

Feral Swine

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Ad Hoc Feral Swine Committee 2014 Annual Report

Meeting Time and Place –

January 26, 2014
1:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center, Kansas City, MO

Attendance –

Nine Midwest member states were represented including eight of the appointed FSC representatives. Doug Dufford (IL); Steve Backs (IN); Bill Bunger (IA); Shane Hesting (KS); Chad Soard (KY); Shannon Hanna (MI); Sam Wilson (NE); Carolyn Caldwell (OH); James Dixon (represented vacant MO seat)

Number of attendees representing each Midwest member state agency: Colorado (0), Illinois (2), Indiana (2), Iowa (3), Kansas (1), Kentucky (1), Michigan (2), Minnesota (0), Missouri (24), Nebraska (1), North Dakota (0), Ohio (1), South Dakota (0), and Wisconsin (0), and the provinces of Manitoba (0), Saskatchewan (0) and Ontario (0).

See Appendix A for attendance list

Executive Summary –

This was the first face-to-face meeting of the MAFWA Ad Hoc Feral Swine Committee (FSC). The success of this meeting was multiplied by being held in conjunction with the Feral Swine in the Midwest: Problems & Solutions Workshop at the 74th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference and sponsored by the north central section of The Wildlife Society. FSC representatives participated in presentations and discussions throughout the day which canvassed the feral swine issue in the Midwest and primed the FSC for priorities to address in working toward our charges. The opportunity to discuss feral swine in the company of many professionals from numerous state and federal agencies, academia, and private contractors working on this issue undoubtedly improved the scope and content of the meeting beyond what the FSC could have accomplished alone.

See Appendix B for the meeting agenda (workshop and FSC meeting)

Director Action Items –

- The FSC drafted a 2014 State Summary Report compiling feral swine regulatory and management information from the MAFWA FSC member states and presents key findings and recommendations. This draft report is presented for Director consideration to adopt as a formal MAFWA document for public dissemination.

Director Information Items –

- See Appendix C for a report on the Feral Swine in the Midwest: Problems & Solutions Workshop containing summations on the presentations and discussions of the day.
- The SEAFWA Wild Hog Working Group (WHWG) has produced an Annual State Summary Report in 2012 and updated in 2014 that together with the FSC drafted 2014 State Summary Report represent a summation of regulatory and management information for a considerable portion of the feral swine infested states across the United States. Regard for the perspectives and recommendations of this resource are advised.
- The FSC endorsed a letter of intent for a proposed research project titled “A nationwide survey of knowledge, costs, and impacts of feral swine (*Sus scrofa*) and their management” that was submitted for consideration in the 2015 Multistate Conservation Grant Program. This important project seeks to quantify the economic impacts of feral swine, and the public’s knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding management strategies, including control schemes and regulatory frameworks, which may be used to effectively control feral swine populations. This information is critical to understand public support for, or opposition to various management strategies and may serve as documentation needed to address political issues, and garner future funding. The FSC endorsement accompanies others from the SEAFWA Directors, Wildlife Resource Committee, and Wild Hog Working Group.
- USDA APHIS has begun implementation of their recently announced APHIS National Feral Swine Damage Management Program. APHIS will serve as the lead federal agency in a cooperative effort with other federal, state, tribal, and local entities that share a common interest in reducing or eliminating problems caused by feral swine. The stated goal of this program is to reduce damage and risk to agriculture, natural resources, property, animal health, and human health and safety in the United States by reducing or eliminating feral swine populations, in cooperation with states, tribes, other federal agencies, organizations, and others. Notably, MAFWA encouraged a funded and comprehensive feral swine program in a July 2010 letter to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry; the fruits of these former labors are being realized. The FSC recommends that Midwest states partner, and support to their utmost ability, the APHIS National Feral Swine Damage Management Program. Additionally, MAFWA should recurrently promote to Congress this well-conceived APHIS program as a long-term federal budget priority in support of lasting eradications and meaningful reductions of invasive swine.

Time and Place of Next Meeting -

To be determined by the needs of the membership; attempts to conference electronically are prioritized as possible.

Respectfully submitted by Chad Soard, Chair; May 22, 2014

Appendices –

Appendix A: 2014 Meeting Attendance List

First Name	Last Name	Company
Steve	Backs	Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife
Scott	Beckerman	USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
Leon	Borges	MO Department of Conservation
Matt	Bowyer	Missouri Department of Conservation
Edward	Brown	Missouri Department of Conservation
William	Bunger	Iowa DNR
Debra	Burns	Missouri Department of Conservation
Bryan	Byrd	Missouri Department of Conservation
Carolyn	Caldwell	ODNR - Division of Wildlife
Bryan	Cobban	USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
Kendall	Coleman	Missouri Department of Conservation
Shane	Creasy	Mo Dept. Of Conservation
Joe	DeBold	Missouri Department of Conservation
Jeff	Demand	Missouri Department of Conservation
Rod	Doolen	Missouri Department of Conservation
Frank	Drummond	MDC
Doug	Dufford	Illinois Dept of Natural Resources
Dwayne	Etter	Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Elmer	Finck	Fort Hays State Univeristy
Joshua	Gaskamp	Noble Foundation
Cynthia	Green	Missouri Department of Conservation
Shannon	Hanna	Michigan DNR - Wildlife
Erin	Harper	Illinois Natural History Survey
Pete	Hildreth	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Matt	Hill	Missouri Department of Conservation
David	Hoover	MO. Dept. of Conservation
Mike	Jones	MO Department of Conservation
Gabriel	Karns	Ohio State University
Paul	Keenlance	Grand Valley State University
Kyle	Lairmore	Missouri Department of Conservation
Alan	Leary	Missouri Department of Conservation
Dan	McMurtry	USDA Wildlife Services
Jayne	Meinhard	Lake Superior State University
William	Moseley	Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation
Dale	Nolte	USDA, APHIS, WS, NWRC
Matt	Olson	Missouri Department of Conservation
Denise	Otto	Missouri Department of Conservation

Tyler	Pittman	Arkansas Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit
Gary	Potts	IL Dept. of Natural Resources
Alex	Prentice	Missouri Department of Conservation
Garret	Price	Lake Superior State University
Mark	Reiter	Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife
Chad	Richardson	USDA Nebraska Wildlife Services
Larry	Rieken	Missouri Dept. of Conservation
Josh	Rusk	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Curran	Salter	USDA/APHIS/WS
John	Schulz	Univ. Missouri
Phil	Seng	DJ Case & Associates
Jerry	Severson	La Crosse County
Susan	Severson	Retired
Steven	Smith	Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation
Chad	Soard	Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources
Scott	Sudkamp	Missouri Dept. of Conservation
Tim	Turpin	Missouri State Parks
Rod	Vaughn	Missouri Department of Conservation
Darrin	Welchert	US Fish&Wildlife Service, Squaw Creek NWR
Timothy	White	USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
Brad	Wilson	USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
Sam	Wilson	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Allison	Zach	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
60 registered attendees above and 20+ additional walk-ins counted		

Appendix B: 2014 Meeting Agenda

MAFWA Ad Hoc Feral Swine Committee (FSC)

January 26, 2014 Meeting Agenda

Sheraton Kansas City Hotel A Crown Center

2345 McGee St.

Kansas City, MO 64108

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm - Workshop: Feral Swine in the Midwest: Problems and Solutions (registered workshop attendees and FSC member states)

- State Reports, State/Federal Agency Collaboration, Genetics, Disease, Toxicants, Current Laws, Eradication Techniques, Media communication, Effective Problem Solving

Break

5:15 pm – 6:30 pm – MAFWA FSC planning meeting (FSC member states only)

- Discuss draft organizational guidelines and initial report (due May 22nd, 2014)
- Discuss MAFWA state questionnaire
- Discuss FSC charges and plan actions to address
 - Review SEAFWA draft “Critical Analysis Document”
 - Review SEAFWA recommended legislation
- Discuss workshop topics and prioritize management recommendations
- Discuss next meeting

Adjourn

Workshop: Feral Swine in the Midwest: Problems & Solutions

January 26, 2014 Meeting Summary Report

74th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference

Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center

2345 McGee St.

Kansas City, MO 64108

Report by the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Feral Swine Ad Hoc Committee

Date: February 21, 2014

Submitted to: Ollie Torgerson, Executive Secretary, MAFWA

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm - Workshop: Feral Swine in the Midwest: Problems and Solutions (60+ registered and approximately 80 total workshop attendees including MAFWA FSC representatives)

Workshop Organizer & Moderator – Gary E. Potts, Vice President, The Wildlife Society and IL DNR

Workshop Sponsor – North Central Section of The Wildlife Society

- **Welcome** – Dr. Rochelle Renken (MO Dept. of Conservation), President, North Central Section of The Wildlife Society
- **Introduction & Position Statements from Professional Organizations** – Gary Potts, IL DNR
 - Discussed steps leading to the drafting of the TWS feral swine position statement, also introduced the NWF and MAFWA resolutions regarding feral swine. Provided context on the Midwest feral swine issue and how the aforementioned documents ultimately laid the foundation for the formation of the MAFWA Feral Swine Ad Hoc Committee and the subsequent organization of this workshop.
- **State Reports** from Steve Backs, IN; Chad Soard, KY; James Dixon, MO; Brad Wilson, IL
 - Each of these states has relatively small, isolated populations, chiefly the result of illegal releases. Proactive control efforts utilizing a variety of methods adaptively are finding success when resources and manpower can be committed in an organized manner. All states presented a central theme that feral swine hunting is wholly ineffective for control, rather it has promoted the spread and maintenance of feral swine populations; especially hindering and contributing to the issue are

hog doggers. Jurisdictional issues confound the issue in states like MO where regulatory authority falls largely to the state agriculture department allowing a largely “anything goes” hunting culture (i.e. day, night, dogs, no weapon restrictions) to grow around feral swine without significant DNR authority to regulate, enforce, etc.

- **Kansas’ Success in Managing Feral Swine** – Curran Salter, USDA WS
 - Similar to other Midwest states, Kansas had relatively small, isolated populations of feral swine in various regions of their state. Kansas took a proactive strategy in 2006 to eradicate feral swine from their state by prohibiting the import, transport, possession, release, and hunting of feral swine; landowners are importantly permitted to conduct damage control on their own land (Ag jurisdiction in KS rather than wildlife/DNR). Kansas Department of Agriculture has contracted with USDA WS in the years following to provide feral swine control through landowner cooperative sought out and maintained by USDA WS. This eradication approach of centrally organized and consistent control (aerial gunning, trapping, shooting) in the absence of incentives to have a feral swine presence for hunting has resulted in numerous population eradications. The Kansas model was strongly promoted to Midwest states and Nebraska also employs such a management strategy with equal success. A flaw mentioned was the laws are civil rather than criminal so lack enforcement teeth; at least one remaining KS population occurs on and around land of a landowner who hunts and replenishes stock regularly.

- **State/Federal Agency Collaboration** – Gary Potts, IL DNR & Scott Beckerman, USDA WS
 - Touted the positive impacts the combined efforts of agency collaboration have netted IL in addressing the feral swine issue. Additionally promoted the inclusion of numerous other partners (sporting and agriculture organizations, etc) in supporting their efforts and in receiving supplementary funds to build traps, etc.

- **Genetic Study of Feral Swine** – Tim White, USDA WS [& Blake McCann, NPS(not present)]
 - Presented results of some genetic analysis of IL feral swine compared to a national database of swine genetic markers attempting to reveal connections between disjunct populations or multiple origins for single populations. Genetic information was compared to local lore of population origins for corroboration. Similar genetic work could support law enforcement cases relating to illegal possession and releases.

- **APHIS National Feral Swine Damage Management Program** – Dr. Dale Nolte, USDA WS
 - The recent President’s budget has included funding for this program, however, this does not 100% confirm this program will happen. The federal EIS process for NEPA compliance is still advancing and plans for implementing the proposed project are continuing. Take-away is that things remain to look very positive for the advancement of the national program. A pilot of the larger proposed program was initiated in New Mexico last year and results are positive. Also stressed that the program recognizes the numerous strong USDA WS/state agency partnerships already existing and would not strip these away, rather its intent would be to bolster such work. Major goals of the proposed national program are to eliminate feral swine from targeted states and stabilize the increase of feral swine damage by 2024. 39 states now recognize feral swine populations, formerly it was 38, but very recently Maine has confirmed.

- **Diseases: Real Concerns & Hot Button Issues** – Tim White, USDA WS
 - Discussed swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, and some foreign animal diseases (classical swine fever, foot & mouth, hog cholera, etc) that USDA has sampled and tested for in recent years. Presented symptoms and discussed susceptibility of humans, pets, livestock, and wildlife, to many of the diseases feral swine may vector. Stressed that feral swine health is not an independent function, but rather operate within a “one health” system of shared susceptibility to various maladies.

- **Research on Toxicants** – Dr. Kurt VerCauteren, USDA NWRC
 - Presented on the status and progress of feral swine toxicant work the USDA NWRC is collaborating with TX Parks & Wildlife on. Indicated that though Australian research has been ongoing for years now, in the US we are at ground zero, but have a promising active ingredient of sodium nitrite. Issues to be worked out are stable encapsulization and avoiding pig detection, field delivery avoiding non-targets (hoghopper may work well), and unavoidable timeline of EPA registration. At earliest we are 3 years out from a marketed toxicant, but captive trials are ongoing in TX.

- **Media Communication and Glorification of Feral Swine** – Phil Seng, DJ Case & Associates
 - Discussed strategic outreach or marketing in natural resource management issues. Promoted research on identifying messages and how to best communicate these to the public to affect a desired outcome. Provided a case study on a now couple decade old campaign conducted in IL to increase interest in and public acceptance of fur trapping. Promoted that a similar approach could benefit feral swine management with the present overwhelming media glorification of feral swine

hunting as enjoyable, but also “helping” to control. Argued that a calculated outreach approach targeting all stakeholders, namely the hunting public so as not increase tensions over solving pig issues by leaving this primary constituency of ours behind, could make significant strides in outreach on the reality of the swine problem, that is, hunting them.

- **Effective Problem-Solving Strategies** – John Schulz, Univ. of MO
 - Encouraged critical thought on the feral swine issue in ways outside of our comfort zone, or the status quo of what’s worked in the past. Stressed the importance of maintaining adaptivity in approaching problems and striving for inclusion of all stakeholders in finding solutions. Top-down approaches of government telling locals what to do often meet immediate undermining tension, and moreover each situation is unique so resist the urge to readily apply one solution over and over.

- **Feral Swine Ad Hoc Committee, MAFWA** – Chad Soard, KDFWR
 - Reiterated the steps that had lead to the creation of the feral swine committee, largely presented in Gary Potts’ Introduction, including position statements and resolutions identifying feral swine as a conservation concern by TWS, NWF, and MAFWA; also indicated the shortly preceding creation of a SEAFWA Wild Hog Working Group lending credence to the organization of this sister MAFWA committee. Presented the mission and charges of the feral swine committee and mentioned progress made toward a MAFWA state feral swine questionnaire that will pair with a similar document produced by the SEAFWA group. Concluded with statements promoting the interest of the feral swine committee to promote science-based management and policy regarding feral swine with a strong focus understanding the human dimensions of public support for feral swine management. Numerous MAFWA and SEAFWA states are recognizing we’re putting the cart before the horse when our science-based control strategies are contending with a culture glorifying pig hunting. It’s widely recognized that stemming the spread and preservation of feral swine for sport hunting opportunity must ultimately arise through an overwhelming public disinterest in hunting them. Yet, present outreach continues to focus on the symptoms of pig presence rather than the cause.

- **Current Laws in the Midwest States** – Moderated group discussion
 - Present states (KY, IN, IL, MI, MO, OH, NE, KS) discussed their current laws regarding feral swine, highlighting pros and cons. Diversity may best describe the group with jurisdictional variation between state agriculture or wildlife/natural resource departments having primary authority and complete prohibitions on feral swine hunting and possession (KS, NE), to nearly limitless take opportunity for

pigs (MO, IN), and take opportunity for other states falling in between; possession and movement is largely prohibited by all states, but in some cases can occur for fenced enclosures. Sport hunting for feral swine is agreed to be an undermining influence incentivizing feral swine presence and preservation, yet, with feral swine now present in many of our states the challenge to eliminate hunting them may be a tall order if hunters, business interest, or policy makers oppose; or if state agencies cannot fund control/eradication efforts in the absence of hunter take opportunity. The group agreed that at a minimum prohibiting the take of feral swine with dogs would have significant benefit as hog doggers have the most vested interests in the sports preservation and spread. MI, IN, and IL are presently working through regulatory amendments to strengthen feral swine possession or take rules, or in MI's case working through legal challenges to new possession laws that will potentially provide important legal precedent on prohibiting feral swine/wild boar possession. IN has proposed "aiding and abetting" language in their laws regarding illegal feral swine acts and the group supports this as feral swine outlaws rarely act alone. The group further agreed that felony consequences for illegal release are a necessary and justified deterrent.

- **Control and Eradication Techniques** – Moderated group discussion
 - Discussion touted the hindering influence of pig hunting when attempting to implement other forms of control; corral trapping in particular is a process and groups of pigs being conditioned to a trap site can be suddenly scattered when shots are taken at the sounder or they are pursued by dogs. Professional aerial shooting was touted by states that have utilized it (KS, NE, MO, KY), and IL will be implementing this management tool in the near future. Centrally-organized and consistent implementation of any control method are agreed to achieve far greater success than unorganized publically-implemented control. Organizing landowner cooperatives and providing leadership in implementing adaptive science-based management actions across entire local populations of feral swine have resulted in eradications in KS, NE, and KY. It must be recognized that the provision of central leadership and consistent control across property boundaries regardless of landowner ability or interest in financial contribution is essential to success. It was pointed out that even in situations of technical guidance or the provision of opportunistic control assistance for a landowner, we the professionals often have to take a "hand holding" approach and actively run a trap, etc, to ensure the work is effective due to reasons including waning landowner interest or ability, or being absentee to the property. Corral trapping remains the recommended method of control to DIY landowners and hunters, and KS stated wide "Jager Pro" style gates are proving benefit over narrow gates, also remote manual triggering is very beneficial in catching the whole sounder. KY reported that budget-friendly gateless or minnow trap style corrals are working well to

capture pigs without a “capture event” of clanging metal; the absence of a threshold pigs have to step over may also be a benefit. Remaining members of sounders are returning on subsequent nights and being caught, seemingly not deterred that other members of their sounder were taken there formerly as has been observed with gated traps. “Drones” (a.k.a. unmanned aerial vehicles) were discussed given recent advances in this technology. No one is presently utilizing these, but KY is in consultation with a hobbyist to research how drones can assist feral swine management. Expected benefits include day or night (using FLIR) property scouting, or used in concert with night shooting activities to relocate sounders that may have been dispersed by initial shots. MO provided an in depth discussion on their experience with “Judas” pigs, or VHF tagged swine released to lead you to more pigs. Ear transmitters were preferred to neck or harnessed transmitters. Parturition inducing / estrous synchronizing drugs like Lutalyse can be used to cause abortion in sows before releasing with the transmitter, giving a 4 month window that she should at least not add to the population. MO’s success with the “Judas” pig has varied, some pigs group up with others and some do not find others; used in concert with planes/helicopters relocating “Judas” pigs and new groups has increased success.

5:15 pm – 6:30 pm – MAFWA FSC planning meeting (FSC member states only)

In attendance: Doug Dufford, IL; Steve Backs, IN; Bill Bunger, IA; Shane Hesting, KS; Chad Soard, KY; Shannon Hanna, MI; Sam Wilson, NE; Carolyn Caldwell, OH

- Discuss draft organizational guidelines and initial report (due May 22nd, 2014)
 - Draft organization guidelines remain as approved by FSC in November 2013 and will be submitted for MAFWA Director approval in May. Our initial report due to the MAFWA Directors will summarize accomplishments of the FSC through May 2014 and include our state questionnaire (in progress).
- Discuss MAFWA state questionnaire
 - Discussed our MAFWA questionnaire in the context of the SEAFWA Wild Hog Working Group State Summary and the MAFWA FSC elected to summarize our information in chart formats as possible with more detailed responses provided in appendices when appropriate.
- Discuss FSC charges and plan actions to address
 - Reviewed SEAFWA draft “Toolkit for Reducing the Spread of Wild Hogs in States with Small or Non-existent Populations” and reviewed SEAFWA recommended wild hog legislation.
 - Elected to make comparable recommendations based on conclusions we reach in our committee’s work to include in our reporting.

- Set a final reporting goal for the 2015 MAFWA Directors meeting.

Adjourned