



# State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife Wild Pig Take Report 2014 – 2015



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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 2014-2015 hunting season, tag sales decreased 5.1 percent from the 61,447 tags sold in 2013. Furthermore, 3,846 wild pigs were reported taken, representing a 12.9 percent increase in the number of successful tags returned from the 2013 season of 3,408. A total of 58,288 wild pig tags were issued making overall successful tag return 6.6 percent. The top six counties for pig harvest were: Kern (23.5%), Monterey (15.0%), San Luis Obispo (9.5%), Sonoma (7.9%), Mendocino (7.8%) and Tehama (6.5%). These six counties accounted for about 70.2 percent of reported take.

Of the reported take, 50.1 percent (1,927) indicated a male was taken, 47.7 percent (1,835) indicated a female was taken, and 2.2 percent (84) left the sex portion of the tag blank. Dogs were reported being used on 4.4 percent (168) of returned tags. Finally, 88.2 percent (3,392) 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 2014 – 2015 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations**

Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2014 at the start of the license year and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2015. 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 2014 – 2015 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

## **Results of 2014 - 2015 Wild Pig Hunting Season**

### **Tag Sales**

During the 2014 – 2015 wild pig season, 58,288 tags were sold (Figure 1). This was up 438 tags from the previous year, constituting an increase of 12.9 percent in pig tag sales. This total consisted of 49,076 resident tags (5.6 percent decrease), 1,085 non-resident tags (9.0 percent decrease), and 8,127 lifetime license tags (1.7 percent decrease). Since the 2000 season, tag sales increased from a low in the 2000 license year with 44,671 until the 2006 license year where sales then fluctuated between 55,000 and 62,000 tags.

### **Total Take and Sex Composition**

In total, 3,846 wild pigs were reported taken during the 2014 – 2015 season (Figure 2). Overall reported take was down 438 pigs from 2013. Of the returned tags, 50.1 percent (1,927) reported sex of the animal as male, 47.7 percent (1,835) as female, with the remaining 2.2 percent (84) 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 2015)

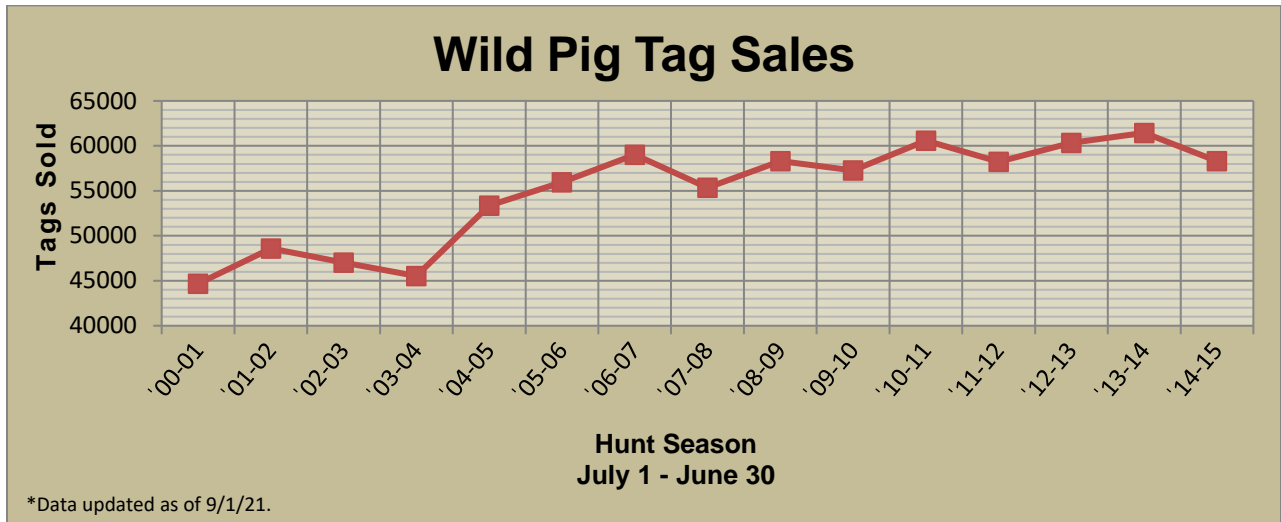
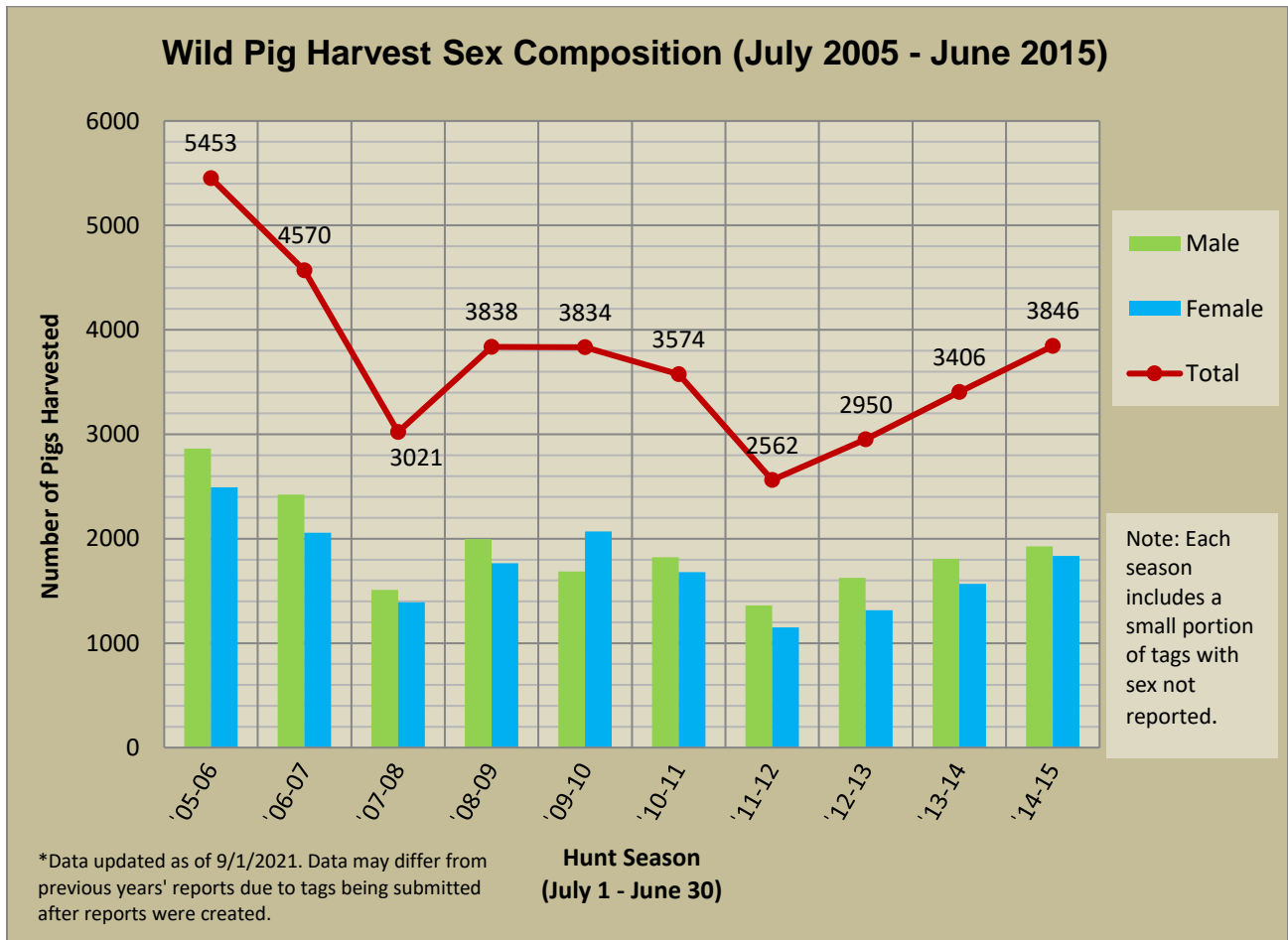


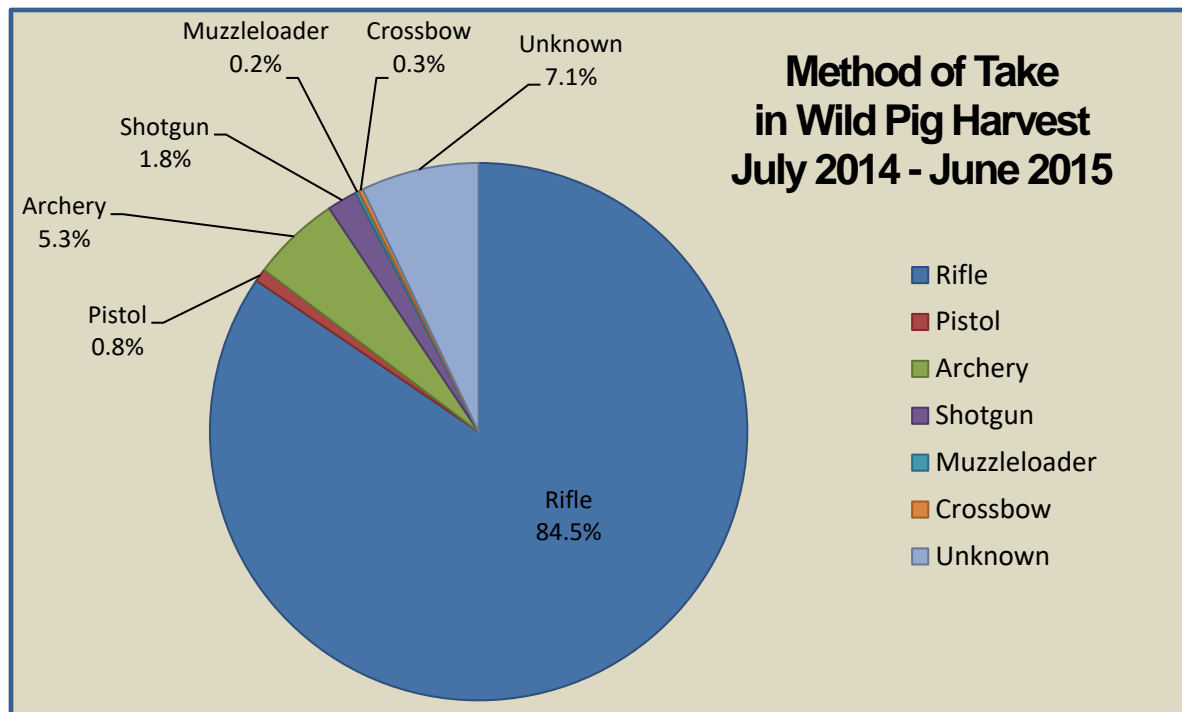
Figure 2. Wild Pig Harvest Sex Composition (July 2005 – June 2015)



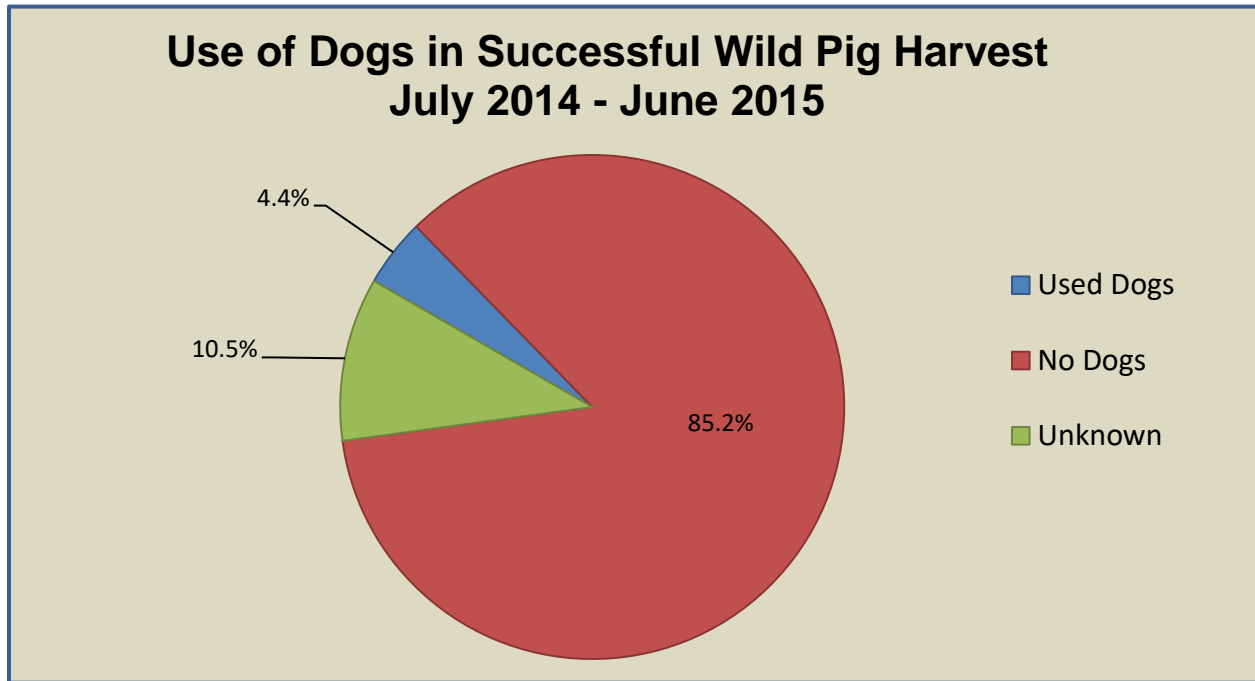
### Methods of Take

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 84.5 percent (3,250) reported using a rifle, 5.3 percent (205) reported using archery equipment, 0.8 percent (30) reported using a pistol, 1.8 percent (70) reported using a shotgun, and less than 1 percent reported using a muzzleloader (8), or crossbow (10) (Figure 3). There were 273 (7.1%) 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 4.4 percent (168) reported using dogs to aid in taking their pig (Figure 4).

**Figure 3. Wild Pig Harvest Method of Take (July 2014 – June 2015)**



**Figure 4. Use of Dogs in Successful Wild Pig Harvest (July 2014 – June 2015)**



#### **Location of Take**

Pigs were reported to be harvested in 44 of California's 58 counties in the 2014 – 2015 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 70.2 percent of all take reported during the 2014 – 2015 season. These six counties were: Kern (23.5%), Monterey (15.0%), San Luis Obispo (9.5%), Sonoma (7.9%), Mendocino (7.8%) and Tehama (6.5%).

Across the entire state, 88.2 percent (3,392) of wild pigs were reported being taken on private land (Figure 5), while only 3.6 percent (137) were reported being taking on public land. An additional 1.5 percent (59) were harvested on military land, leaving 6.7 percent (258) unreported.

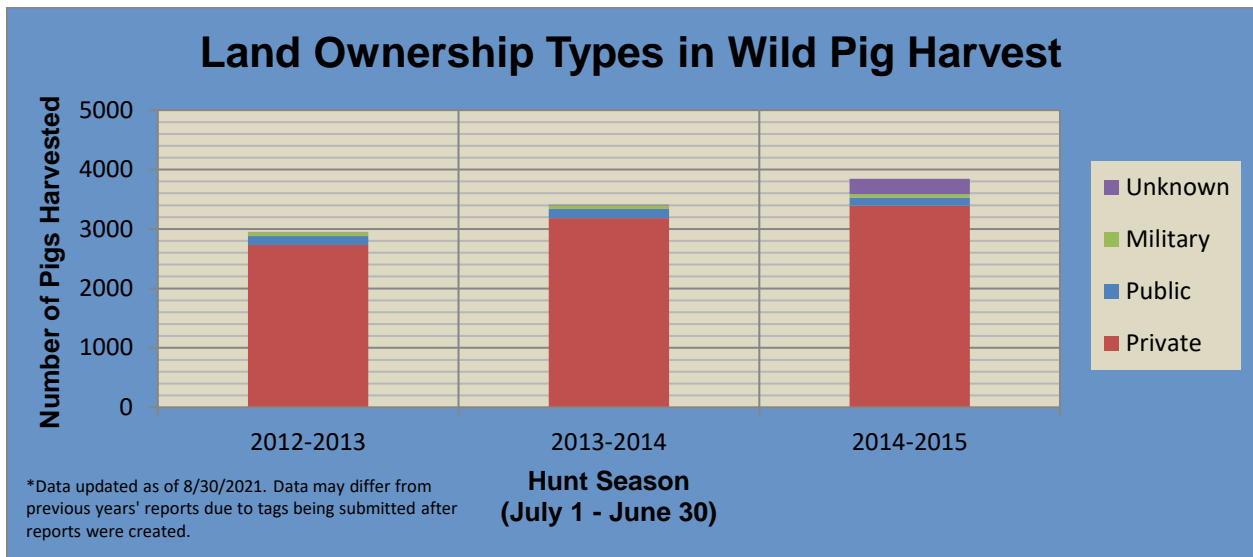
**Table 1. Reported Wild Pig Take by County (July 2013 – June 2014)**

<b>County</b>	<b>Pigs Harvested</b>
Alameda	19
Butte	3
Calaveras	1
Colusa	98
Contra Costa	4
Fresno	65
Glenn	63
Humboldt	21
Kern	903
Kings	8
Lake	103
Los Angeles	10
Madera	38
Marin	1
Mariposa	13
Mendocino	300
Merced	33
Mono	1
Monterey	578
Napa	39
Nevada	18
Placer	2

<b>County</b>	<b>Pigs Harvested</b>
Riverside	5
San Benito	145
San Bernardino	3
San Diego	3
San Joaquin	1
San Luis Obispo	364
San Mateo	1
Santa Barbara	48
Santa Clara	83
Santa Cruz	2
Shasta	73
Siskiyou	12
Solano	50
Sonoma	305
Stanislaus	24
Sutter	10
Tehama	251
Trinity	19
Tulare	48
Unknown	58
Ventura	4
Yolo	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>3846</b>



Figure 5. Reported Wild Pig Harvest on Land Ownership Types (July 2012 – June 2015)

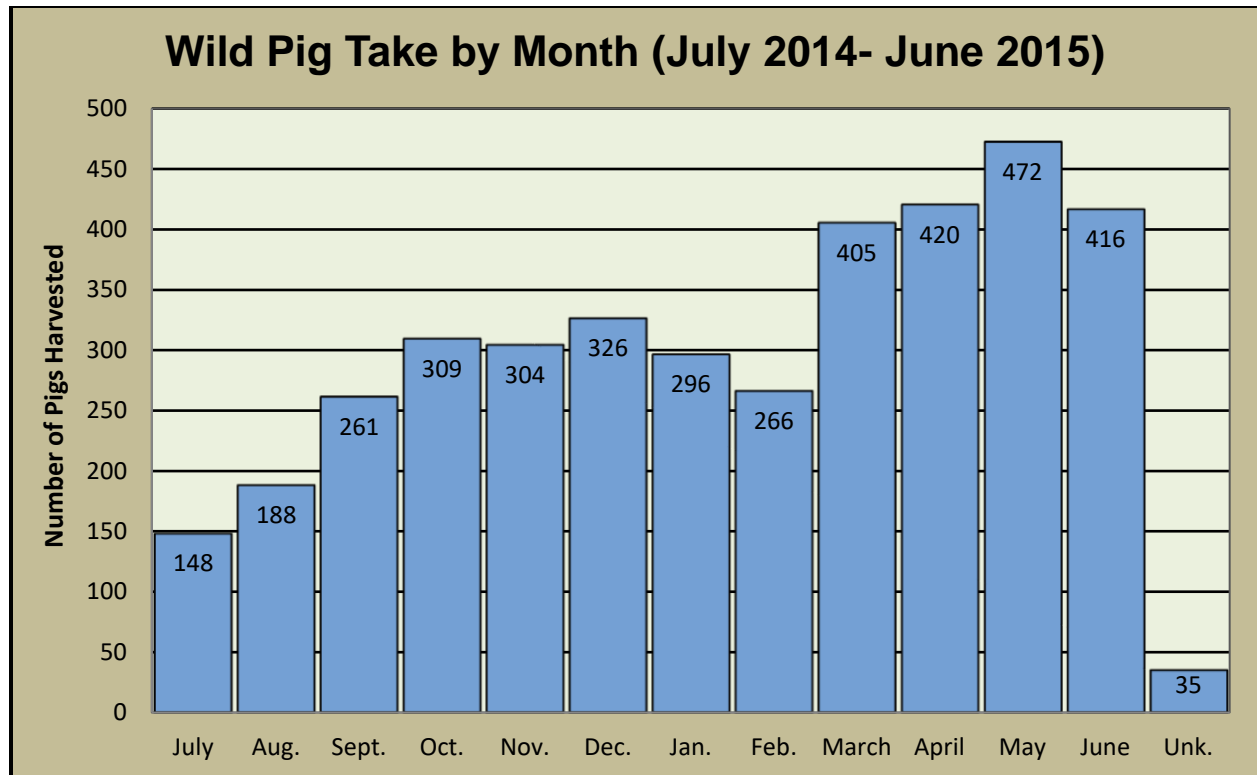


### Timing of Take

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 showed an upward trend at the beginning of the season, slightly fluctuating through winter, and was at its highest through spring.

The month with the lowest reported wild pig harvest for the 2014 - 2015 hunting season stood at 148 for the month of July. There were 35 tags that did not indicate a kill date (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. 2014-2015 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.

