



FERAL SWINE IN GEORGIA

BIOLOGY OF FERAL SWINE

Habitat

Feral swine are highly adaptable and inhabit woodlands, croplands, and many other habitats with a food and water source.

Diet

Feral Swine are opportunistic omnivores; they will consume most anything from mast crops (acorns and fruit) and agricultural crops to grub worms and carrion (dead animals). Though not normally considered predators, they will opportunistically consume deer fawns, eggs of ground nesting birds, young sea turtles, roots and tubers, grass, and herbaceous plants.

High Reproductive Potential

Feral swine have short reproductive cycles and large litter sizes. Feral swine have a gestation period of about 112-115 days. Generally, reproduction begins around 10-11 months for sows but males can be reproductively active at five to seven months. The average litter frequency is three litters in a two year span. Litter size can vary but an average of four to six piglets per litter is most common.

Mortality Rates

Groups of feral swine traveling together are called sounders which consist of two or more related adult females and their offspring. Group behavior characteristics is considered to be a contributing factor to the low mortality rates of feral swine. Other than humans through hunting, trapping, and automobile collisions, adult feral swine don't have a true predator.



In Georgia, a "feral hog" is defined in the state code (O.C.G.A. §27-1-2. Definitions) as "any hog which has lived any part of its life in a wild, free-ranging state and is currently in such state or has been taken."

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Hunting

Feral swine may be hunted year-round on private land with no bag limits. Hunters must have written permission from the landowner to hunt on private land. Feral swine can also be hunted on federal and state Wildlife Management Areas during open season for game species with weapons legally allowed during that specific season. It is illegal to hunt feral swine on public land at night. It is illegal to trap feral swine on public land.

Transport

It is illegal to transport feral swine without a permit. Permits must be obtained prior to transport from the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Feral swine can be transported to one of three places: 1) A licensed and inspected Feral Hog Holding Facility; 2) An approved and inspected Georgia Department of Agriculture slaughter facility; or 3) a personal location for slaughter.

Slaughter

Feral swine processing facilities can be located on the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resource Division webpage. Live feral swine taken to a licensed and inspected processing facility must pass a pre- and post- death inspection if the processed product is to be sold, donated, or given away. If dead feral swine are taken to a licensed and inspected processing facility, the processed product must be marked **NOT FOR SALE** and can only be used for the owner's consumption.

Release

It is illegal to release any trapped or transported live feral swine into any area that is not fenced to prevent escape of such feral swine. Any persons convicted of the release of live feral swine in violation of established laws and regulations may be subject to revocation of hunting privileges for up to three years.

GEORGIA CODE

Title 2 and Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated are most relevant to feral swine. The rules that govern feral swine are published by the Georgia Department of Agriculture in GDA Rule 40-13-15. Please refer to these statutes and governing rules for more information.

