



State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife Wild Pig Take Report 2018 – 2019



July 12, 2021

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 2018 – 2019 hunting season, tag sales decreased 4.1 percent from the 50,579 tags sold in 2017. Furthermore, 3,720 wild pigs were reported taken, representing a 17.9 percent decrease in the number of successful tags returned from the 2017 season of 4,530. A total of 48,503 wild pig tags were issued making overall successful tag return 7.7 percent. The top six counties for pig harvest were: Monterey (23.1%), San Luis Obispo (11.6%), Kern (6.6 %), Tehama (6.2%), Mendocino (5.3%) and San Benito (4.4%). These six counties accounted for about 57.3 percent of reported take.

Of the reported take, 55 percent (2,045) indicated a male was taken, 44.5 percent (1,656) indicated a female was taken, and .5 percent (19) left the sex portion of the tag blank. Dogs were reported being used on 5.5 percent (205) of returned tags. Finally, 91.1 percent (3,389) 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 2018 – 2019 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations

Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2018 at the start of the license year, and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2019. 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 2018 – 2019 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

Results of 2018 - 2019 Wild Pig Hunting Season

Tag Sales

During the 2018 – 2019 wild pig season, 48,503 tags were sold during the 2020 – 2021 season (Figure 1). This was down 2,076 tags from the previous year, constituting a decline of 4.1 percent in pig tag sales. This total consisted of 39,549 resident tags (4.5 percent decrease), 902 non-resident tags (4.2 percent increase), and 8,052 lifetime license tags (2.8 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, 3,720 wild pigs were reported taken (Figure 2). Overall reported take was down 810 pigs from 2017. Of the returned tags 55.0 percent (2,045) reported sex of the animal as male, 44.5 percent (1,656) as female, with the remaining .5 percent (19) 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 2019

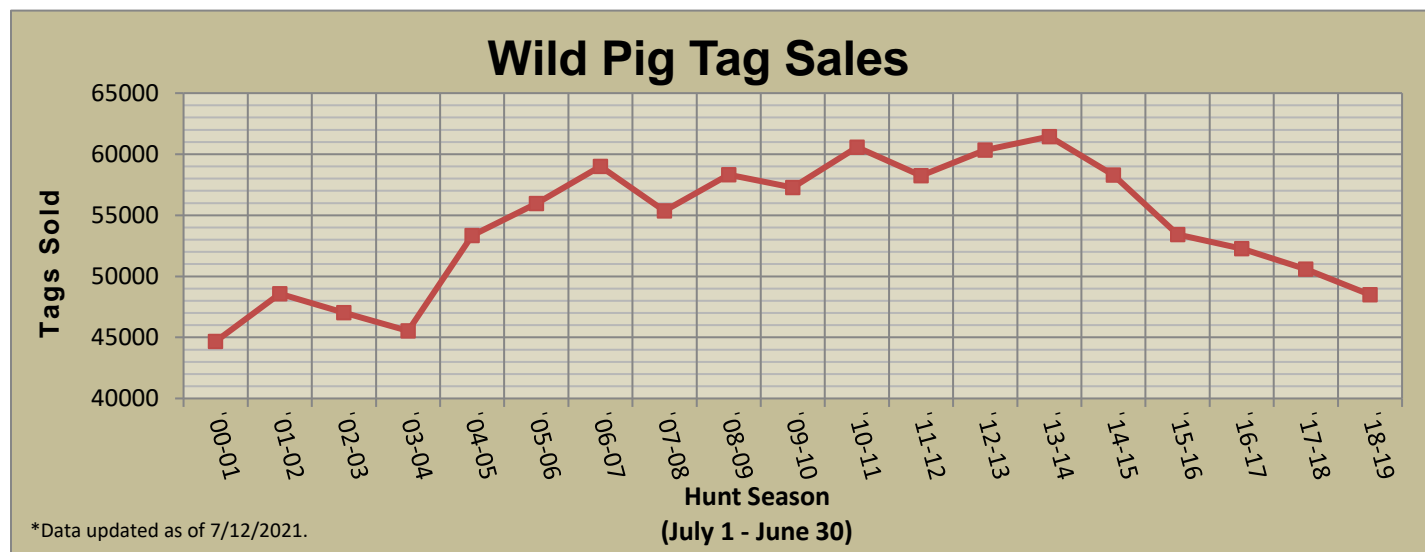
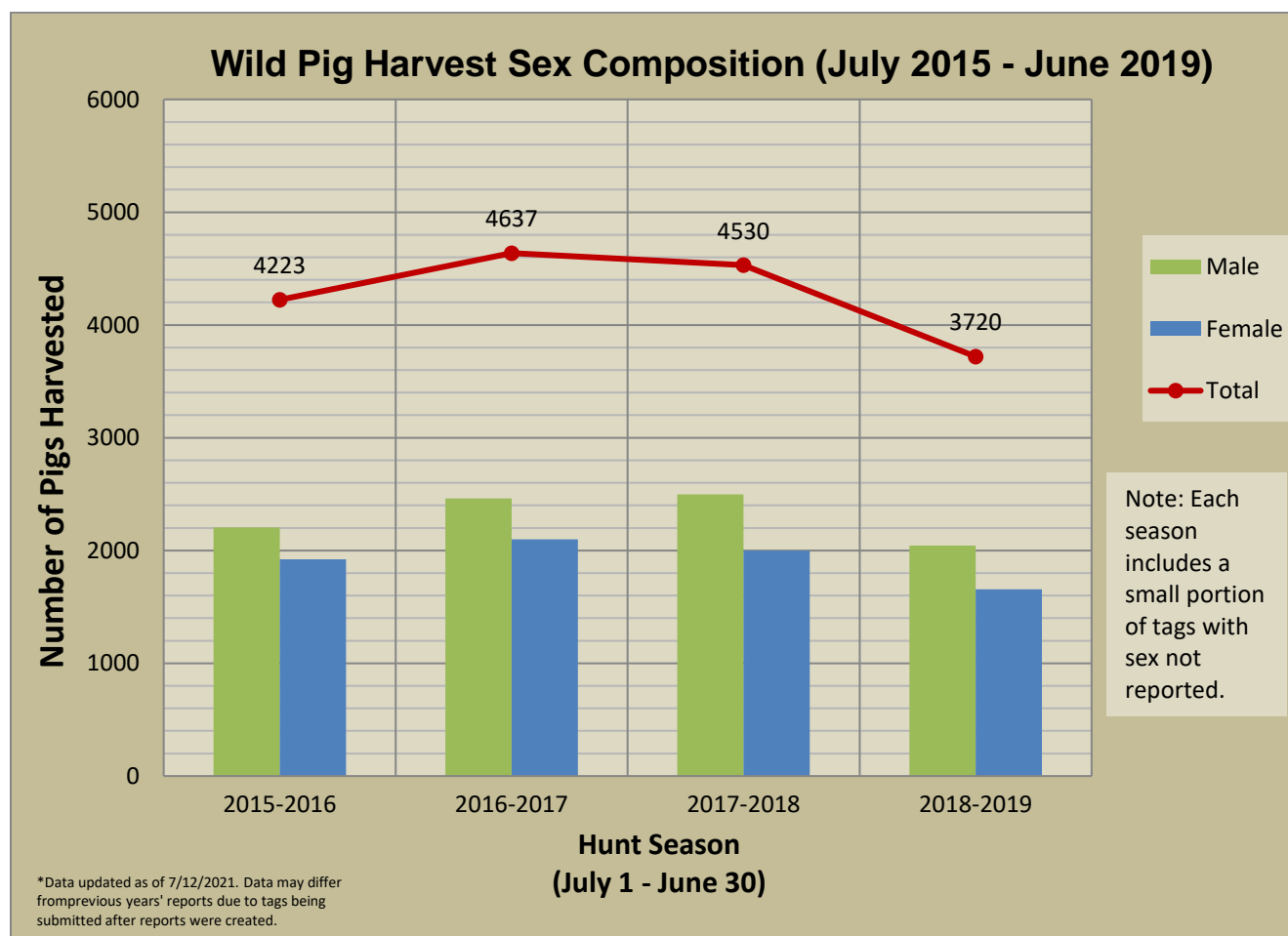


Figure 2. Wild Pig Harvest Sex Composition (July 2015 – June 2019)



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, 90 percent (3,348) reported using a rifle, 6.0 percent (223) reported using archery equipment, 1.2 percent (44) reported using a pistol, 1.9 percent (71) reported using a shotgun, and less than 1 percent reported using a muzzleloader (11), or crossbow (15) (Figure 3). There were 8 (0.2%) 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 5.5 percent (205) reported using dogs to aid in taking their pig (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Wild Pig Harvest Method of Take (July 2018 – June 2019)

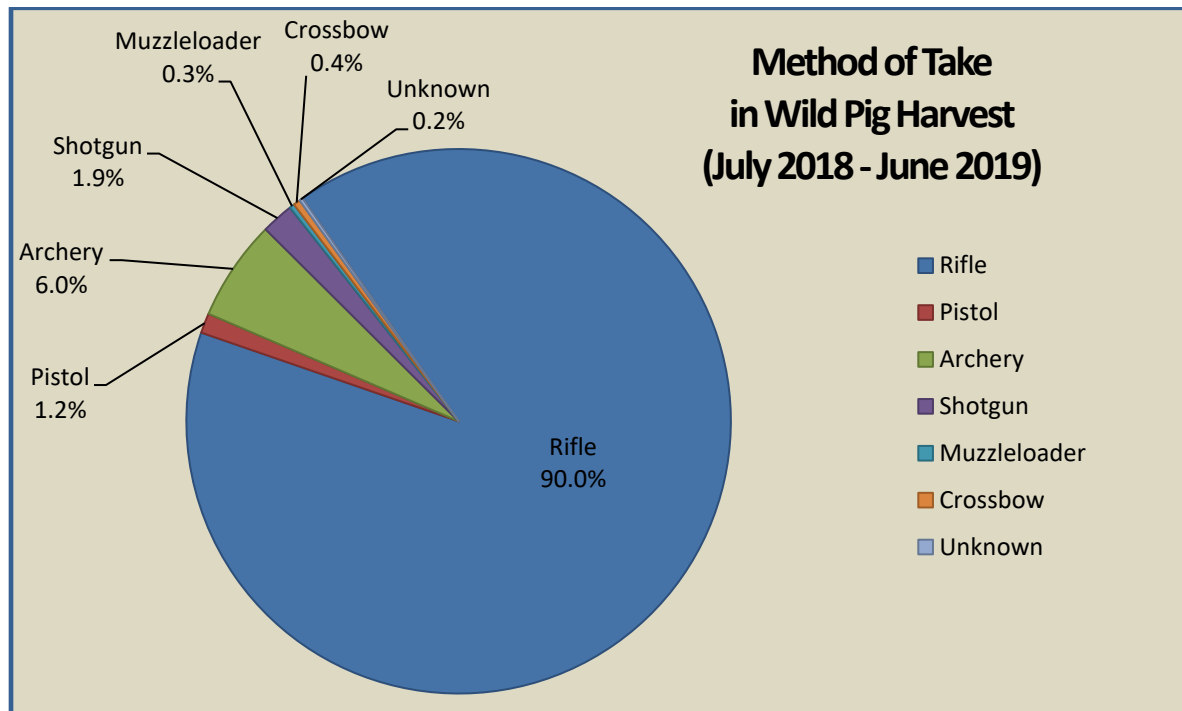
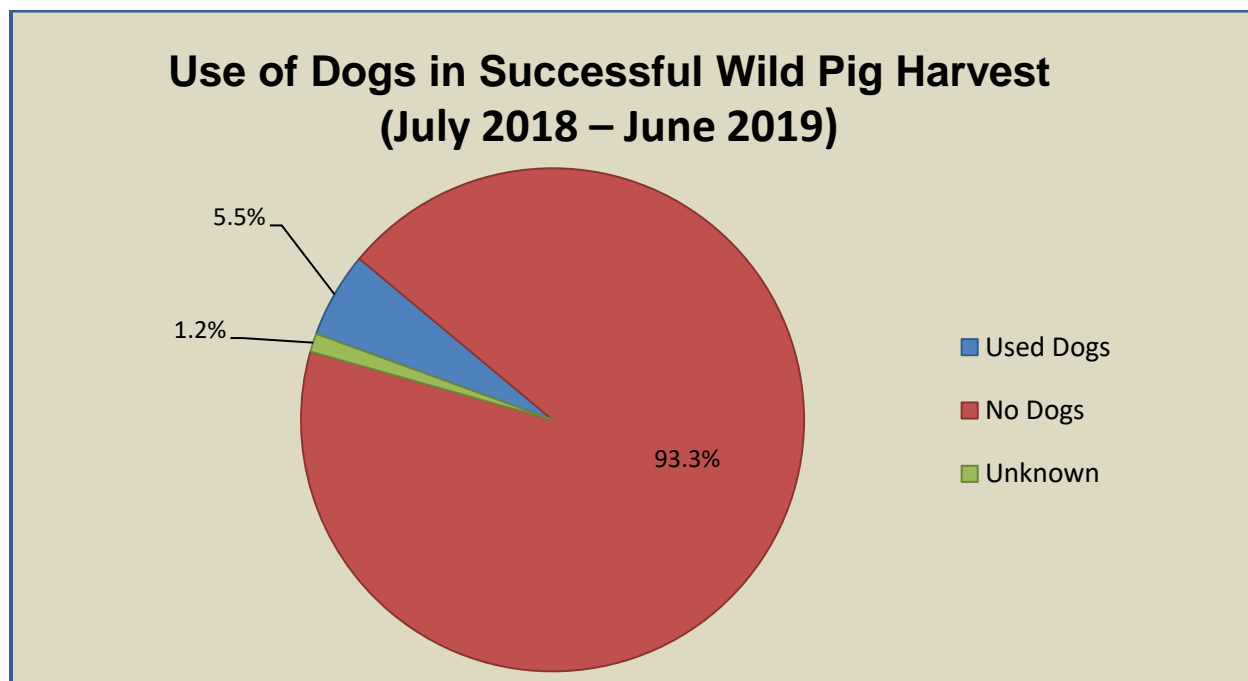


Figure 4. Use of Dogs in Successful Wild Pig Harvest (July 2018 – June 2019)



Location of Take

Pigs were reported to be harvested in 47 of California's 58 counties in the 2018 – 2019 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 57.3 percent of all take reported during the 2018 – 2019 season. These six counties were: Monterey (23.1%), San Luis Obispo (11.6%), Kern (6.6 %), Tehama (6.2%), Mendocino (5.3%) and San Benito (4.4%).

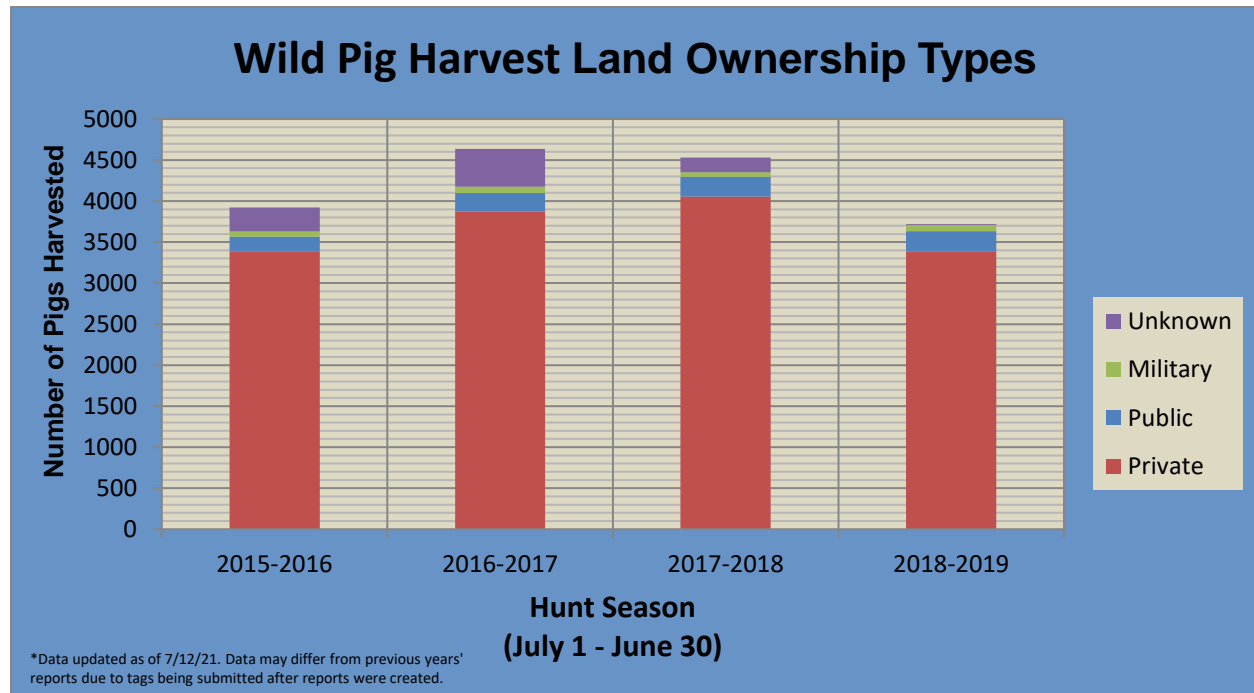
Across the entire state, 91.1 percent (3,389) of wild pigs were reported being taken on private land (Figure 5), while only 6.6 percent (244) were reported being taking on public land. An additional 2.0 percent (76) were harvested on military land, leaving 0.3 percent (11) unreported.

Table 1. Reported Wild Pig Take by County July 2018 – June 2019

County	Pigs Harvested
Alameda	103
Amador	12
Butte	4
Colusa	150
Contra Costa	23
Fresno	142
Glenn	128
Humboldt	47
Kern	246
Kings	13
Lake	63
Lassen	1
Los Angeles	2
Madera	27
Mariposa	44
Mendocino	199
Merced	119
Mono	3
Monterey	858
Napa	47
Nevada	10
Orange	1
Placer	1
Riverside	4
Sacramento	1

County	Pigs Harvested
San Benito	165
San Bernardino	2
San Diego	1
San Joaquin	4
San Luis Obispo	432
San Mateo	1
Santa Barbara	57
Santa Clara	144
Santa Cruz	2
Shasta	45
Sierra	1
Siskiyou	1
Solano	50
Sonoma	141
Stanislaus	35
Sutter	29
Tehama	230
Trinity	16
Tulare	73
Ventura	2
Yolo	18
Yuba	11
Unknown	12
Total	3720

Figure 5. Reported Wild Pig Harvest on Land Ownership Types (July 2015 – June 2021)

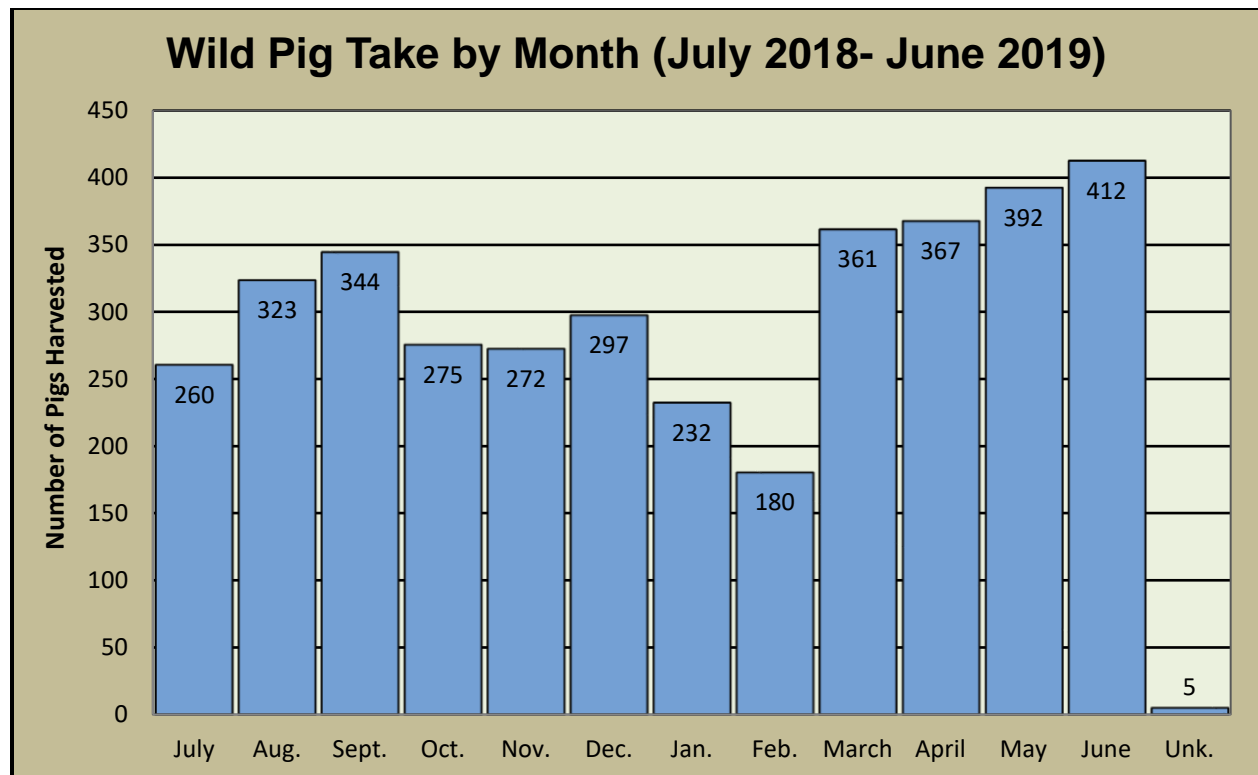


Timing of Take

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 in the summer and fall, dipped down during the winter, but was relatively high in the spring.

The month with the lowest reported wild pig harvest for the 2020 - 2021 hunting season stood at 180 for the month of February. A kill date was specified for all harvested pigs (Figure 6).

Figure 6. 2018-2019 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.

