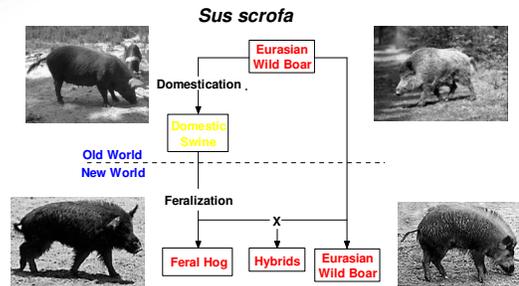


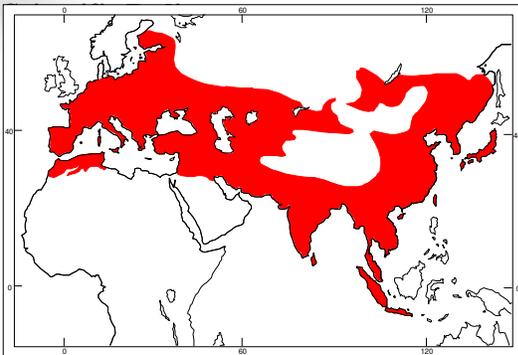
History and Ecology of Wild ~~Feral~~ Hogs in the Southeast

Dr. Jack Mayer
Savannah River National Laboratory
Aiken, South Carolina

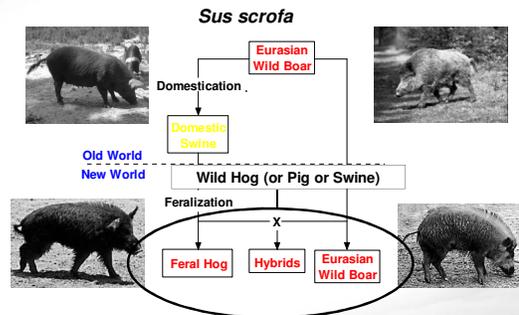
Wild Hogs - History Scientific Pedigree



Wild Hogs - History

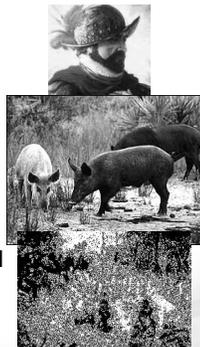


Wild Hogs - History Scientific Pedigree



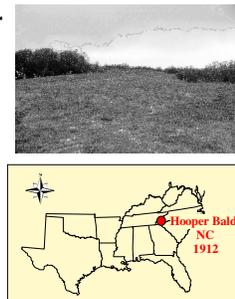
Wild Hogs - History History in the Southeast

- Wild hogs have a long history in the Southeast
- Populations date back to the mid 1500s
- Derived from domestic swine that went wild (i.e., becoming feral hogs)
- Feral hogs were widespread in the Southeast by the early 1900s

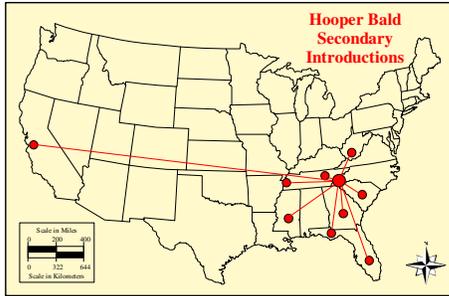


Wild Hogs - History History in the Southeast

- Pure Eurasian wild boar introduced into NC in 1912
- Fenced hunting preserve on Hooper Bald
- Animals escaped enclosure
- Hybridized with feral hogs in surrounding area

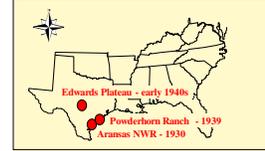


Wild Hogs - History
History in the Southeast



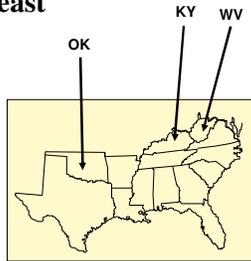
Wild Hogs - History
History in the Southeast

- Denman introductions in Texas:
 - Aransas NWR
 - Powderhorn Ranch
- Edwards Plateau introduction
- Currently all states in SE have at least some populations with wild boar ancestry



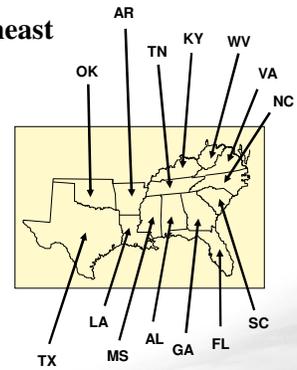
Wild Hogs - History
History in the Southeast

- In 1900, only three of the states in the SE did not have wild hogs
- By the 1970s, all states in SE had wild hogs
- Recent expansion seen in most states in SE



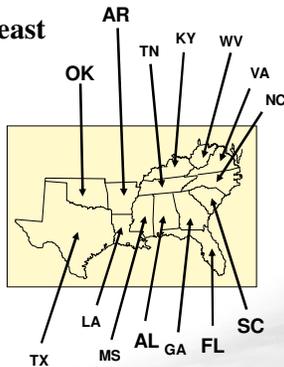
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Wild Hogs - History
History in the Southeast

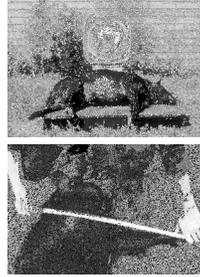
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Between 2000 and 2009, wild hogs were reported in 45 of the 50 states in the USA



Wild Hogs - Ecology
Size, Shape and Color

- Males are larger and heavier than females
- Average adult weights:
 - Males – 200 lbs.
 - Females – 175 lbs.
- Born at <2 pounds
- 30 inches at shoulder
- Total length is 5 to 6 feet

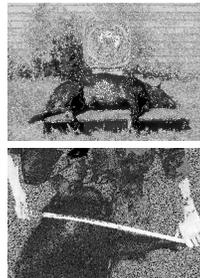


Wild Hogs - Ecology
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Wild Hogs - Ecology
Size, Shape and Color

- Coat coloration is highly variable (e.g., solid, spotted, belted, etc.)
- Most variation is due to the mixed ancestry of these animals (feral hog crossed with wild boar)



Wild Hogs - Ecology
Food Habits/Diet

- Wild pigs are classified as opportunistic omnivores
- “If it has a calorie in it, and they can get their mouth around it, wild pigs will eat it”
- Typical composition of diet:
 - 88% plant matter
 - 10% animal matter
 - 2% fungi
 - <1% misc. (e.g., soil, rocks, sticks, garbage)



Wild Hogs - Ecology
Habitat Requirements

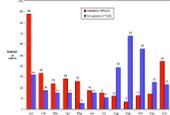
- Adaptable to a wide variety of habitats
- Need year-round access to:
 - Food and water
 - Shade
 - Escape cover
- Recent increase of numbers in urban habitats



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Reproduction

- Very high reproductive potential
- Early sexual maturity (3-6 months of age)
- Large litters
 - Average of 6
 - Maximum of 16
- Breed year-round
- Multiple litters per year



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Social Unit Organization

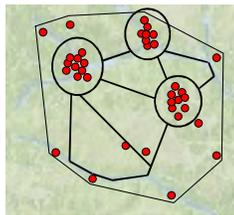
- Basic unit - maternal or family group (i.e., sow with her litter of piglets)
- Mature males solitary
- Multiple family groups of related sows as pigs get close to being weaned
- Large groups (100+ animals) can occur around a localized attraction or resource



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Home Range

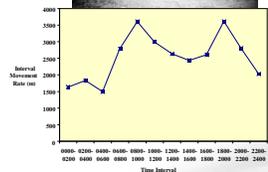
- Exhibit a "home range" behavior
- Average of 4 sq. mi.
- Maximum of 50 sq. mi.
- Varies depending on spatial availability of food, water, shade and escape cover
- Home range composition:
 - Core areas
 - Network of paths



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Daily Activity Pattern

- Difficult to regard them as either diurnal or nocturnal
- Varies by location
- Intense hunting pressure and human activity will drive them to be nocturnal
- Seasonal variation



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Movement Pattern

- Drifting or wandering movement pattern
- Move in relation to supporting resources
- Disturbance will cause them to move
- Capable of long-range movement over the short-term (up to 200 miles)



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Mobility

Wild pigs can:

- Run up to 30 mph
- Jump a 3-ft fence
- Swim across 2 miles of open water
- Turn sharp corners while running
- Ascend very steep inclines
- Jump/climb over 5-6' corral trap walls



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Senses

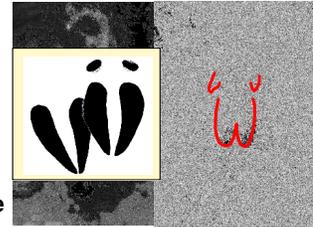


- **Smell - Excellent**
 - 5-7 miles over surface
 - 25 feet below grade
- **Sight - Good**
 - Field of vision is 260 to 275 degrees
 - Some binocular vision
 - "See" threat over 1 mile away
- **Hearing - Fair**
 - Highest role in thick cover
 - Unknown sounds or noise may cause pigs to go into a "freeze" or alert posture
- **"Touch" (Taste)**
 - Done with the mouth
 - "Mouth" objects to evaluate them

Wild Hogs - Ecology

Wild Pig Tracks

- **Typical cloven-hoofed print**
- **Resembles a rounded "W"**
- **Lateral or dewclaw prints often present**
- **Deer tracks – toe print are pointed**



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Wallowing and Rubs

- **Wallow to cool themselves**
- **Can be almost any wet depression**
- **Use rubs for comfort and mud removal**
- **Rubs are not always associated with wallows**



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Nests and Beds

- **Build two types of unique structures:**
 - Farrowing nests
 - Resting or loafing beds
- **Somewhat similar in appearance**
- **Can be simple to very complex**



Wild Hogs - Ecology

Aggressive Behavior

- **Wild pigs can be very aggressive**
- **Typically when cornered or threatened**
- **5-10 people killed annually due to wild pig attacks**
- **Do not "like" dogs**



Wild Hogs – History and Ecology

Questions?

