

Okaloosa County News Release

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Wild Hogs Considered Nuisance Wildlife in Northern Okaloosa

Agriculture Agent Jennifer Bearden, along with a representative from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, will host an **informational meeting concerning nuisance wild hogs on May 23**, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the newly constructed, **University of Florida/Okaloosa County Extension office, located at 3098 Airport Road in Crestview**. Wild hogs, also called feral hogs, are not native to the U.S, are highly adaptable and can find suitable habitat easily. They can be all shapes, sizes and colors since they are hybrids of many different breeds. In our area, red, black, white, spotted and striped coats have been seen.

In Florida, wild hogs may be hunted year round on private land (with permission of the landowner) and at night with no permit required. Hogs may also be trapped year round, but this requires individuals to register with Florida Department of Agriculture as a Feral Swine Dealer. **Wild hogs cannot be trapped and released onto public land**. Trapped wild hogs can be transported to slaughter, to private lands or to an approved Feral Swine Holding Facility.

The most effective way to remove wild hogs from a location is a combination of trapping and shooting. Hogs are smart creatures and will learn from the mistakes of other hogs. We recommend setting a large enough trap to hold all wild hogs in a given sounder. Wild hog females and young live and travel in groups called sounders, which typically have 1 to 3 adults and several young. We also recommend leaving the trap unset with bait in it for several days until the whole sounder enters the trap. Once the whole sounder enters, you can set the trap gate. **If you miss just one hog, she will remember the trap and not enter it again.**

Wild hogs pose a health risk to humans because they can carry numerous diseases and parasites. Diseases of concern to humans are brucellosis, leptospirosis, salmonellosis, toxoplasmosis, sarcoptic mange, *E. coli*, and trichinosis. **Care should be taken when handling wild hogs**. Wear gloves, cover any open wounds, and wear clothing that can be cleaned thoroughly.

The impact of wild hogs on the environment is soil erosion, decreased water quality, spread of other invasive plants, damage to agricultural crops, and damage to native plants and animals. They have been documented as threats to threatened and endangered species. They can significantly impact populations of reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, ground nesting birds and even deer. For more information on Wild Hogs, go to: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw322> and <http://www.myfwc.com/hunting/by-species/wild-hog/> or contact Okaloosa County, University of Florida Extension 850-689-5850.

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