State of California
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wild Pig Take Report
2020 – 2021



August 30, 2021

Wildlife Branch

1010 Riverside Parkway

West Sacramento, CA 95605

Executive Summary

Tag return for successful pig hunters is mandatory and provides the data comprising this report. In the 2020-2021 hunting season, tag sales increased 13.5 percent from the 47,498 tags sold in 2019. Furthermore, 3,950 wild pigs were reported taken, representing a 1.8 percent decrease in the number of successful tags returned from the 2019 season of 4,022. A total of 53,923 wild pig tags were issued making overall successful tag return 7.3 percent. The top six counties for pig harvest were: Monterey (27.8%), San Luis Obispo (15.1%), Kern (8.9 %), San Benito (5.5%), Mendocino (4.8%) and Santa Clara (4.4%). These six counties accounted for about 66.5 percent of reported take.

Of the reported take, 58.0 percent (2,292) indicated a male was taken, 41.7 percent (1,647) indicated a female was taken, and 0.3 percent (11) left the sex portion of the tag blank. Dogs were reported being used on 3.1 percent (123) of returned tags. Finally, 90.4 percent (3,570) of all returned tags indicated that they hunted wild pigs on private land.



Photos courtesy of CDFW Deer Program

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 2020 – 2021 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations

Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2020 at the start of the license year, and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2021. 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 2020 – 2021 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

Results of 2020 - 2021 Wild Pig Hunting Season

Tag Sales

During the 2020 – 2021 wild pig season, 53,923 tags were sold (Figure 1). This was up 6,425 tags from the previous year, constituting an increase of 13.5 percent in pig tag sales. This total consisted of 44,624 resident tags (15.8 percent increase), 1,000 non-resident tags (21.2 percent increase), and 8,299 lifetime license tags (2.0 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, 3,950 wild pigs were reported taken during the 2020 – 2021 season (Figure 2). Overall reported take was down 72 pigs from 2019. Of the returned tags, 58.0 percent (2,292) reported sex of the animal as male, 41.7 percent (1,647) as female, with the remaining.0.3 percent (11) 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 2021)

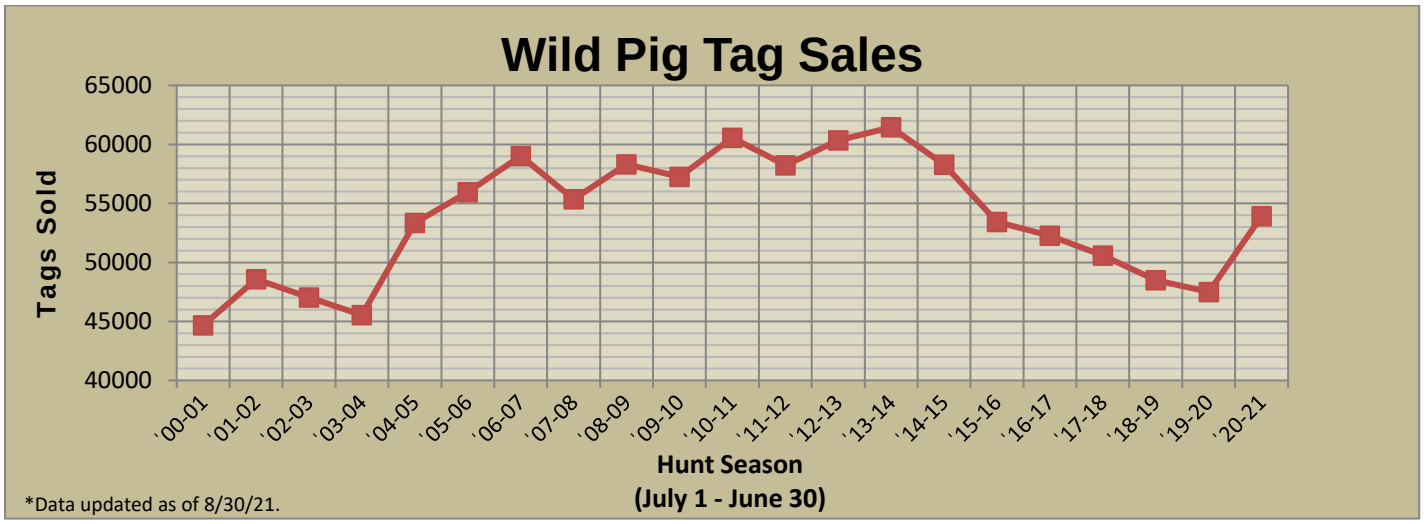
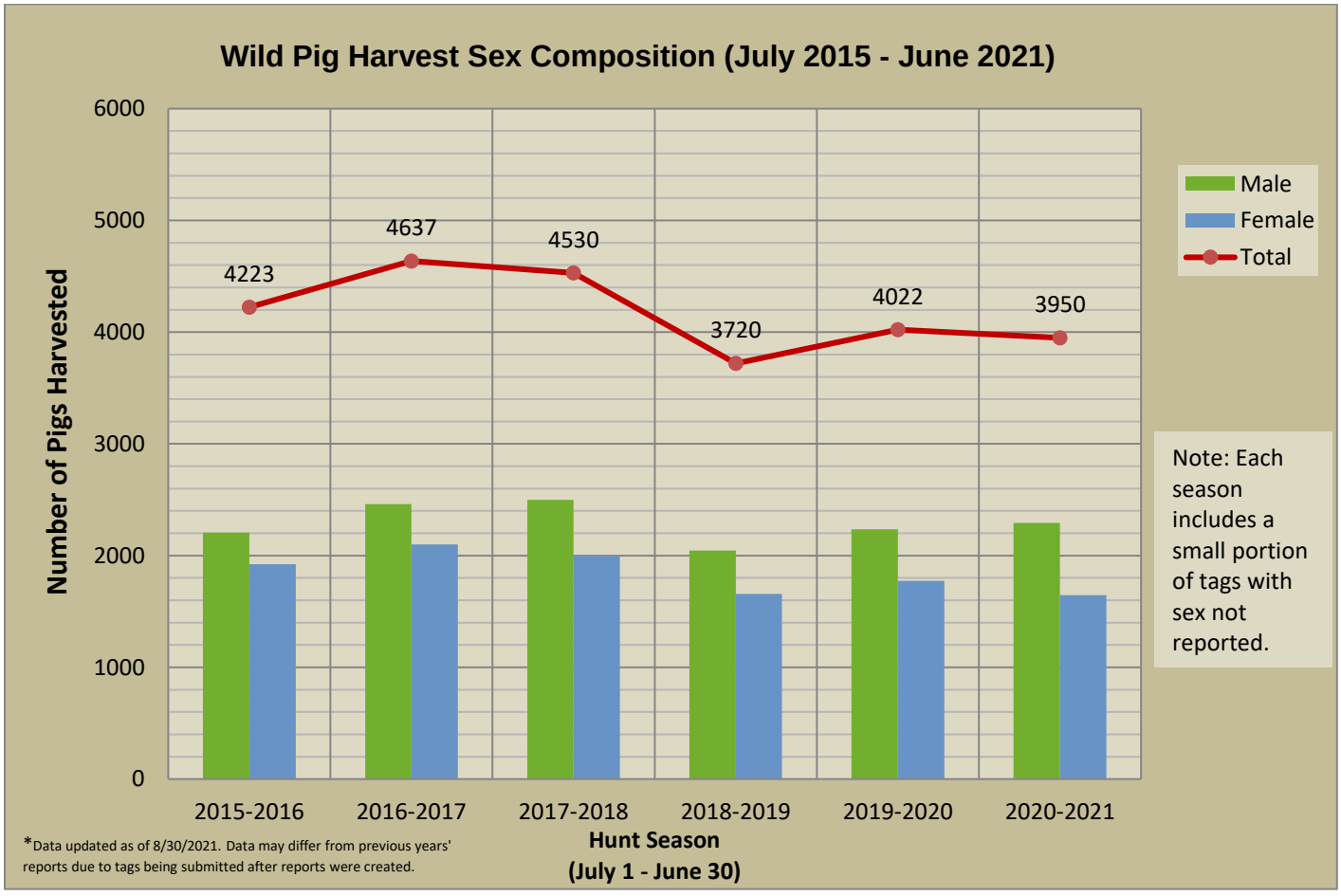


Figure 2. Wild Pig Harvest Sex Composition (July 2015 – June 2021)



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 91.3 percent (3,605) reported using a rifle, 5.8 percent (228) reported using archery equipment, 0.6 percent (25) reported using a pistol, 1.6 percent (64) reported using a shotgun, and less than 1 percent reported using a muzzleloader (14), or crossbow (10) (Figure 3). There were 4 (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 3.1 percent (123) reported using dogs to aid in taking their pig (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Wild Pig Harvest Method of Take (July 2020 – June 2021)

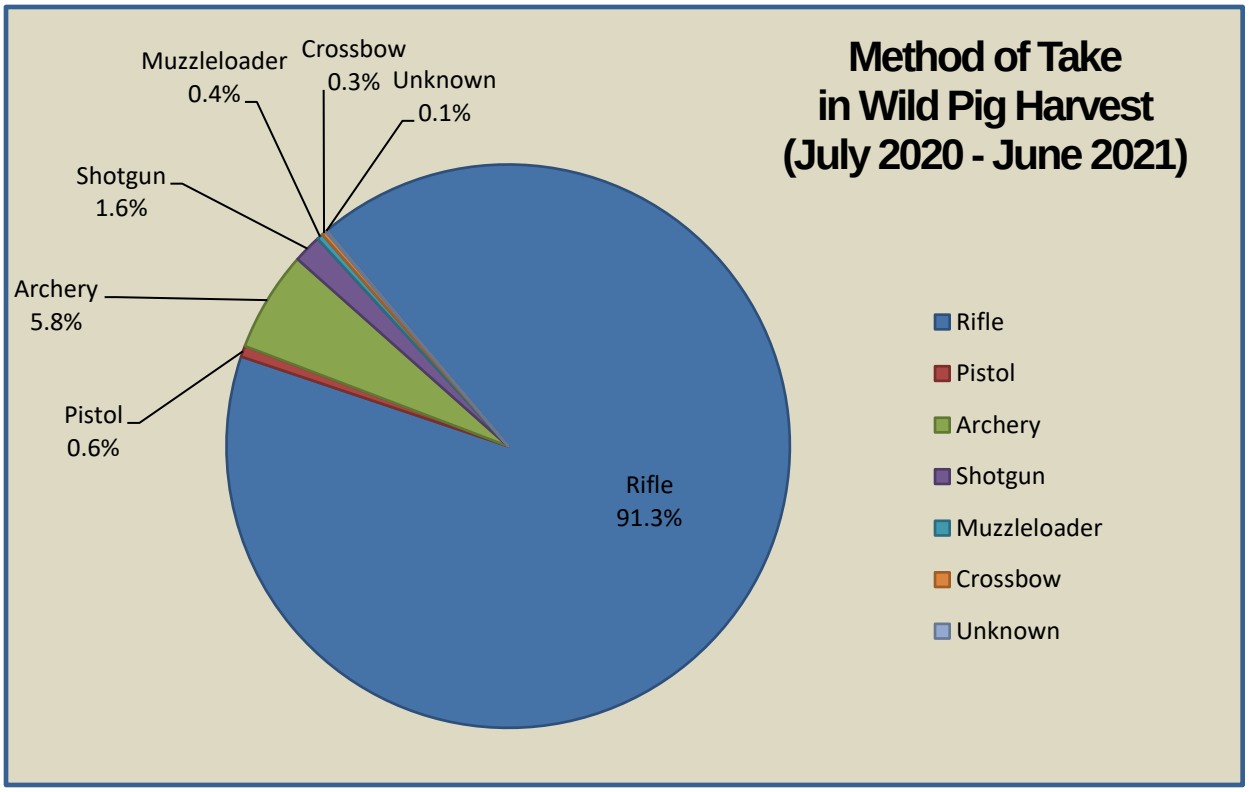
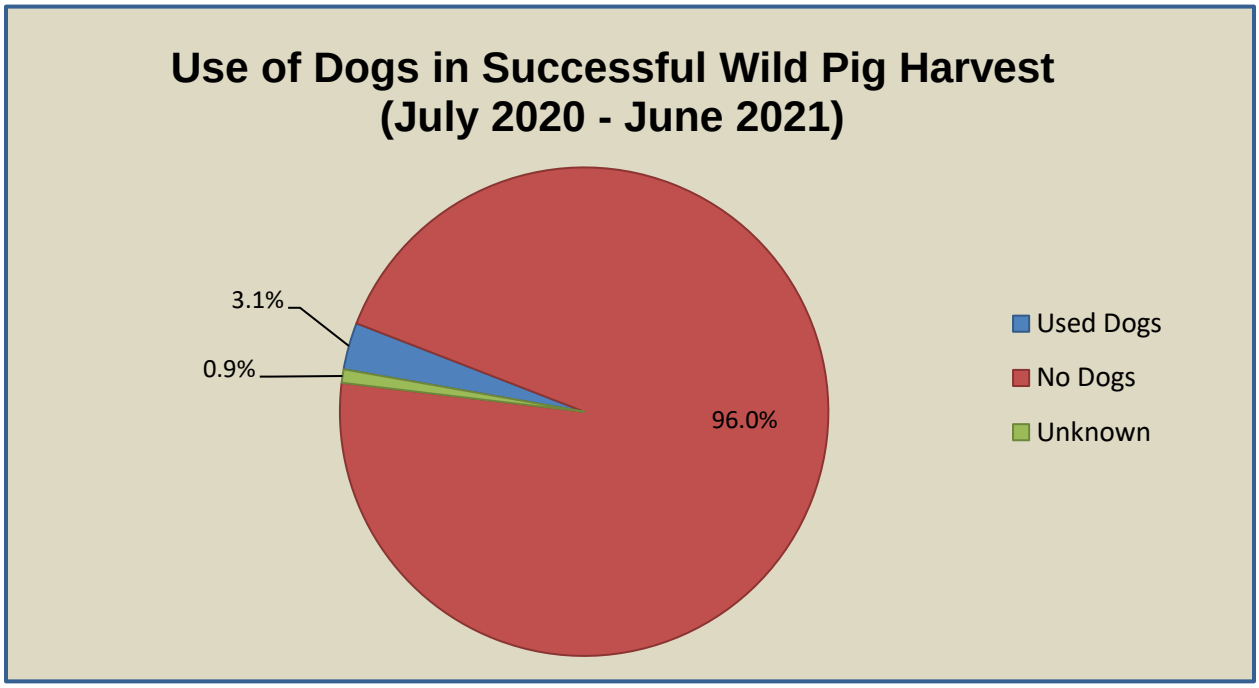


Figure 4. Use of Dogs in Successful Wild Pig Harvest (July 2020 – June 2021)



Location of Take

Pigs were reported to be harvested in 48 of California's 58 counties in the 2020 – 2021 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 66.5 percent of all take reported during the 2020 – 2021 season. These six counties were: Monterey (27.8%), San Luis Obispo (15.1%), Kern (8.9%), San Benito (5.5%), Mendocino (4.8%) and Santa Clara (4.4%).

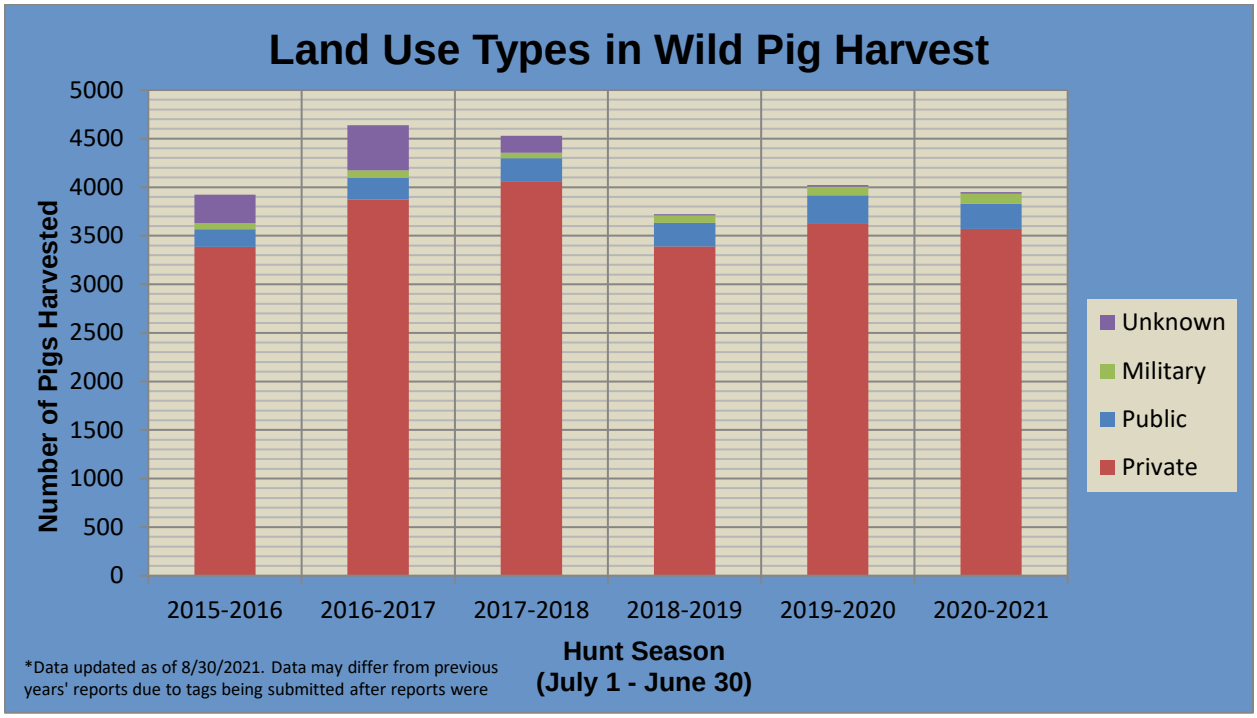
Across the entire state, 90.4 percent (3,570) of wild pigs were reported being taken on private land (Figure 5), while only 6.6 percent (260) were reported being taking on public land. An additional 2.6 percent (104) were harvested on military land, leaving 0.4 percent (16) unreported.

Table 1. Reported Wild Pig Take by County (July 2020 – June 2021)

County	Pigs Harvested
Alameda	47
Amador	6
Butte	3
Calaveras	2
Colusa	77
Contra Costa	10
Fresno	118
Glenn	88
Humboldt	43
Inyo	1
Kern	358
Kings	8
Lake	35
Los Angeles	3
Madera	64
Marin	3
Mariposa	31
Mendocino	195
Merced	111
Modoc	1
Mono	3
Monterey	1118
Napa	29
Nevada	2
Placer	2

County	Pigs Harvested
Riverside	5
Sacramento	2
San Benito	222
San Bernardino	5
San Luis Obispo	607
Santa Barbara	85
Santa Clara	175
Santa Cruz	2
Shasta	58
Sierra	1
Siskiyou	12
Solano	23
Sonoma	95
Stanislaus	15
Sutter	18
Tehama	134
Trinity	13
Tulare	84
Tuolumne	2
Unknown	5
Ventura	12
Yolo	14
Yuba	3
Total	**3950**

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

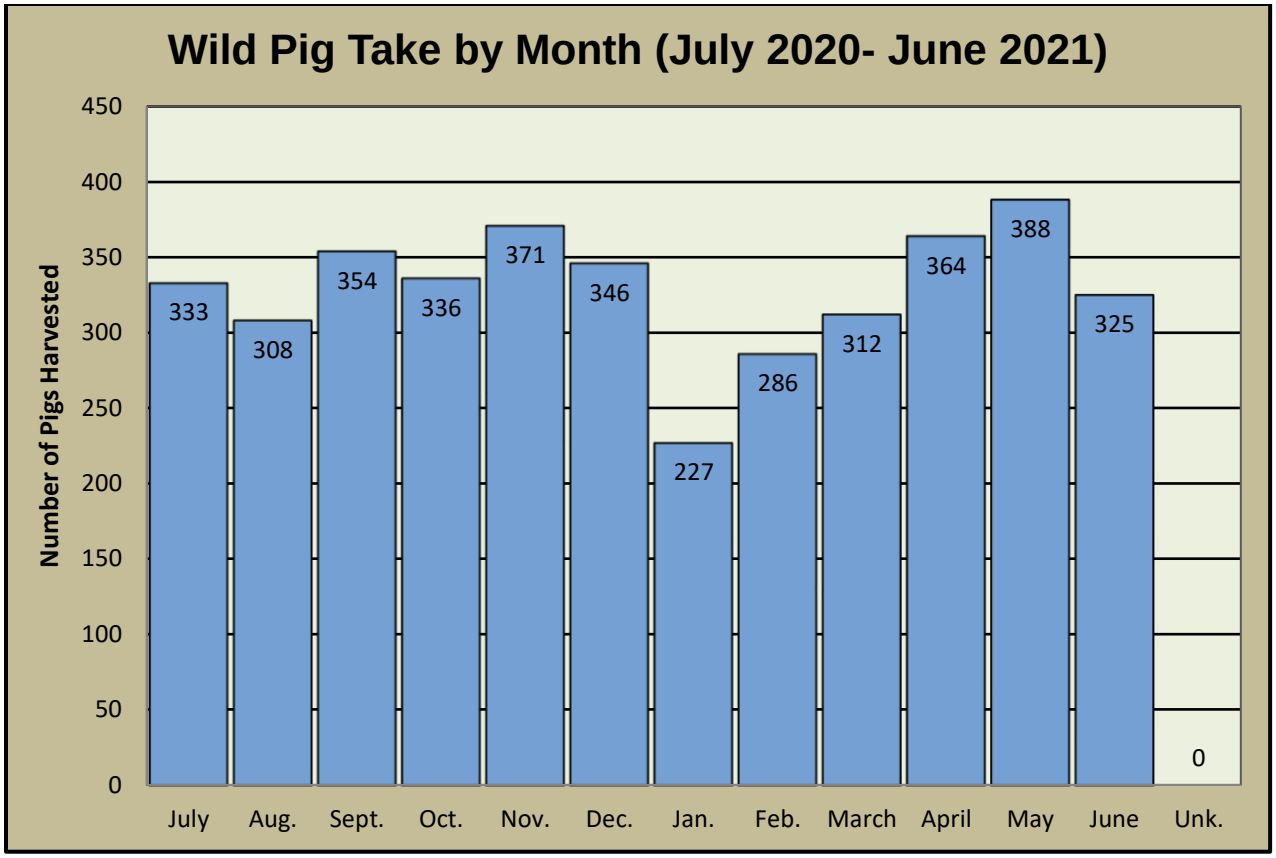


Timing of Take

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 throughout the year with the exception of January – March.

The month with the lowest reported wild pig harvest for the 2020 - 2021 hunting season stood at 227 for the month of January. A kill date was specified for all harvested pigs (Figure 6).

Figure 6. 2020-2021 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.

