

Effects Of Invasive Wild Pig Species In Kentucky

By: Adley Cunningham

Invasive wild pigs are all a hybrid breed with differentiating features, but all have the same destructive manors. Some may argue invasive wild pig species are a relief of hunting pressure for many game species, and can have positive effects on different plant species. However, this can be true, these invasive wild pigs have detrimental effects on the economy, native plant and animal populations, and habitat loss.

Economic Losses

Firstly, invasive wild pigs vastly affect the annual income of farmers, which then goes to negatively affect the economy overall. Invasive wild pigs are very destructful, hence they demolish everything in their path in multiple ways. According to [Farming and Farm Income United States Department of Agriculture](#), the agricultural industry is one of the most impactful industries economically with an global average net farm income yearly of 183 billion dollars and an average net farm income yearly of 9.92 billion dollars in Kentucky. These wild pigs cause extensive damage to agricultural crops, food plots, and hayfields. Wild pigs are able to destroy acres of fields overnight in multiple ways such as eating the crops, rooting, and transmitting different diseases. The most destructive way the wild pigs are destroying fields is by something called rooting. Rooting is when wild pigs are searching for food by wallowing and rolling around to completely flip the sod or pasture to expose the tender roots of plants, grubs and invertebrates. This action completely destroys the field making it more difficult to grow plants in that area or completely destroying the existing crops. By these wild pigs population growing more and more farmers fields are being rooted, which then affects their product yield vastly. These yield decreases can negatively affect a farmers income by thousands of dollars. This decrease in income can be detrimental to many farmers and will continue to get worse if these invasive wild pigs are not extracted.

Effect On Existing Animals

Secondly, invasive wild pigs have a huge negative impact on the existing wildlife. These wild pigs are openly in competition for resources with the existing wildlife, transmit diseases, and are aggressive towards other animals. All of these contribute to the displacement and death of many different species of animals from their natural habitat. Wild pigs are one of the only species of animals that truly will eat almost anything, so this leads to these pigs consuming everything in their path. Leading to the other wild animals having to compete for food, which either leads to starvation or that animal abandoning their habitat away from these pigs for more resources. These pigs also actively hunt and consume many of these animals, and if the pig population continues to grow the existing wildlife could become heavily endangered. According to [Wild Pigs - UC IPM UC IPM](#), animals abandoning their natural habitat and moving to new territories leads to more and more food chains being affected. The moving animals can either be very helpful or very harmful to their new habitats. Some species of animals, such as deer

and turkey, will immediately leave at the first sign of these wild pigs, since they are not able to compete with the pigs. As a deer and turkey hunter myself, it is very frustrating to put in so much work to have a successful hunting season and then not see very much game. If this wild pig population continues to grow there will eventually be no place in Kentucky for other hunters, as well as myself, to have a successful harvest.

Habitat Loss

Some may argue that invasive wild pigs are a big relief on hunting pressure for many game species, and can have a positive effect on different plant species. Though this is somewhat true, invasive wild pigs are continuing to be a major contributing factor to habitat loss and hunting these pigs is highly ineffective and discouraged. [//fw.ky.gov/InvasiveSpecies](http://fw.ky.gov/InvasiveSpecies) explains how wild pigs are able to destroy forests, wetlands, and overall any ecosystem. Wild pigs are destroying forests by uprooting tree saplings, consuming acorns, and completely rooting up plants. By destroying these woodland habitats many of the native plant and animal species are forced to move or they are destroyed with the habitat. Wild pigs destroy wetlands by disrupting the water quality through wallowing, rooting, and fecal decomposition. These changes in water create unfavorable or even unlivable conditions for many aquatic species. Overall wild pigs behavior in general disrupts and destroys the native habitats. Hunting is discouraged with these wild pig species due to pigs being able to have 2 litters a year with around 7-8 pigs per litter. These wild pigs having such a large litter so often makes wild pigs populations able to increase very rapidly. Also these wild pigs are very smart and can recognize disturbances associated with humans and will shift their movement and activity patterns to avoid the disturbances. This cycle will continue to worsen, so the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources encourages trapping and properly removing the invasive wild pigs, and highly discourages hunting the wild pigs.

These invasive wild pigs will continue to worsen the economy, habitats, and other animal species if their population continues to grow. Whether or not these invasive wild pigs are not directly affecting you now, if nothing is done it will eventually negatively affect everyone in multiple ways. By simply helping get these invasive pigs out of Kentucky everyone and everything will benefit.