

Wild Pigs in Ontario

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MNRF Proposal

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Wild pigs in Ontario may be controlled from the source. New legislation could be put into place for individuals who own pigs whether large scale agricultural operations, or small hobby farmers. Making all pigs be stamped, marked or branded in the case one is found roaming or dead to identify the farm from which it came. This coupled with legislation of reinforced fencing, or a minimal standard for fencing could be put into place to ensure the pigs cannot leave their enclosure and if they so happen to, an investigation could be conducted to see if these minimal standards were met based on the aforementioned markings. This increase of fencing could have minimum weight bearing, double fencing or electrical fencing to inhibit their movement. If not farmers, or the individual should be subject to a fine of damaging our natural resources and could be incrementally increased based on the number of pigs loose, large scale operation vs small scale operation and the damage to the ecosystem. Managing this could be difficult but for large scale operations there could be quality assurance checks mandatorily done every month to ensure the minimum standards of housing for pigs is kept up to par to minimize their escape. A database could be started, similar to domesticated pets where individuals must register through an MNRF portal on how many pigs they have, the sex of their pigs and if they have incurred any issues with escape. This database could be systematically introduced over the years working with local communities and educating them on environmental protection. Secondly, if there are believed to be isolated populations of pigs in the natural environment, I do not believe opening a season or allowing farmers to mitigate the situation by hunting would be beneficial as evidence suggests the group will separate and begin to breed prolifically due to the hunting pressure (Finzel et al, nd). Instead, a concentrated effort to estimate the population that is loose and effectively try to identify and remove the breeding sows through communication with the farmer whose pigs are lost, and combination with trail cameras to identify individuals. Removal of pigs could be done through trapping, similar to what has been done in the Southern United States with large box traps, or corral traps capable of holding multiple pigs without allowing escape could be placed in areas of expected populations by MNRF researchers or Conservation Officers. These corral traps are highly productive as they do not introduce as much fear into the sounder as would shooting, or other forms of trapping might do. Other efforts such as exclusion fencing around ecologically

significant areas such as wetlands or, other delicate ecosystems could be put into place where suspected populations are. Thus, limiting their destruction on our native species such as waterfowl and their already vulnerable habitat.

References

Finzel J, et al. No Date. *Wild Pigs Management Guidelines*. UC IPM. Ucanr.edu. [accessed 2021 Apr 21]. <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74170.html>