



State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife Wild Pig Take Report 2019 – 2020



July 13, 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 2019 – 2020 hunting season, tag sales decreased 2.1 percent from the 48,503 tags sold in 2018. Furthermore, 4,022 wild pigs were reported taken, representing an 8.1 percent increase in the number of successful tags returned from the 2018 season of 3,720. A total of 47,498 wild pig tags were issued making overall successful tag return 8.5 percent. The top six counties for pig harvest were: Monterey (23.5%), San Luis Obispo (12.1%), Kern (9.7 %), San Benito (5.3%), Tehama (5.3%) and Mendocino (4.9%). These six counties accounted for about 60.9 percent of reported take.

Of the reported take, 55.6 percent (2,235) indicated a male was taken, 44.1 percent (1,775) indicated a female was taken, and 0.3 percent (12) left the sex portion of the tag blank. Dogs were reported being used on 3.8 percent (152) of returned tags. Finally, 90.3 percent (3,631) of all returned tags indicated that they hunted wild pigs on private land.



Cover photo courtesy of 2017 California Big Game Hunting Digest

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 2019 – 2020 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations

Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2019 at the start of the license year, and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2020. 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 2019 – 2020 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

Results of 2019 - 2020 Wild Pig Hunting Season

Tag Sales

During the 2019 – 2020 wild pig season, 47,498 tags were sold (Figure 1). This was down 1,005 tags from the previous year, constituting a decline of 2.1 percent in pig tag sales. This total consisted of 38,539 resident tags (2.6 percent decrease), 825 non-resident tags (8.5 percent decrease), and 8,134 lifetime license tags (1.0 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, 4,022 wild pigs were reported taken during the 2020 – 2021 season (Figure 2). Overall reported take was up 302 pigs from 2018. Of the returned tags 55.6 percent (2,235) reported sex of the animal as male, 44.1 percent (1,775) as female, with the remaining 0.3 percent (12) 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 2020)

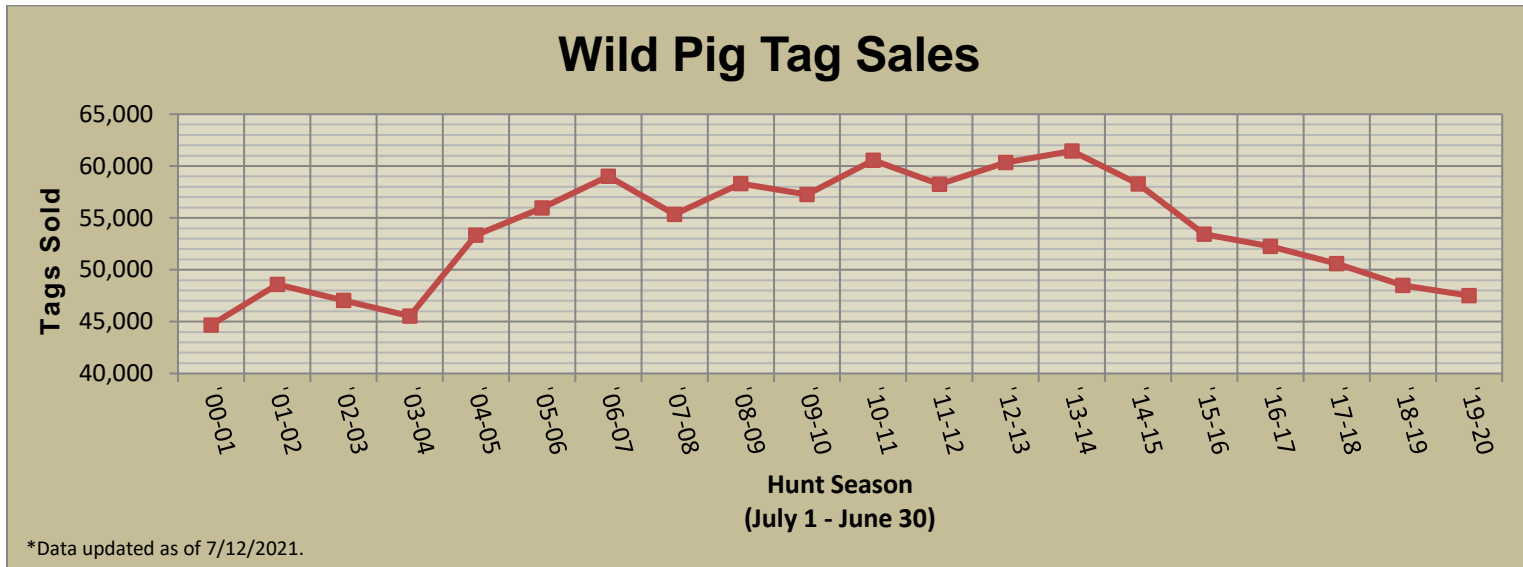
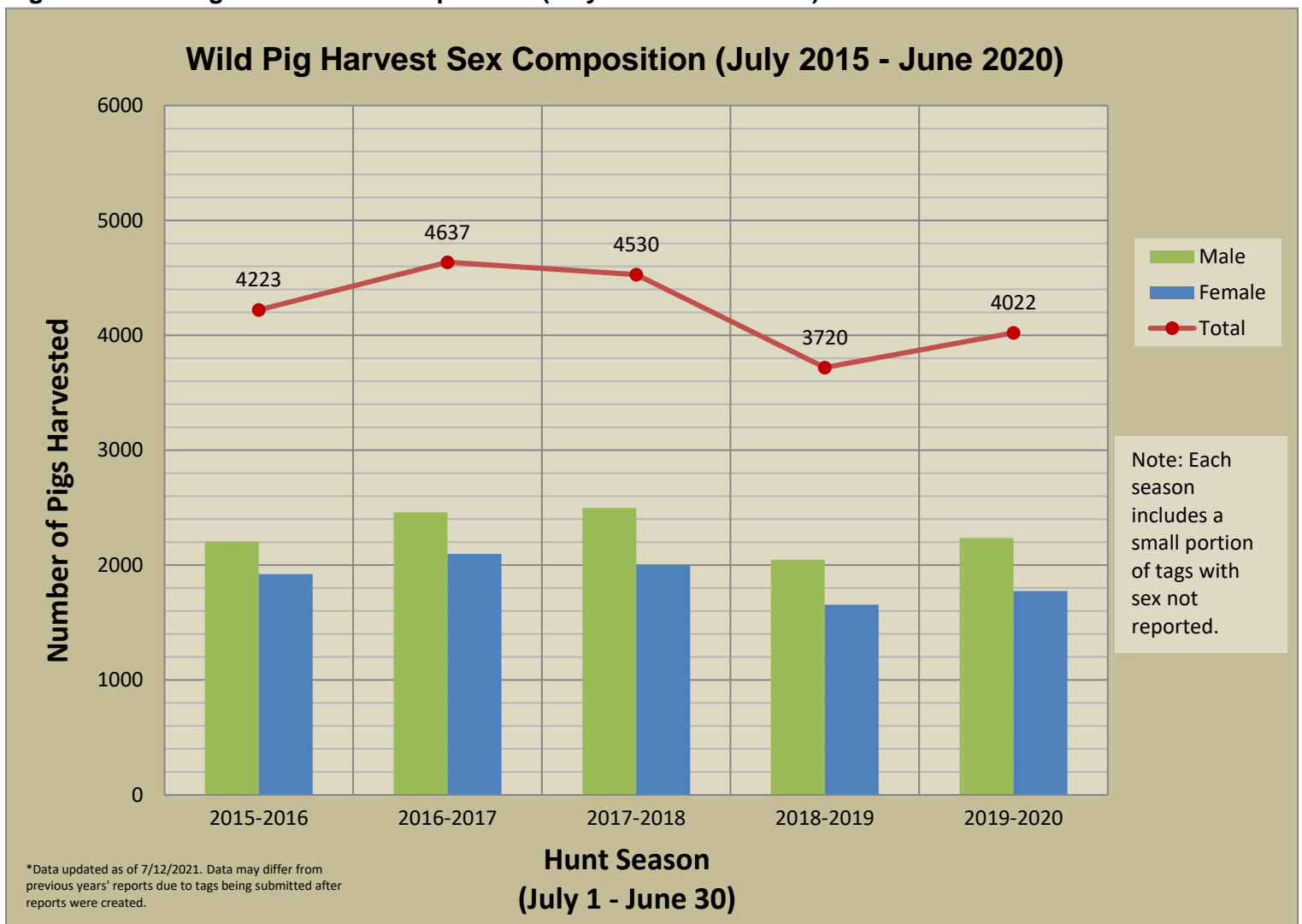


Figure 2. Wild Pig Harvest Sex Composition (July 2015 – June 2020)



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 90.6 percent (3,644) reported using a rifle, 6.0 percent (243) reported using archery equipment, 0.8 percent (31) reported using a pistol, 1.8 percent (74) reported using a shotgun, and less than 1 percent reported using a muzzleloader (17), or crossbow (10) (Figure 3). There were 3 (0.1%) 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 3.8 percent (152) reported using dogs to aid in taking their pig (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Wild Pig Harvest Method of Take (July 2019 – June 2020)

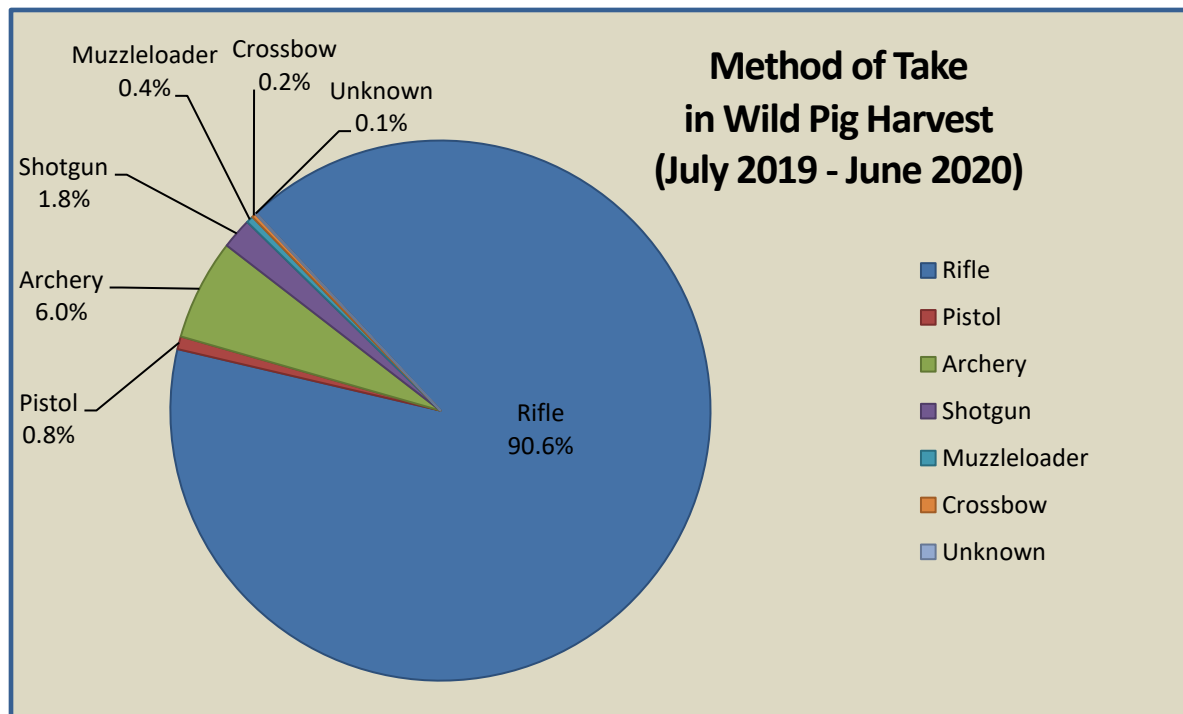
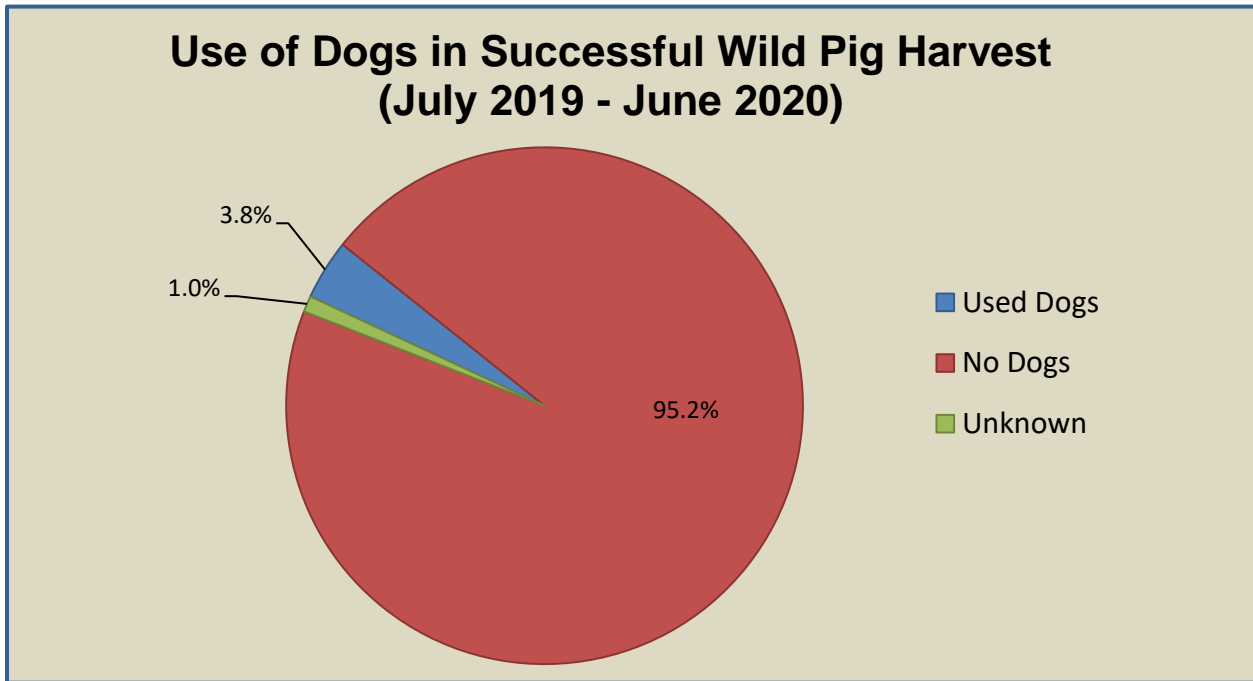


Figure 4. Use of Dogs in Successful Wild Pig Harvest (July 2019 – June 2020)



Location of Take

Pigs were reported to be harvested in 50 of California's 58 counties in the 2019 – 2020 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 60.9 percent of all take reported during the 2019 – 2020 season. These six counties were: Monterey (23.5%), San Luis Obispo (12.1%), Kern (9.7 %), San Benito (5.3%), Tehama (5.3%) and Mendocino (4.9%).

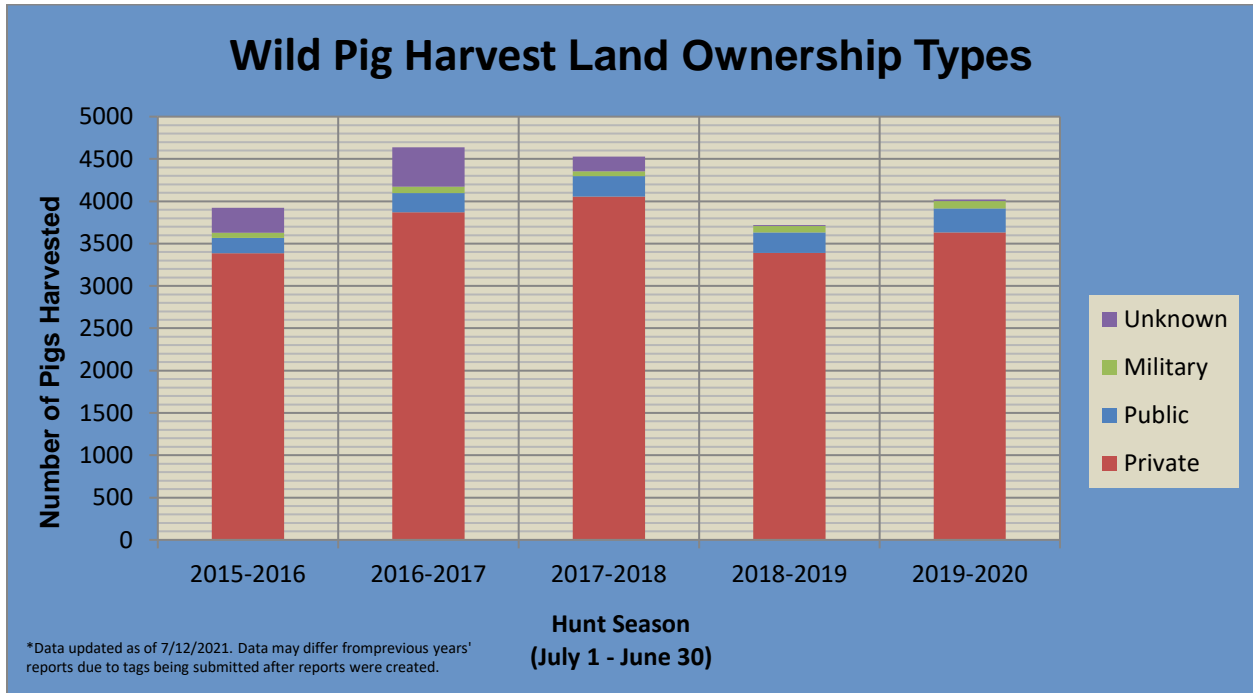
Across the entire state, 90.3 percent (3,631) of wild pigs were reported being taken on private land (Figure 5), while only 7.1 percent (284) were reported being taking on public land. An additional 2.2 percent (89) were harvested on military land, leaving 0.4 percent (18) unreported.

Table 1. Reported Wild Pig Take by County July 2019 – June 2020

County	Pigs Harvested
Alameda	89
Alpine	1
Amador	6
Butte	1
Colusa	93
Contra Costa	20
Fresno	127
Glenn	115
Humboldt	36
Imperial	1
Kern	391
Kings	7
Lake	54
Lassen	1
Los Angeles	2
Madera	72
Marin	1
Mariposa	43
Mendocino	197
Merced	185
Modoc	2
Mono	2
Monterey	946
Napa	52
Nevada	14
Orange	2

County	Pigs Harvested
Placer	3
Riverside	2
Sacramento	1
San Benito	215
San Bernardino	5
San Diego	1
San Joaquin	8
San Luis Obispo	487
San Mateo	1
Santa Barbara	55
Santa Clara	175
Shasta	62
Siskiyou	4
Solano	32
Sonoma	109
Stanislaus	25
Sutter	28
Tehama	212
Trinity	20
Tulare	77
Tuolumne	1
Ventura	3
Yolo	22
Yuba	2
Unknown	12
Total	4022

Figure 5. Reported Wild Pig Harvest on Land Ownership Types (July 2015 – June 2020)

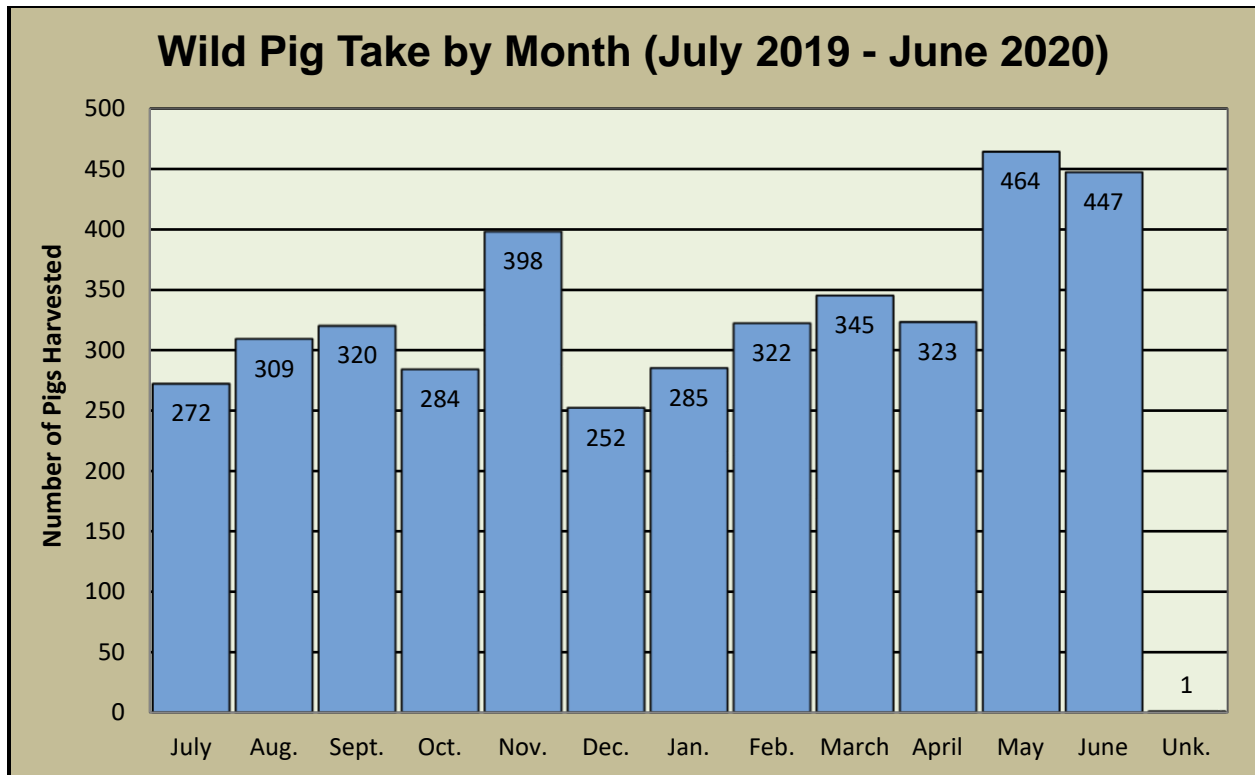


Timing of Take

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 with the exception of November, May, and June.

The month with the lowest reported wild pig harvest for the 2020 - 2021 hunting season stood at 252 for the month of December. A kill date was specified for all harvested pigs (Figure 6).

Figure 6. 2019-2020 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.

