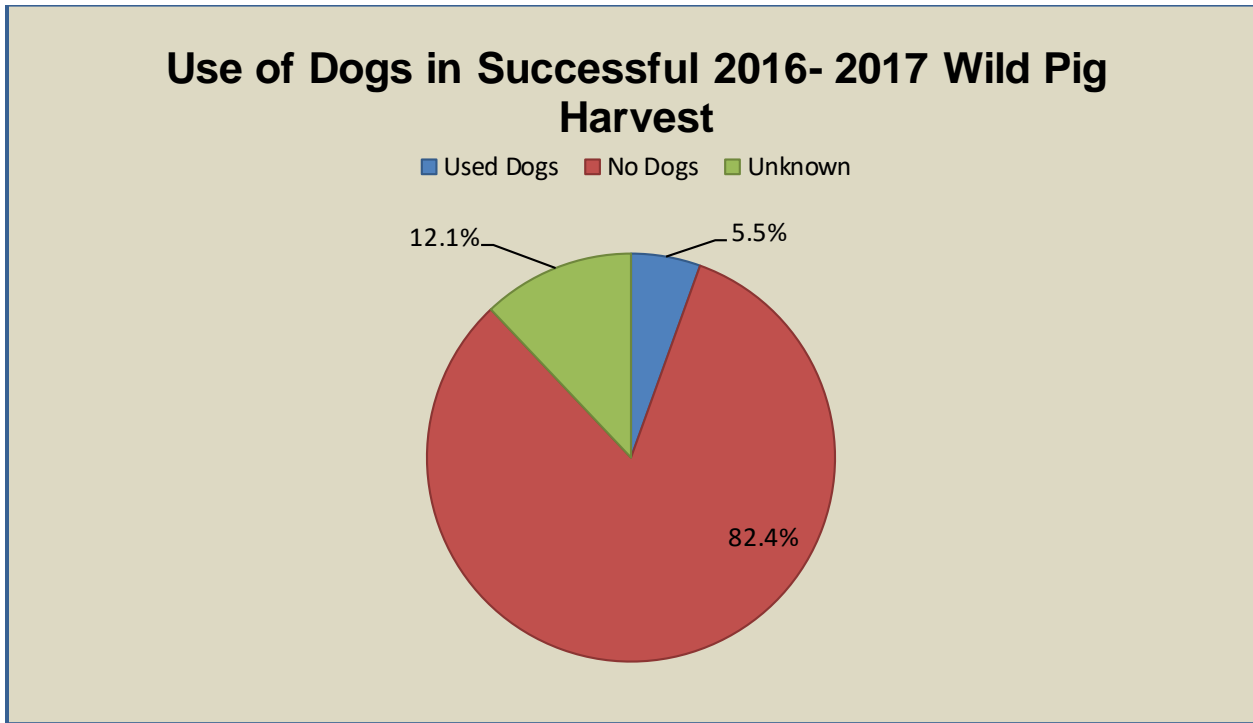


Figure 4. Use of Dogs in Successful 2016 – 2017 Wild Pig Harvest



Location of Take

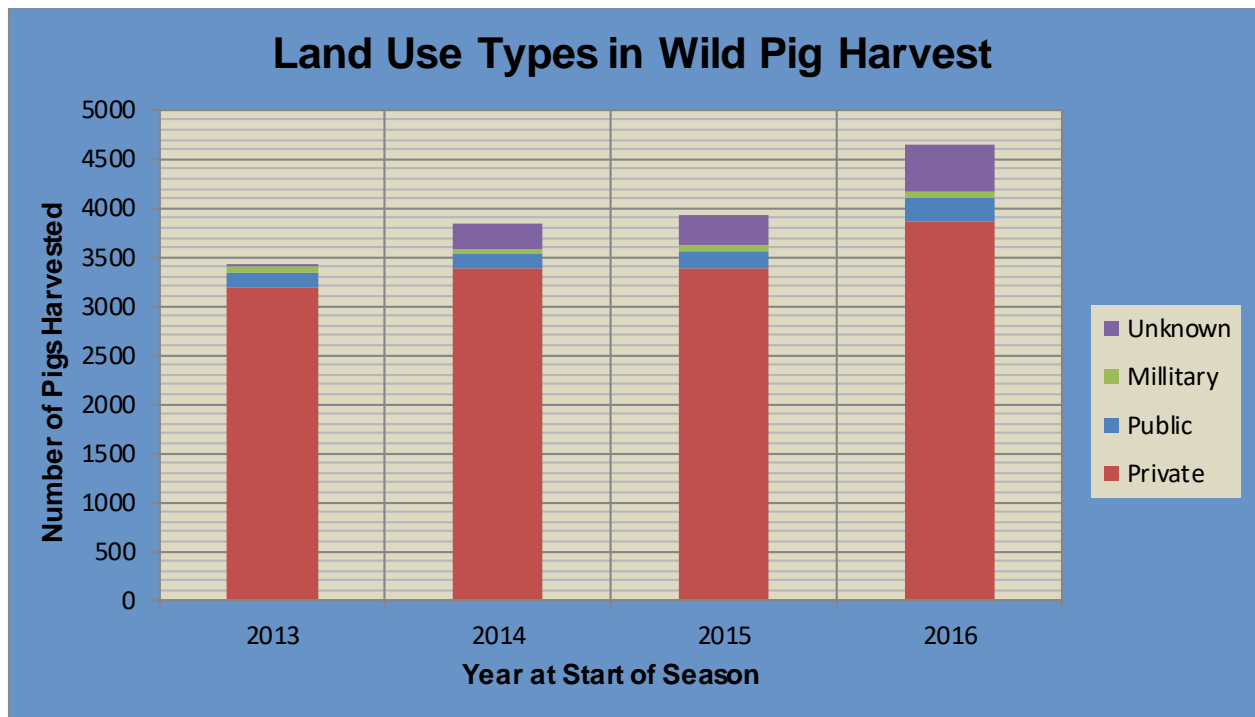
Pigs were known to be harvested in 43 of California’s 58 counties in the 2016 – 2017 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 65 percent of all take reported during the 2016 – 2017 season. These six counties were: Monterey (24.0%), Mendocino (9.1%), San Luis Obispo (9.0%), Sonoma (8.0%), Kern (7.7%) and Tehama (7.5%).

Across the entire state, 83.5 percent (3,872) of wild pigs were reported being taken on private land (Figure 5), while only 4.8 percent (224) were reported being taking on public land. An additional 1.7 percent were harvested on military land, leaving 10.0 percent (463) unreported.

Table 1. 2016-2017 Wild Pig Take by County

County	Pigs Harvested
Alameda	86
Amador	2
Butte	1
Calaveras	1
Colusa	138
Contra Costa	10
Fresno	102
Glenn	112
Humboldt	51
Kern	355
Kings	10
Lake	132
Los Angeles	3
Madera	23
Mariposa	31
Mendocino	421
Merced	74
Monterey	1,112
Napa	64
Nevada	41
Placer	11
Riverside	6
Sacramento	2
San Benito	230
San Bernardino	6
San Diego	2
San Joaquin	5
San Luis Obispo	418
Santa Barbara	25
Santa Clara	133
Shasta	94
Siskiyou	8
Solano	28
Sonoma	370
Stanislaus	37
Sutter	16
Tehama	347
Trinity	14
Tulare	41
Tuolumne	1
Ventura	5
Yolo	20
Yuba	6
Unknown	43
Total	4,637

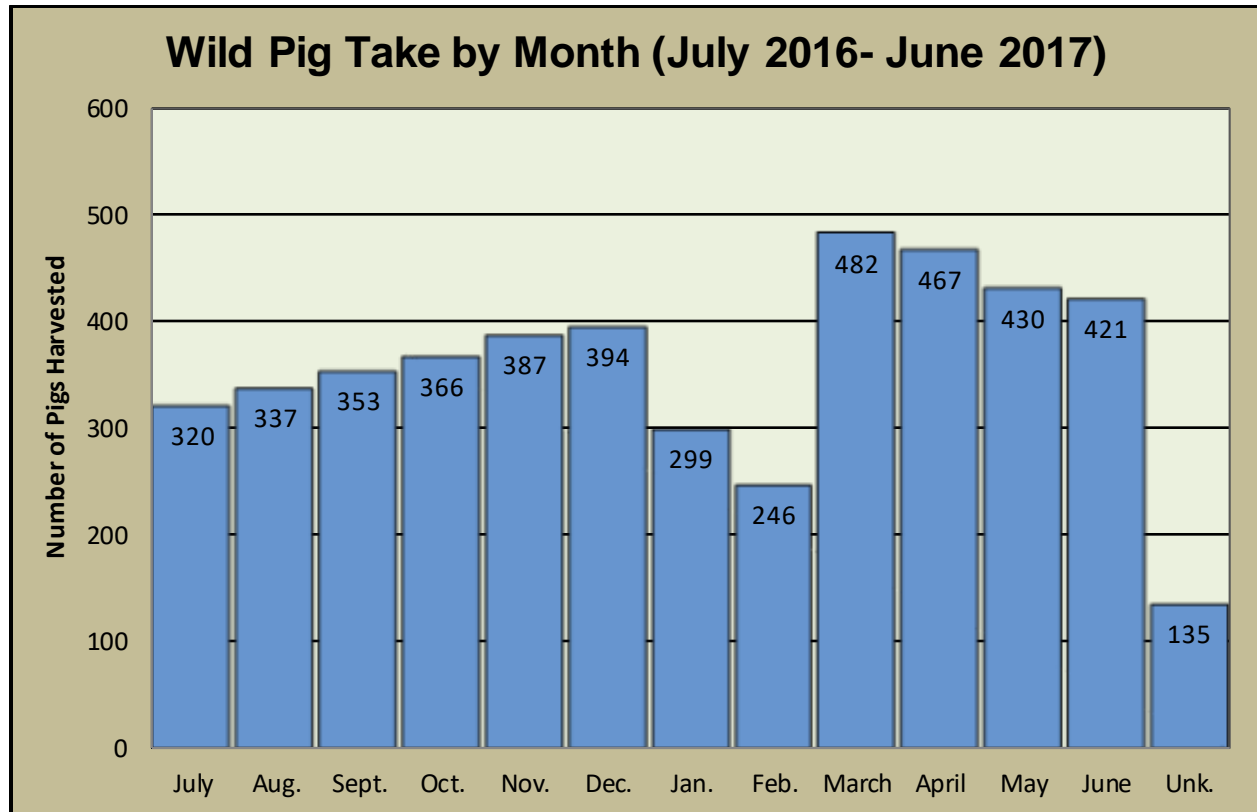
Figure 5. 2016 – 2017 Wild Pig Harvest on Land Use Types



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 March 2017 at 482 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 2016 - 2017 hunting season stood at 246 for the month of February 2017. There were 135 takes that did not indicate kill date (Figure 6).

Figure 6. 2016-2017 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.

