

Michigan wants hunters to shoot feral pigs

Feral pigs have become such a problem in Michigan that the state Department of Natural Resources has asked deer hunters in 51 counties to shoot any they see.

Joe Houser told The Detroit News he shot a 300-pound wild sow during a hunting trip in Hillsdale County on the state's southern border. He said he had to run away when a wild pig chased him five years ago.

"I know it sounds bad -- I'm 25 -- but I won't walk out in the dark because of the pigs," Houser said. "I'm afraid I'm going to walk up on one in the dark. You just never know."

In addition to chasing hunters, wildlife experts say the feral pigs trample and eat wild plants and crops and, as true omnivores, eat wild animals. Agricultural officials worry feral pigs may spread disease to domestic hogs.

No one is sure where the feral pigs come from. They are believed to be fugitives from farms and from private hunting operations that import boar.

What experts do know is that in the wild the pigs are prolific breeders.

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