



# State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife Wild Pig Take Report 2024 – 2025



**Wildlife Branch  
1010 Riverside Parkway  
West Sacramento, CA 95605**

## Executive Summary

The provisions of Senate Bill (SB) 856 from the 2021 – 2022 Legislative session became effective July 1, 2024. Among the changes resulting from this legislation was the replacement of wild pig tags previously sold by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), with a wild pig validation. The change from tag to validation was intended to support the CDFW's wild pig management goals by reducing barriers for hunters and landowners to take wild pigs. The holder of a wild pig validation is now authorized to take any number of pigs on an annual basis rather than being limited by tags. Additionally, reporting requirements for wild pig hunters have been streamlined and provide more flexibility. Hunters now report their take of wild pigs electronically, in the Automated License Data System (ALDS), within 60 days of the end of the license year instead of immediately returning the report card portion of a wild pig tag to the CDFW each time an animal is harvested. The sale of wild pig validations and the harvest reported by wild pig hunters comprise the data presented in this report.

In the 2024 – 2025 hunting season, 37,910 wild pig validations were sold. This in comparison to 47,415 wild pig tags sold during the 2023 – 2024 hunting season. Furthermore, 2,224 wild pigs were reported taken, representing a 33.2 percent decrease in the number of wild pigs that were reported as harvested during the 2023 – 2024 season at 3,327. Among holders of wild pig validations, 3.4 percent of hunters (1,297 hunters) reported success in harvesting one or more wild pigs. Among those successful wild pig hunters, the average number of pigs taken was 1.71. This was higher than the average of 1.27 pigs taken by successful hunters since 2020. The top six counties for pig harvest were: Monterey (16.9%), San Luis Obispo (13.2%), Tehama (7.9%), Kern (6.7%), Mendocino (6.5%) and Colusa (4.6%). These six counties accounted for 55.9 percent of reported take. The data presented in this report suggests that the change from tag to validation provided greater opportunity for hunters to harvest multiple pigs. However, the change in mandated reporting may have reduced the reporting of successful take.



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 (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. In 2024, the wild pig was reclassified as the first “exotic” game species in California and wild pig tags previously sold by the CDFW were replaced with a single validation that allows for unlimited harvest during that license year (beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending June 30<sup>th</sup>) according to the provisions of SB 856 which was signed into law on September 22, 2022.

The intent of SB 856 is to give the public and the CDFW more tools to manage wild pigs, with the goal to reduce their numbers and thereby mitigate the damage they cause to property and the environment. This bill made sweeping changes to Fish and Game Code (FGC), as it relates to wild pigs, including changes to the laws regarding definitions, licensing, hunting take, captive hunting preserves, capture, possession, and release; and the reclassification of wild pigs, designating the wild pig as the first exotic game mammal in California with the addition of FGC §3965. Amendments to FGC §4652 established a wild pig validation in place of the former wild pig tag(s). The base fee for a wild pig validation is \$25 for residents and \$90 for nonresidents, which shall be adjusted annually based on an inflation index indicated in FGC §713. This is comparable to the cost of a single wild pig tag sold by the Department during the 2023 – 2024 license year, which allowed for the harvest of just one wild pig. Revenues generated from the sale of these validations continue to be placed in the Big Game Management Account for expenditure by the Department as described in FGC §3953.

There are no daily bag or possession limits for hunting wild pigs, and the season occurs year-round. Regulations during the period of this report required hunters to report their

take of wild pigs in the Automated License Data System within 60 days of the end of the license year. The required information includes only the hunter's identity and number of pigs taken by month and by county, as indicated by FGC §4657 and Title 14 of California Code of Regulations Section 708.13. Hunters are no longer required to report the sex of the animal, the land ownership for the area hunted, the method of take, whether they were aided by hunting dogs, time of day and locality of the kill for each wild pig harvested, immediately upon filling a tag as was true in previous years.

### **Summary of 2024 – 2025 Wild Pig Hunting Regulations**

Wild pig season opened on July 1, 2024, at the start of the license year, and ran continuously until the end of the license year on June 30, 2025. Individuals were able to purchase a wild pig validation 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 2024 – 2025 wild pig season ran its full length with no closures.

### **Results of 2024 - 2025 Wild Pig Hunting Season**

#### **Sales of Wild Pig Validations**

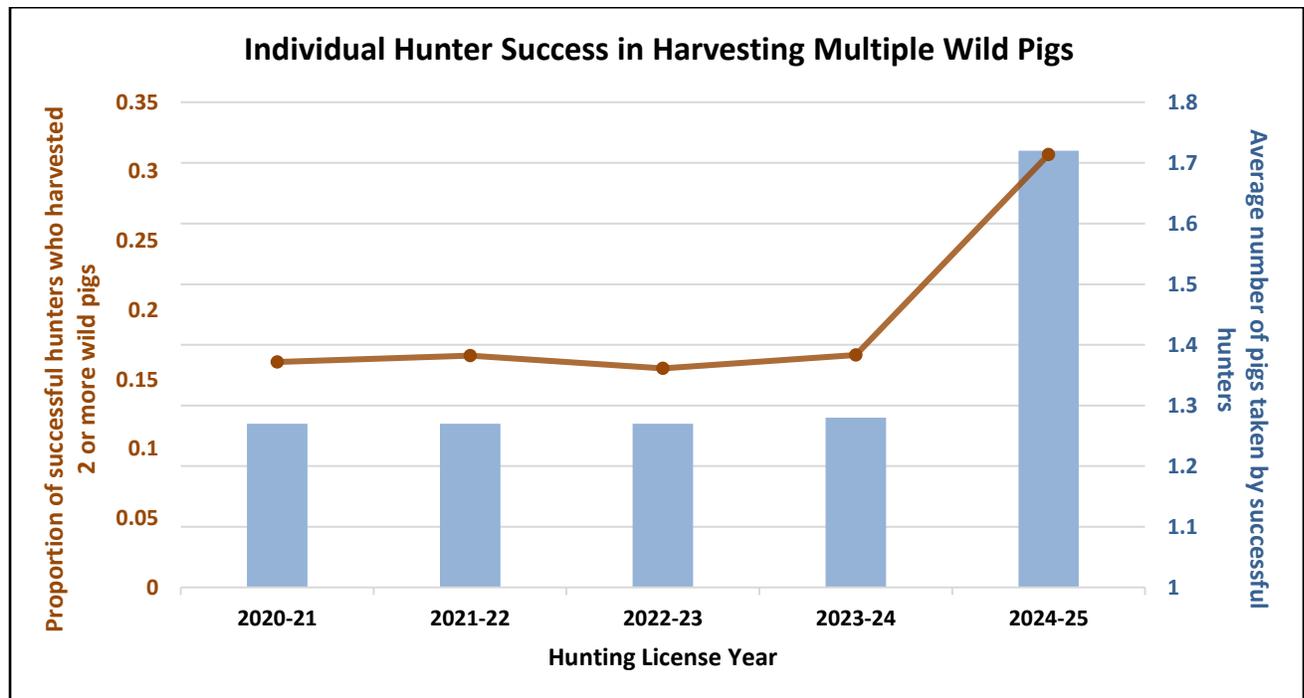
During the 2024 – 2025 hunting season, 37,910 wild pig validations were sold. This total included 2,649 lifetime wild pig validations; 34,316 annual wild pig validations sold to California residents and 945 annual wild pig validations sold to non-residents. This is a relative decrease overall, from the 47,415 total wild pig tags sold during the 2023 – 2024 hunting season. However, a wild pig validation now allows for the take of an unlimited number of pigs, in contrast to the wild pig tags previously sold by the Department that authorized the holder to take just one wild pig per tag. In the 2023 – 2024 license year, approximately 17% of successful hunters filled more than one wild pig tag. This ratio approximates the 20% decrease in overall sales totals for wild pig tags versus the validation (from 47,415 tags to 37,910 validations) to hunt wild pigs

during 2024 – 2025 license year. Thus, the decrease in sales is likely driven by the change from tag to validation and not a decrease in hunter interest.

### Total Take

In total, 2,224 wild pigs were reported taken during the 2024 – 2025 season. Overall, this reported take was down 1,103 pigs from the 2023 – 2024 season, yet counter to this trend, the proportion of successful hunters that reported harvesting two or more wild pigs increased from 16.77% of successful hunters during the 2023 – 2024 season, to 31.23% during the 2024 – 2025 season. Additionally, the average number of wild pigs reported taken by successful hunters increased from 1.28 pigs per hunter during the 2023 – 2024 season, to 1.72, during the 2024 – 2025 season. Thus, a greater proportion of successful hunters reported success harvesting a greater number of pigs than in previous years (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Trend among Successful Wild Pig Hunters (July 2020 – June 2025)**



Decades of tag returns for wild pigs consistently indicated that wild pig harvest composition generally reflects a nearly 1:1 sex ratio with males taken at a slightly higher proportion.

California wild pig hunters are allowed several legal methods of take which are valid at any point during the season including rifle, archery, shotgun, pistol, muzzleloader, and crossbow. Overall, rifles are the most popular method for taking wild pigs among successful hunters. Other allowable methods of take include using archery equipment or crossbow, a shotgun, a pistol or a muzzleloader. Additionally, dogs are allowed to be used to assist in taking pigs. Hunters are no longer required to report the sex of harvested wild pigs.

### **Location of Take**

Pigs were reported to be harvested in 44 of California's 58 counties in the 2024 – 2025 license year (Table 1). Six counties accounted for approximately 55.9 percent of all take reported during the 2024 – 2025 season. These six counties were: Monterey (17.0%), San Luis Obispo (13.2%), Tehama (7.9%), Kern (6.7%), Mendocino (6.5%) and Colusa (4.6%). These six counties accounted for about 55.9 percent of reported take.

Across the entire state, the majority of wild pigs are taken on private lands while a smaller proportion of harvest comes from public lands and military lands.

**Table 1. Reported Wild Pig Take by County (July 2024 – June 2025)**

<b>County</b>	<b>Pigs Taken</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Pigs Taken</b>
ALAMEDA	45	SAN BERNARDINO	3
AMADOR	3	SAN DIEGO	1
BUTTE	2	SAN JOAQUIN	25
COLUSA	103	SAN LUIS OBISPO	294
CONTRA COSTA	12	SAN MATEO	2
FRESNO	58	SANTA BARBARA	74
GLENN	68	SANTA CLARA	80
HUMBOLDT	34	SANTA CRUZ	1
KERN	149	SHASTA	25
KINGS	3	SISKIYOU	1
LAKE	29	SOLANO	16
LASSEN	1	SONOMA	67
LOS ANGELES	4	STANISLAUS	18
MADERA	26	SUTTER	32
MARIPOSA	13	TEHAMA	176
MENDOCINO	144	TRINITY	28
MERCED	67	TULARE	33
MONTEREY	378	TUOLUMNE	6
NAPA	53	VENTURA	36
NEVADA	7	YOLO	16
PLACER	1	YUBA	6
SACRAMENTO	1	(blank)	6
SAN BENITO	77	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2224</b>

## 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 highest during the spring and fall months, March – June, and August - September.

The month with the lowest reported wild pig harvest for the 2024 - 2025 hunting season stood at 92 for the month of December (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. 2024 – 2025 Reported Wild Pig Take by Month**



## Discussion

Reported harvest of wild pigs was lower during the 2024 – 2025 license year in comparison to the 2023 – 2024 license year. This may be due to lower reporting rates overall, among wild pig hunters resulting from the different reporting conditions of for a wild pig tag versus a wild pig validation under regulations that became effective on July 1, 2024. Reports continued to be received after the close of the 60-day reporting window for wild pig validations on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and through the end of 2025, the CDFW received 1,297 harvest reports from successful wild pig hunters. This in contrast to 2,600 hunters who reported successfully filling one or more wild pig tags during the 2023 – 2024 license year. While the rate of reporting appears lower than in previous years, the number of pigs reported taken by individual hunters has increased from 1.28 pigs per successful hunter during 2023 – 2024 to 1.71 pigs per successful hunter during 2024 – 2025 meaning that at the individual level, successful hunters harvested more wild pigs under the conditions of the unlimited wild pig validation, than in previous years.

The cost of the California wild pig validation which allows for taking an unlimited number of pigs, is comparable to the cost of one (1) pig tag previously sold by the Department that authorized the taking only one pig; thus the change to a wild pig validation lowered the overall cost for the public to hunt wild pigs in California and this change is not likely to be responsible for a decrease in the number of wild pigs reported taken. The number of wild pig validations sold during the 2024 – 2025 license year is an indication that hunter interest in targeting wild pigs remains high.

California is estimated to have the fourth largest population of wild pigs in the country, at between 200,000 and 400,000 animals. Under the previous system of tags for wild pigs, hunters reported killing fewer than 3,800 wild pigs per year on average, over the most recent decade. This harvest represents less than 2% of the State's wild pig population and this level of harvest is not significant to the trajectory of California's wild pig population. It is estimated that reduction or elimination of wild pigs from the State would require removing as great as 70% of their population on an annual basis, due to their high productivity, and lack of natural predators. Given the level of annual pig take and the size of their population in California, the importance of lowering the cost for hunters to hunt multiple pigs and streamlining reporting requirements for hunters that target wild pigs was prioritized over the comprehensive collection of accurate and timely harvest data under the previous tagging system for wild pigs. The provisions of Senate Bill 856 enjoyed broad support during the Legislative process.

Under the provisions of FGC §4653, the Department may determine the type of information to be included on the wild pig validation and prescribe the procedures for the issuance and use of the validation. The Fish and Game Commission (Commission) has the authority under FGC §4657, to require collection of other information the

Commission finds would be appropriate to better understand the location and abundance, and rate of take, of wild pigs or to enforce the provisions of this code or Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. Department will continue to monitor trends in the reported take of wild pigs by hunters annually and consider adjusting regulations or conducting additional surveys of wild pig hunters, if necessary to meet the goals laid out by Fish and Game Code Section 1801.

