

Negative Impacts of Feral Hogs

Feral Hog Management in the Southeast
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Negative Impacts of Feral Hogs

- Ecological Damage
- Economic Losses
 - Agriculture Damage
 - Livestock Depredation
 - Reforestation Failure
 - Damage in Suburban Communities
- Disease Threats



Photo Credit: Chris Jaworowski in West et al. (2009)
Managing Wild Pigs: A Technical Guide

Ecological Damage

- Impact of Rooting
- Damage to plant & animal communities
- Increase in exotic plants
- Increase in soil erosion
- Decreased water quality
- Affects on other wildlife



Photo Credit: Chris Jaworowski in West et al. (2009)
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Ecological Damage

- Impact of rooting
- Besides man, greatest vertebrate modifier of natural communities



Ecological Damage

- Damage to Native Plant Communities
- Direct & indirect effects
- Rooting, trampling, soil compaction, water infiltration
- Disruption of nutrient cycle
- Effects most pronounced in wetland areas
- Documented declines in NP communities in FL & HI

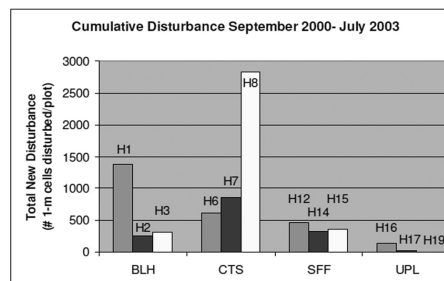
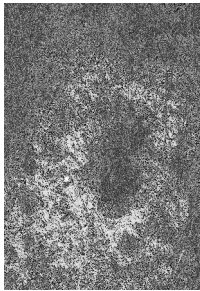


Figure 2-5. Cumulative disturbance per habitat type and plot for the three year study period; mixed bottomland hardwoods (BLH), cypress-tupelo swamp (CTS), seepage floodplain forest (SFF), and upland pine flatwoods (UPL).

Zengal 2008. p. 204. *Wild Pig Habitat Use, Substrate Disturbance, and Understorey Vegetation at the Congaree National Park*, Ph.D. Dissertation.


Ecological Damage

- **Damage to Sensitive Plant & Animal Species**
- Destruction of rare & endangered plant communities in SC Heritage Preserves
- Depredation to threatened loggerhead sea turtle nests on North Island, Winyah Bay, SC
- FL endangered turtles nests destroyed



Ecological Damage

- **Increase in Exotic & Less Desirable Plants**
- Frequent rooting disturbance favors competitive non-native plants
- Out compete native plants



Ecological Damage

- **Increase in Soil Erosion**
- Loss of soil fertility, plant growth, plant diversity
- Effects on water quality from siltation





Photo Credit: Eddie Parham in West et al. (2009) Managing Wild Pigs: A Technical Guide


Ecological Damage

- **Decreased Water Quality**
- Soil runoff & bacterial contamination
- Impacts aquatic flora & fauna
- Freshwater mussels & insects impacted
- Fecal coliforms in some streams exceeds human health standards



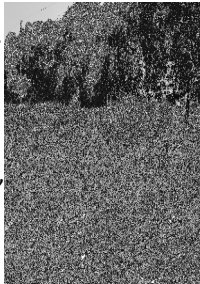
Ecological Damage

- **Effects on Other Wildlife**
- Damage to habitat
- Direct predation
- Significant predators of ground nesting bird nests
- Competition for resources, especially soft & hard mast (fruit)
- Spread of diseases & parasites



Economic Losses

- **Agricultural Damage**
- \$ 1.5 billion lost annually in U.S.
- Consume & trample crops, damage pastures by rooting & digging
- Hay, small grains, corn, peanuts, vegetables, watermelons, soybeans, cotton, tree fruits & others
- Damage to fences, roads, dikes



Economic Losses

- **Livestock Depredation**
- Prey on lambs, goats, newborn cattle, poultry, & exotic game
- Predation on young animals usually occurs on calving or lambing grounds, may be attracted to afterbirth



Pattern of Wild Pig Predation

- Difficult to verify, entire carcass is usually consumed, leaving little evidence.
- Also scavenge carcasses killed by other animals.
- Kill prey by biting & crushing skull or neck; carcass skinned & stomach contents consumed.



Economic Losses

- **Forestry/Reforestation Challenges**
- Regeneration of hardwoods from seed may be difficult
- Hardwood & pine seedlings (especially longleaf) are very susceptible to pig damage through consumption, rooting, & trampling



Photo Credit: Steve Gullledge in West et al. (2009) Managing Wild Pigs: A Technical Guide

Economic Losses

- **Damage in Suburban Communities**
- Yard, landscape & ornamental plant damage
- Garden damage
- Golf course damage



Photo Credit: Billy Higginbotham in West et al. (2009) Managing Wild Pigs: A Technical Guide

Economic Losses

- **Management for Game Species**
- Destruction of wildlife plantings & food plots
- Consumption of corn & other supplemental foods at feeders
- Damage to habitats



Photo Credit: Chris Jaworowski in West et al. (2009) Managing Wild Pigs: A Technical Guide



Disease Threats

- Carry disease that affect humans, livestock, & wildlife
- **Humans** - brucellosis, leptospirosis, salmonellosis, toxoplasmosis, sarcoptic mange, *E. coli*, & trichinosis
- **Livestock & Wildlife** - pseudorabies, swine brucellosis, tuberculosis, vesicular stomatis, & classical swine fever
- Serve as a reservoirs & amplifier for other diseases (e.g. foot & mouth disease)



Positive Impacts of Feral Hogs ?

- Increased hunting opportunities
- Increase revenue from hunts
- Rooting may stimulate production of native plants that require disturbance

