



State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife Wild Pig Take Report 2017 – 2018



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Wildlife Branch

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Executive Summary

Tag return for successful pig hunters is mandatory and provides the data comprising this report. In the 2017 – 2018 hunting season, tag sales decreased 3.2 percent from the 52,256 tags sold in 2016. Furthermore, 4,530 wild pigs were reported taken, representing a 2.3 percent decrease in the number of successful tags returned from the 2016 season of 4,637. A total of 50,579 wild pig tags were issued making overall successful tag return 9.0 percent. The top six counties for pig harvest were: Monterey (22.9%), San Luis Obispo (11.2%), Mendocino (7.0 %), Tehama (6.6%), Kern (6.4%) and San Benito (5.5%). These six counties accounted for about 60 percent of reported take.

Of the reported take, 55.2 percent (2,499) indicated a male was taken, 44.1 percent (1,999) indicated a female was taken, and 0.7 percent (32) left the sex portion of the tag blank. Dogs were reported being used on 4.5 percent (204) of returned tags. Finally, 89.5 percent (4,055) 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. Currently, there are 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 2017 – 2018 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations

Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2017 at the start of the license year, and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2018. 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 2017 – 2018 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

Results of 2017 - 2018 Wild Pig Hunting Season

Tag Sales

During the 2017 – 2018 wild pig season, 50,579 tags were sold (Figure 1). This was down 1,677 tags from the previous year, constituting a decline of 3.2 percent in pig tag sales. This total consisted of 41,433 resident tags (3.5 percent decrease), 866 non-resident tags (16.8 percent decrease), and 8,280 lifetime license tags (0.1 percent 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.

Total Take and Sex Composition

In total, 4,530 wild pigs were reported taken during the 2020 – 2021 season (Figure 2). Overall reported take was down 107 pigs from 2016. Of the returned tags 55.2 percent (2,499) reported sex of the animal as male, 44.1 percent (1,999) as female, with the remaining 0.7 percent (32) not reporting sex. As is typical, harvest composition generally reflects a nearly 1:1 sex ratio with males taken at a slightly higher proportion.

Figure 1. Wild Pig Tag Sales July 2000 – June 2018

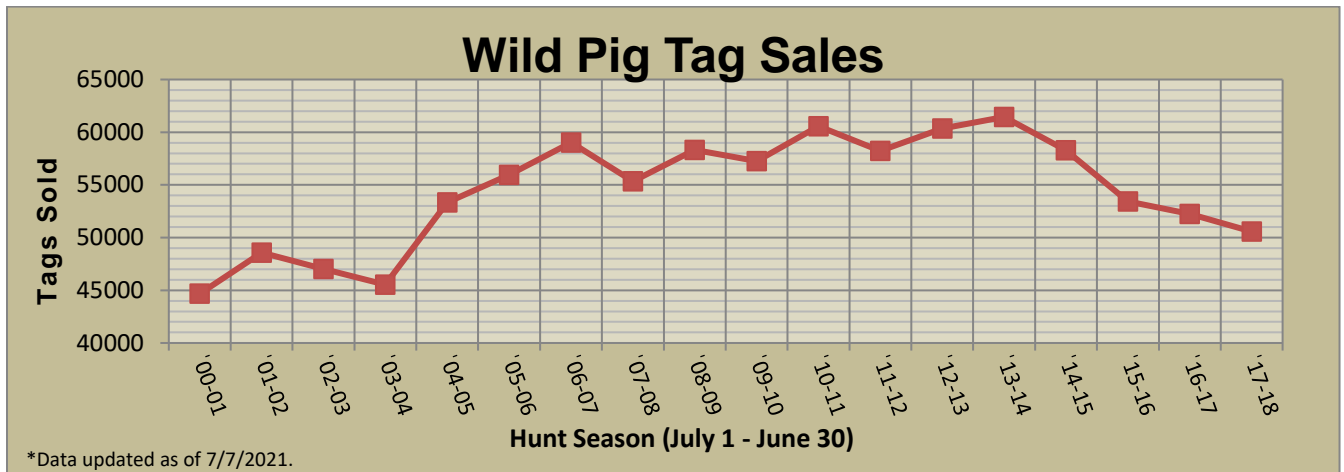
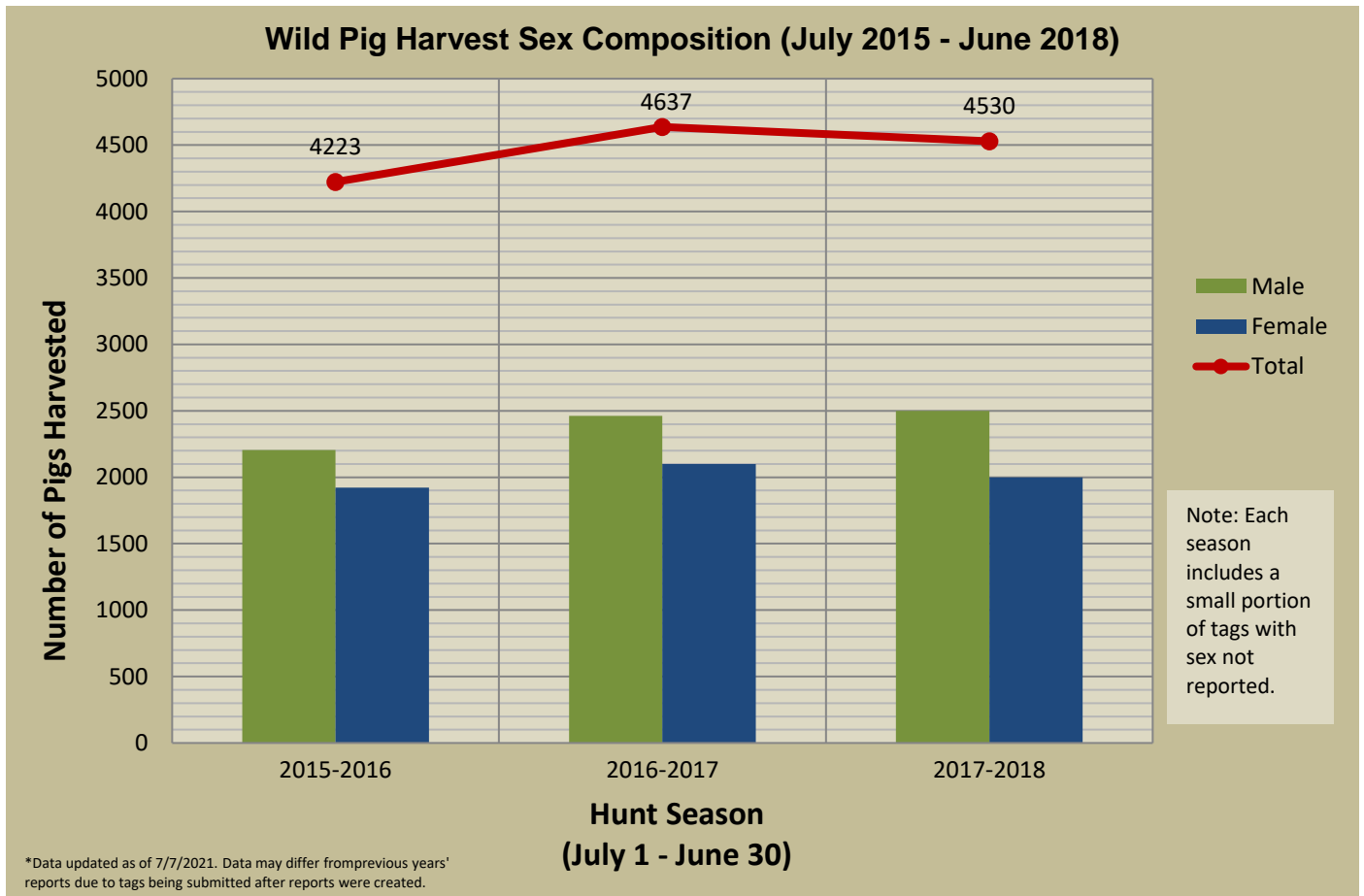


Figure 2. Wild Pig Harvest Sex Composition (July 2015 - June 2018)



Methods of Take

California wild pig hunters are allowed several legal methods of take which are valid at any point during the season including rifle, archery, pistol, shotgun, muzzleloader, and crossbow. Overall 88.2 percent (3,995) reported using a rifle, 5.3 percent (239) reported using archery equipment, 1.1 percent (49) reported using a pistol, 1.3 percent (61) reported using a shotgun, and less than 1 percent reported using a muzzleloader (8), or crossbow (13) (Figure 3). There were 165 (3.6%) successful tags that did not indicate method. Additionally, the use of dogs to assist in taking pigs is also a legal practice. A total of 4.5 percent (204) reported using dogs to aid in taking their pig (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Wild Pig Harvest Method of Take (July 2017 – June 2018)

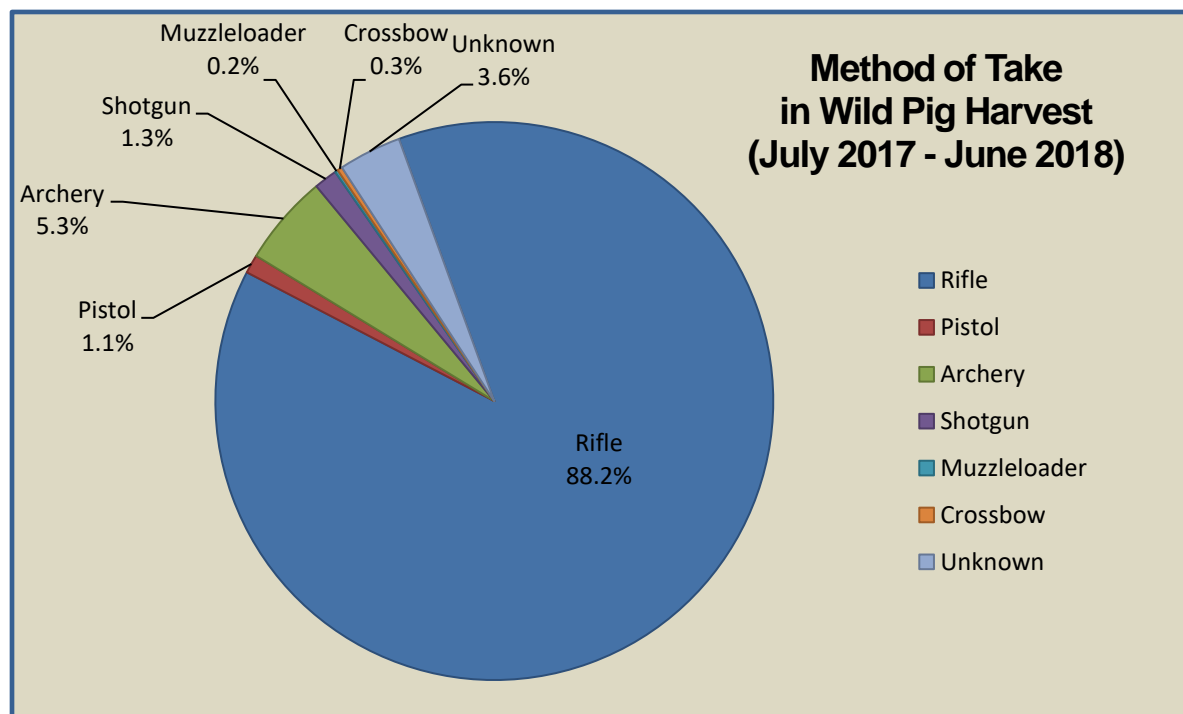
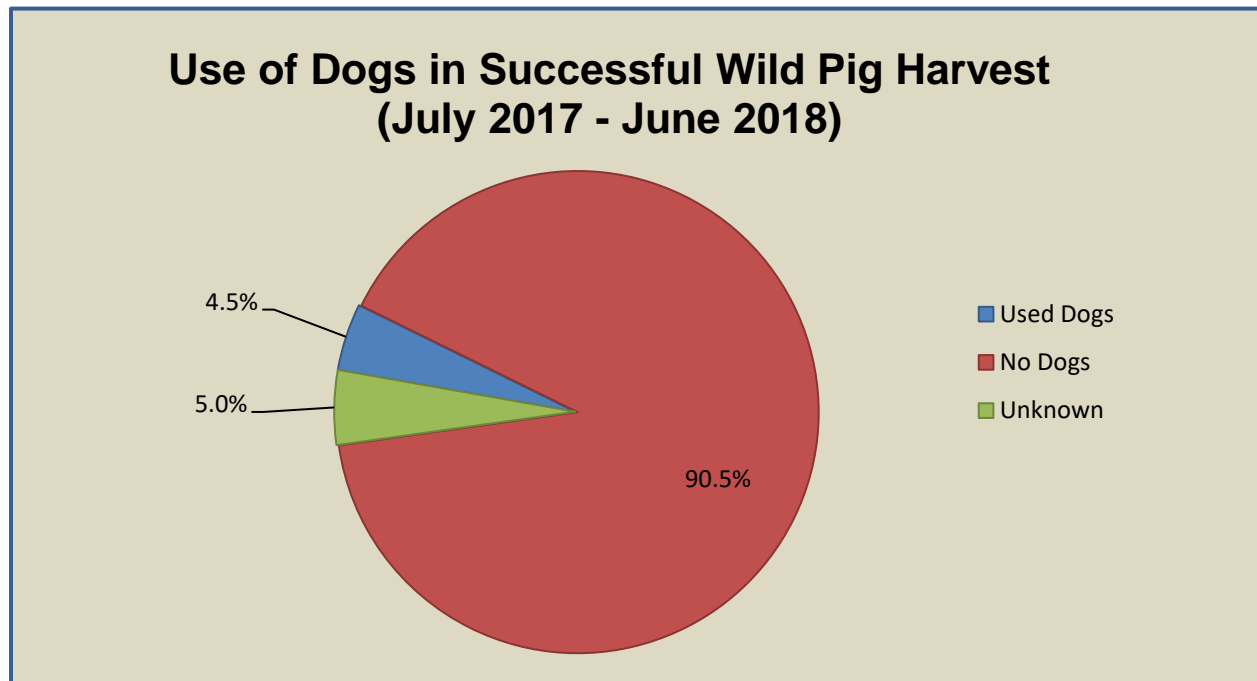


Figure 4. Use of Dogs in Successful Wild Pig Harvest (July 2017 – June 2018)



Location of Take

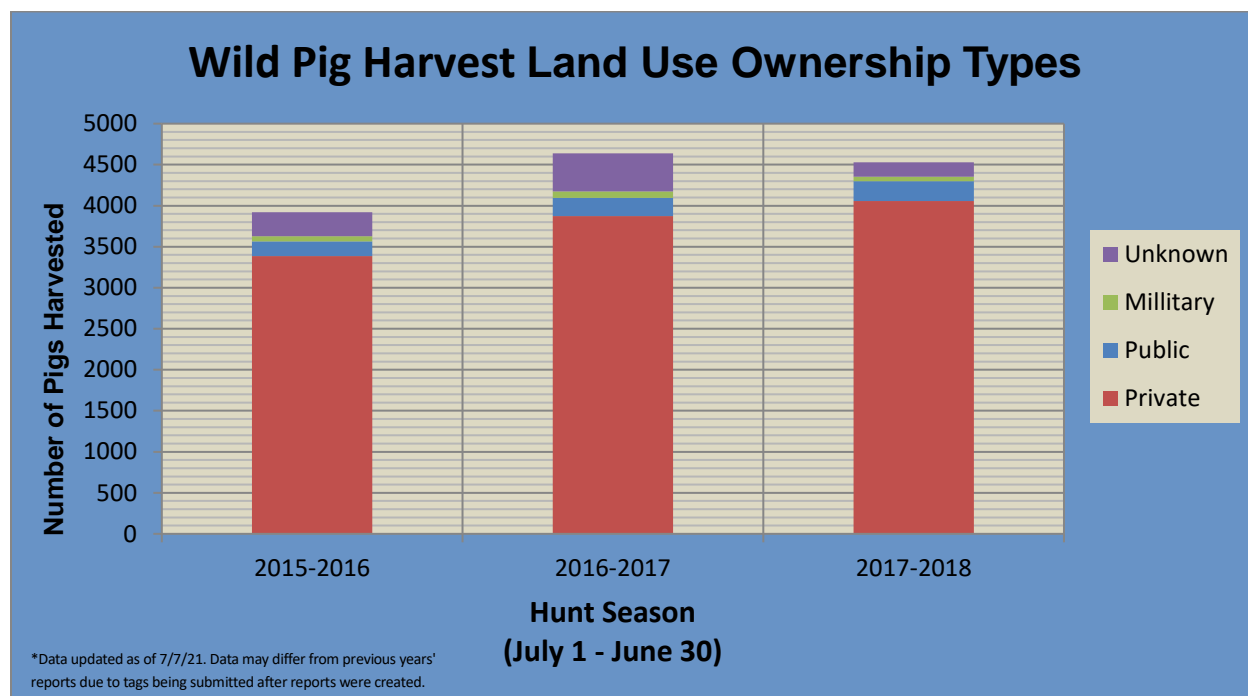
Pigs were reported to be harvested in 44 of California's 58 counties in the 2017 – 2018 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 60 percent of all take reported during the 2017 – 2018 season. These six counties were: Monterey (22.9%), San Luis Obispo (11.2%), Mendocino (7.0 %), Tehama (6.6%), Kern (6.4%) and San Benito (5.5%).

Across the entire state, 89.5 percent (4,055) of wild pigs were reported being taken on private land (Figure 5), while only 5.4 percent (243) were reported being taking on public land. An additional 1.2 percent (55) were harvested on military land, leaving 3.9 percent (177) unreported.

Table 1. Reported Wild Pig Take by County (July 2017 – June 2018)

County	Pigs Harvested
Alameda	108
Alpine	1
Amador	11
Butte	1
Calaveras	3
Colusa	215
Contra Costa	23
Fresno	135
Glenn	164
Humboldt	39
Inyo	2
Kern	291
Kings	10
Lake	115
Los Angeles	1
Madera	23
Mariposa	43
Mendocino	316
Merced	107
Monterey	1037
Napa	71
Nevada	13
Placer	4
Riverside	7
San Benito	247
San Bernardino	1
San Joaquin	8
San Luis Obispo	509
Santa Barbara	36
Santa Clara	154
Santa Cruz	3
Shasta	72
Siskiyou	14
Solano	45
Sonoma	187
Stanislaus	48
Sutter	27
Tehama	301
Trinity	16
Tulare	50
Tuolumne	1
Yolo	31
Yuba	10
Unknown	30
Total	4530

Figure 5. Reported Wild Pig Harvest on Land Ownership Types (July 2015 – June 2018)

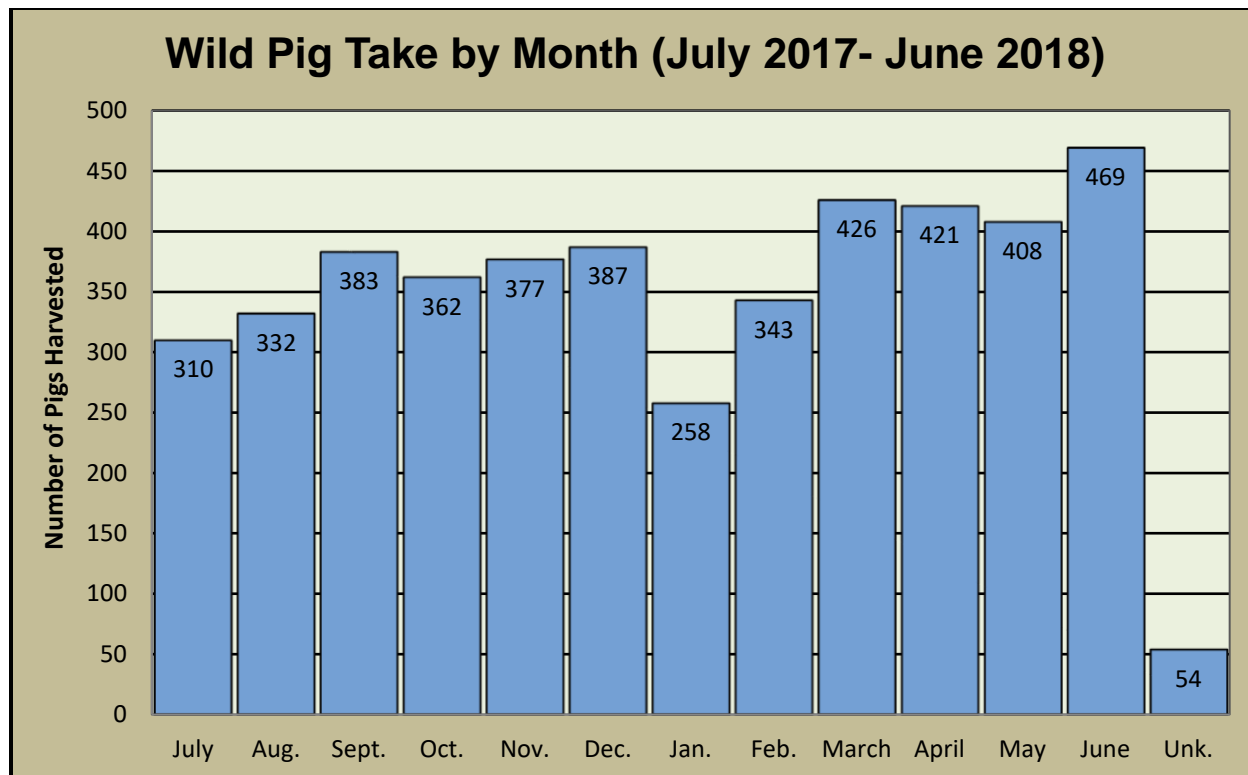


Timing of Take

Wild pig season is continuous, year-round. Because wild pigs are not migratory and do not hibernate, they are often consistently available for hunting, although localized events such as extreme hunting pressures, weather conditions, and variation in land use throughout the year can affect pig behavior, occurrence, and harvest. Pig harvest was fairly consistent throughout the year, dipping in January and February, but was relatively high in spring.

The month with the lowest reported wild pig harvest for the 2020 - 2021 hunting season stood at 258 for the month of January. A kill date was specified for all harvested pigs (Figure 6).

Figure 6. 2017-2018 Reported Wild Pig Take by Month



Discussion

Wild pigs occur throughout a large portion 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.

