

# Wild Pig Newsletter

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## Wild Pig Outreach in Action: Landowner Technical Assistance

By: Mark Tyson, M.S.

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” – Benjamin Franklin. Providing landowner technical assistance is just one aspect of our multi-faceted educational outreach approach to abating wild pig damage. These visits, commonly referred to as site visits, provide an opportunity for us to join forces with the local County Extension Agent and provide a property specific recommendation for abating wild pig damage grounded in research-based information and personal experience. These visits also permit for a more hands-on learning approach, which allows land managers to better understand the concepts conveyed.

It is common for our team to receive calls from concerned landowners seeking more information on wild pigs and their management. While practical information can be shared over the phone it is hard to convey in situation specific context.

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# Meet the Wild Pig Team



**Jim Cathey** is an Associate Department Head, Program Leader, Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Jim earned a Bachelor and Master of Science degree in Wildlife Management at Texas A&M University and his Ph.D. from Texas Tech University. He served as a Wildlife Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife at the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area (1997-2002) in eastern Texas before joining Texas AgriLife Extension Service, serving in Uvalde and now in College Station, Texas (2002-present).

**Mark A. Tyson** is an Extension Associate with the Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences Extension Unit of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Mark has a B.S. in Natural Resource Management from Sul Ross State University and a M.S. in Wildlife, Aquatic, and Wildlands Science and Management from Texas Tech University. Prior to working for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, he worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the 32,000 acre Circle Ranch in far west Texas.



**Josh Helcel** is an Extension Associate with the Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences Extension Unit of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Josh has a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Management from Texas A&M University. Prior to working for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, he worked as an interpreter and public hunting coordinator for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

**Kimberly Aston** is an Extension Assistant with the Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences Extension Unit of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Kimberly is a recent graduate from Texas State University with a B.S. in Wildlife Biology. Prior to working as an Extension Assistant, she worked as the Special Projects Intern for the Texas Master Naturalists.





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In a circumstance like this it is much easier for us to say “how about we set up a time to meetup out at your place?” That is exactly what happened one hot summer day, when we teamed up with Brazos County Ag and Natural Resources County Extension Agent Dusty Tittle to visit a ranch in the southern portion of the county. Upon arriving at the ranch we began to visit and learn more about the property. “For as long as I can remember, wild pigs were not truly a problem on our place. We would have the occasional group of pigs pass through and root things up but they never really inflicted major damage” said the landowner.

The drought of 2011 brought a major shift in the density of wild pigs on the property. As we began to tour portions of the ranch, rooting damage was evident across large portions of the open pastures. Additionally the property lied along the banks of the Brazos River, creating a great matrix of wild pig habitat. The landowner recounted “The pigs have completely destroyed my pastures, which severely reduces my capability to maintain them. I have invested large sums of money and time into repairing rooting damage in pastures just to see them damaged again within a few weeks.” Our tour eventually led us back to the headquarters where we began to discuss damage

abatement options based on the distribution of different habitats on the property. After a long discussion about relevant techniques we parted ways with an agreement to keep in touch.

In the preceding months we continued to follow up, answering questions and discussing strategy adjustments as needed. Just over a year has passed since we first started working with the landowner and he could not be happier. “Armed with the technical know how and an increased understanding of wild pigs, I have enacted a management plan on the ranch. To date we have been highly successful and only occasionally see rooting damage” he expressed. “I have learned so much valuable information from the team which will pay dividends well into the future not only from an economic standpoint but also from an ecological one.”

Taking research-based educational resources and guiding land managers in applying them in real world situations is what our team is all about. If you are interested in technical assistance relating to legal damage abatement techniques in Texas (trapping, snaring, shooting and trained dogs) please feel free to contact us: Mark Tyson covers south and south central Texas and can be reached at 979-845-4698, Josh Helcel covers central and north central Texas and can be reached at 512-554-3785.



# Seasonal Spotlight: Spring Wild Pig Management Strategies

By: Josh Helcel, Extension Associate, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Late winter and early spring can be the best time of the year for controlling expanding populations of wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*). And with an estimated 2.6 million now occupying 99% of Texas counties, there is plenty of work to do. Reducing populations of this exotic invasive species can directly translate into improved water quality, agricultural production, native species and habitat. The majority of wild pigs diet is vegetation, and soon longer days and warming temperatures will give way to conditions that can make getting wild pigs on bait more difficult. It's been said that there is no better time than the present, and below are several reasons to consider abatement efforts on your property.

## Low Resource Availability

Late winter and early spring is generally a time of year when resource availability is low, and this can help to make baited traps more appealing. Consider establishing bait sites or using supplemental feed sites as potential trap sites, and use game cameras to identify which sites are attracting the most wild pigs. One option is to then construct a D.I.Y. Game Feeder Corral Trap. It can also be important to not allow wild pigs too many options for accessing

supplemental feed as the goal is to direct the animals to the trap site. Consider deactivating or excluding supplemental feed sites to force the animals to access desired locations.



## Deer Season is Over

Deer season in Texas is kind of a big deal. Landowners rely on the millions of dollars in revenue it generates and the recreational value of hunting is nothing short of time honored tradition. However, lease hunting and deer season in general often mean that abatement efforts including aerial gunning and trapping cease. But late winter and early spring can be a great time for controlling pigs because it falls directly between hunting season and the higher resource availability of spring and early summer; when abundant resources on the landscape can potentially reduce overall success. Now is the time to put to good use all of the leftover supplemental feed from deer season into reducing wild pig numbers.



## Reduced Canopy Cover

Deciduous plants (those that lose their leaves) have long shed their leaves and have yet to produce new spring growth. Late winter and early spring can be a great time of year to use this to your benefit when enacting aerial gunning or strategic shooting efforts. The increased visibility can increase overall success, and can also increase the effectiveness of technologies such as night vision and thermal equipment particularly in heavily wooded areas.

## Conclusion

Spring is fast approaching and the month of March can represent a great opportunity to benefit your property by reducing wild pig numbers. Relatively low resource availability, the end of deer season and reduced canopy cover this month can all translate into wild pig management success. And while successful wild pig abatement can be a challenge, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service remains dedicated to providing the resources, educational outreach and technical assistance to help you reach your management goals.



# Wild Pig Continuing Education Courses Now Available Online

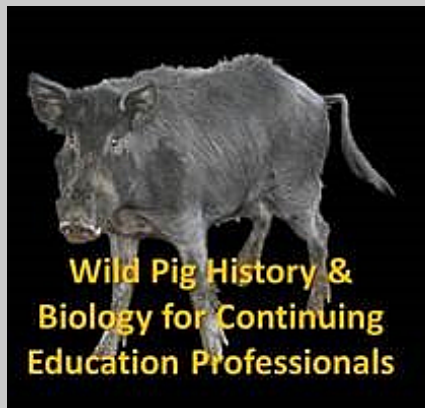
Attending a wild pig workshop is a great way to learn more and the biology and management of this invasive species, however this is not always an option. In an effort to provide this opportunity to anyone at any time, our team has collaborated with members of the Feral Hog Community of Practice to create 3 online distance education courses. Each course is tailored towards a specific audience and contains content from leading experts in their respective fields. The topic areas covered include: History and Biology of Wild Pigs, Damage, Disease, Management Techniques and Laws and Regulations. The course content is laid out in an interactive format that includes graphics, videos and in-depth illustrations.

The first 2 courses are designed to provide continuing education units (CEUs) for both Texas private pesticide applicators and natural resource professionals. An additional course is available for members of the general public seeking to increase their knowledge of wild pigs and their management.

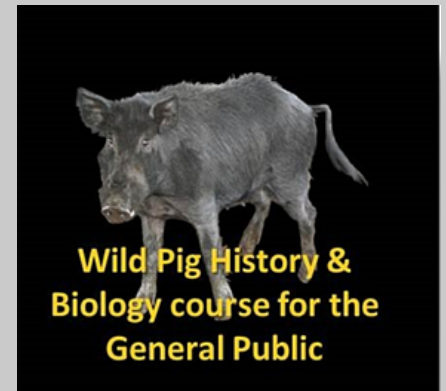
View all courses here:  
<http://bit.ly/1pvEPqK>



**Wild Pig Management for Texas Pesticide Applicators** provides a total of 2 Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) CEUs, 1 in general and 1 in integrated pest management (IPM) and costs \$45.00.



**Understanding Wild Pig History and Biology for Continuing Education Professionals** provides 3 category one contact hours for The Wildlife Society, 2.5 CEUs for The Society of Range Management and 2.5 hours of category two continuing forestry education credits and costs \$70.00.



**Understanding Wild Pig History and Biology for the General Public** is designed for those wanting to increase their knowledge of wild pigs and their management and costs \$20.00.

## What people are saying about the courses...

"The course is available 24/7, so I can work at my own pace!"

"The interactive modules make it easy to stay engaged in the material."

"Great Course! I really enjoyed the variety of speakers and information."

Subscribe to our  
**Newsletter**  
 by emailing  
[Mark.Tyson@tamu.edu](mailto:Mark.Tyson@tamu.edu)

# Landowner Cooperatives:

## Improving Wild Pig Abatement Efforts

By: Mark Tyson, Extension Associate, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Tim Siegmund, Regulatory Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

**A group of focused landowners can accomplish any task set before them.** “Individual commitment to a group effort: that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work” – Vince Lombardi. What better a challenge to undertake than wild pigs? In a previous article, [Do my population reduction efforts even make a difference](#), wild pig management success stories were highlighted to show that wild pig population reduction efforts can make a difference. In this article we would like to propose some ideas on how landowners can team up to tackle the wild pig problem in Texas.

**It is important to know your neighbors.** If you don't, now is a good time to meet them. Landowner cooperatives are easily formed around common goals. If you are experiencing wild pig damage, it is highly likely your neighbor is as well. Failing to collaborate with your neighbors can leave “safe havens” for the pigs, which will lessen the effectiveness of your wild pig management efforts. If you are not able to convince your neighbor to collaborate, refer them to a local natural resource professional such as your county's [TPWD Wildlife Biologist](#) or [County Extension Agent](#). These individuals will be able to explain the implications that wild

pigs have on the landscape and our economy. They will also be able to discuss the questions and concerns your neighbor may have about landowner cooperatives.

**Preparation is often more important than operation.** Planning is the first and most important step in accomplishing a task effectively. Dwight D. Eisenhower knew the importance of planning: “In preparing



for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable”. If it can go wrong, it most likely will, especially when you are working with wild pigs. An in-depth plan will help in overcoming the adversities you will face along the way. Logistics are “the things that must be done to plan and organize a complicated activity or event that involves many people” according to Merriam-Webster. In planning think logistics: acquisition, distribution, maintenance and replacement for both materials and people. Other

factors to consider are: goals, objectives and outcomes, budget, timelines, who is responsible for what, and internal communication. Creating an outline is a great way to keep all your “ducks in a row”. In your outline make sure to outline all essential decisions/activities in a time sequential order from the beginning to the end. Plan to have a plan or plan to miss the mark.

**Creating a budget and meeting the financial needs of the cooperative is a vital portion of the planning process.** “A budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went” – Dave Ramsey. Some disagreements may arise when it comes to finances but these concerns can be addressed in a detailed budget. Having everyone onboard as to how and when supplies are to be paid for can be the

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oil that keeps your cooperative running smoothly.

**Supplement your cooperative's budget through the sale of live wild pigs to [Approved Feral Swine Holding Facilities](#) which are licensed and regulated by the [Texas Animal Health Commission](#).** The publication [Feral Hog Approved Holding Facility Guidelines in Texas](#) provides a more in-depth explanation on holding facilities. These buyers will typically pay between 0.25 and .35 cents per pound for live hogs over seventy pounds. A 200 pound pig sold at .30 cents a pound will bring \$60.00, selling ten pigs of this size can cover the expense to construct a large well-built corral trap.

**Best management practices suggest that corral traps are the way to go and research backs this recommendation.** Williams et al. (2011) found that corral traps exhibited a capture rate >4 times that of box traps during a study conducted on the Fort Benning military installation outside Columbus, GA. The first step in trapping is to train the pigs to your bait site. [Training Wild Pigs to Bait](#) explains this process in great detail. Finally, a trap gate will need to be selected, such as this simple, easy to build [Guillotine Style Drop Gate](#). Saloon doors are another manually operated gate style that performs well. Additionally wireless or remotely operated gates are available from a variety of companies online. The great thing about using corral

traps is that one gate can be shared between multiple traps. This works well for landowner cooperatives looking to share trapping materials. As one trap is set to catch the remaining traps can continue conditioning the pigs to bait. The video [Constructing a corral trap for feral hogs](#) provides a detailed look into the considerations for building a corral trap.

**While corral traps can be a high effective tool, often a combined approach is need to achieve optimal results.** The high capture rates associated with corral traps can help to quickly reduce populations, yet there will always be pigs that show aversion to this technique. Using other techniques such as snaring, shooting and trained dogs will help in capturing weary pigs. Our [Wild Pig Management Video Series](#) provides in-depth information on how to use a variety of abatement techniques.

**Forming a landowner cooperative can be a highly effective technique to manage feral hogs in an area.** The first step is actually taking a step; the wild pig problem in Texas is not going to heal itself. Rely on the experience of your county's TPWD Wildlife Biologist or County Extension Agent to get you

through any challenges your group may face. "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success" – Henry Ford.

## Upcoming Programs

March 29 - Riparian & Stream Ecosystems- Edna, TX

April 4-8 - Ranch Management University- College Station, TX

**Mark Tyson**

Mark.tyson@tamu.edu  
(979) 845-4698

March 9th – Wild Pig Biology, Damage in Watersheds and Control, Burnet, TX

March 15th – Bandera County Wild Pig Workshop, Bandera, TX

**Josh Helcel**

josh.helcel@tamu.edu  
(512) 554-3785

**Tell us how we can help you.**

Educational Programs  
Technical Assistance  
Educational Resources

**The Wild Pig Team recently received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society!**



# what's Trending

**Articles:** available at  
<http://wild-wonderings.blogspot.com/>



## The Best Choice for a Box Trap Gate

highlights research on capture rates of  
side-swing and rooster gates on box traps.  
([click to view](#))



## The Best Choice for a Corral Trap Gate

presents a comparison of typical corral trap  
gates and suggests which style is most  
effective. ([click to view](#))

**Videos:** available at  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/WFSCAgriLife/playlists>



## Fermenting Corn or Grain for Wild Pig Trapping

guides you through the process of souring  
corn for use in wild pig traps.  
([click to view](#))

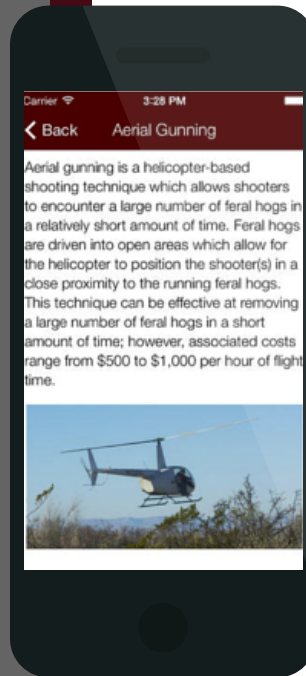


## Corral Trapping Wild Pigs: A Success Story

experience a real world corral trapping effort  
from site selection to sounder capture.  
([click to view](#))

This publication was developed by the Enhancing Feral Hog Management Project, with funding support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source grant administered by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. Additional funding was contributed by the San Antonio River Authority.

There's  
an **APP** for  
THAT!



The Feral Hog Management App is available at the iTunes App store for 0.99 cents and is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod devices. It gathers years of science-based information and field experience from a host of sources into one easy-to-use format right at your fingertips. The app helps

landowners identify, plan, and implement the most effective feral hog management plan for their property. Methods like snare building, strategic shooting, bait recipes, and trap designs are explained through vivid photographs and detailed examples.

Scan the QR code  
to pull up the app!



(Scan or click to view)

