

Ministry of Natural Resources

2024 Annual report on invasive wild pig sightings

This annual report summarizes wild pig sightings and associated site visits in Ontario between January 1 and December 31, 2024.

In Ontario, a wild pig is defined as any pig outside of a fence that is not contained or under the physical control of a person. It includes all free roaming pigs: domesticated and pot-bellied pigs, Eurasian wild boar, and hybrids.

Reporting Changes

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has changed the annual reporting period and how wild pig sightings are summarized to align with the recently released [Canadian Invasive Wild Pig Report](#). Sightings are now summarized by calendar year (January 1 to December 31) rather than by fiscal year (April 1 to March 31), as used in previous annual sighting reports. As a result of this change, this summary for 2024 includes some data previously reported in the 2023 annual report. Also, summaries are now based on the date the wild pig was sighted rather than the date the sighting was reported. Therefore, yearly summary numbers may

change over time as more reports come in, since reports are not always received in the same year pigs are sighted.

While evidence suggests that wild pig populations are not established in Ontario, research shows that a proactive approach to managing this invasive species is most successful. Therefore, the MNR continues to collect and follow up on wild pig sightings in the province.

Reports and follow-up

The MNR receives reports of wild pigs from the public by email wildpigs@ontario.ca, phone line (1-833-933-2355), www.inaturalist.ca, and partners. MNR staff follow up on all reports received by communicating with the reporter. For priority cases, the ministry conducts in-person investigations, follows up remotely with municipalities, local businesses, and residents or uses a combination of these methods. Case prioritization depends on a number of factors, including: the reporter's confidence in having observed a wild pig (e.g., photo evidence), number of reports in an area, number of animals present, if

animals were seen with young, length of time animals were known to have been on the landscape, and degree of risk of pigs breeding in the wild, or being a threat to property, livestock, or human safety.

Prior [research](#) in the province revealed that wild pigs are not moving into Ontario from neighbouring jurisdictions; rather, most sightings originate from pigs that have escaped from captivity; current year data continues to support this observation.

Wild pig reports

Wild pig sightings are sorted into four categories: domesticated pigs, pot-bellied pigs, Eurasian wild boar, and unknown (when the pig type cannot be verified with a photo or is unclear).

Sightings between January 1 and December 31, 2024, showed 28% of reports received were of unknown pig type, domesticated pigs made up 39% and pot-bellied pigs 32% of the total sightings while only 1% of sightings were of Eurasian wild boar (Figure 1). These pigs are often determined to be escapees from enclosures or containment.

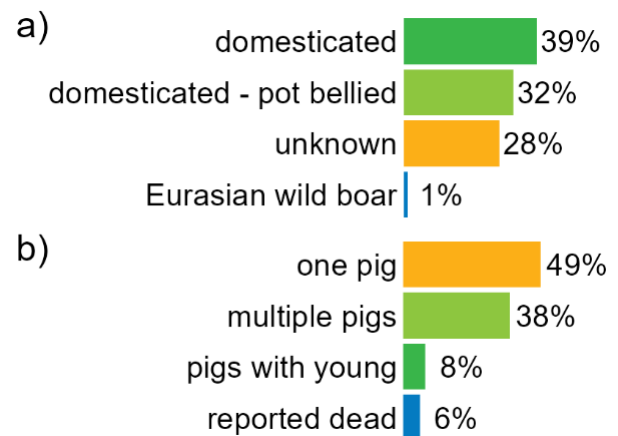


Figure 1. Types (a) and number (b) of wild pigs reported to the Ministry between January 1 and December 31, 2024.

One sighting of Eurasian wild boar was confirmed during this period, resulting in the removal of two pigs from the wild in eastern Ontario. Eurasian wild boar sightings have declined since their phase out was initiated in Ontario in 2022 (Figure 2).

Most of the wild pigs reported have been lone animals (49%) or multiple animals with no young (38%), and some wild pigs were found dead, then reported (6%). Only 8% of the reports were in the highest risk category of multiple pigs with young (Figure 1), though none of these reports appeared to be established groups breeding in the wild.

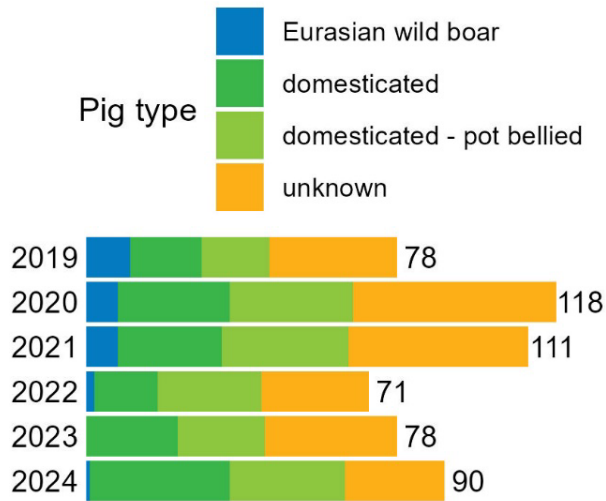


Figure 2. Pig types reported to the MNR over time by reporting year, 2019–2024. Numbers at end of bars represent total number of unique moderate or high confidence sightings of wild pigs each reporting year. Pig(s) observed over multiple years are counted once per calendar year.

Between January 1 and December 31, 2024, site visits were conducted at 20 unique locations (Figure 3).

All high priority reports were followed up on in the field. In some cases, low priority reports were not investigated in the field. This occurred when the pigs reported were confirmed to be domestic or pot-bellied pigs and farms or owners were known to be nearby. In these cases, the probability of recapture by owners or further reports in populated areas was high, with no additional sightings of the pigs reported.

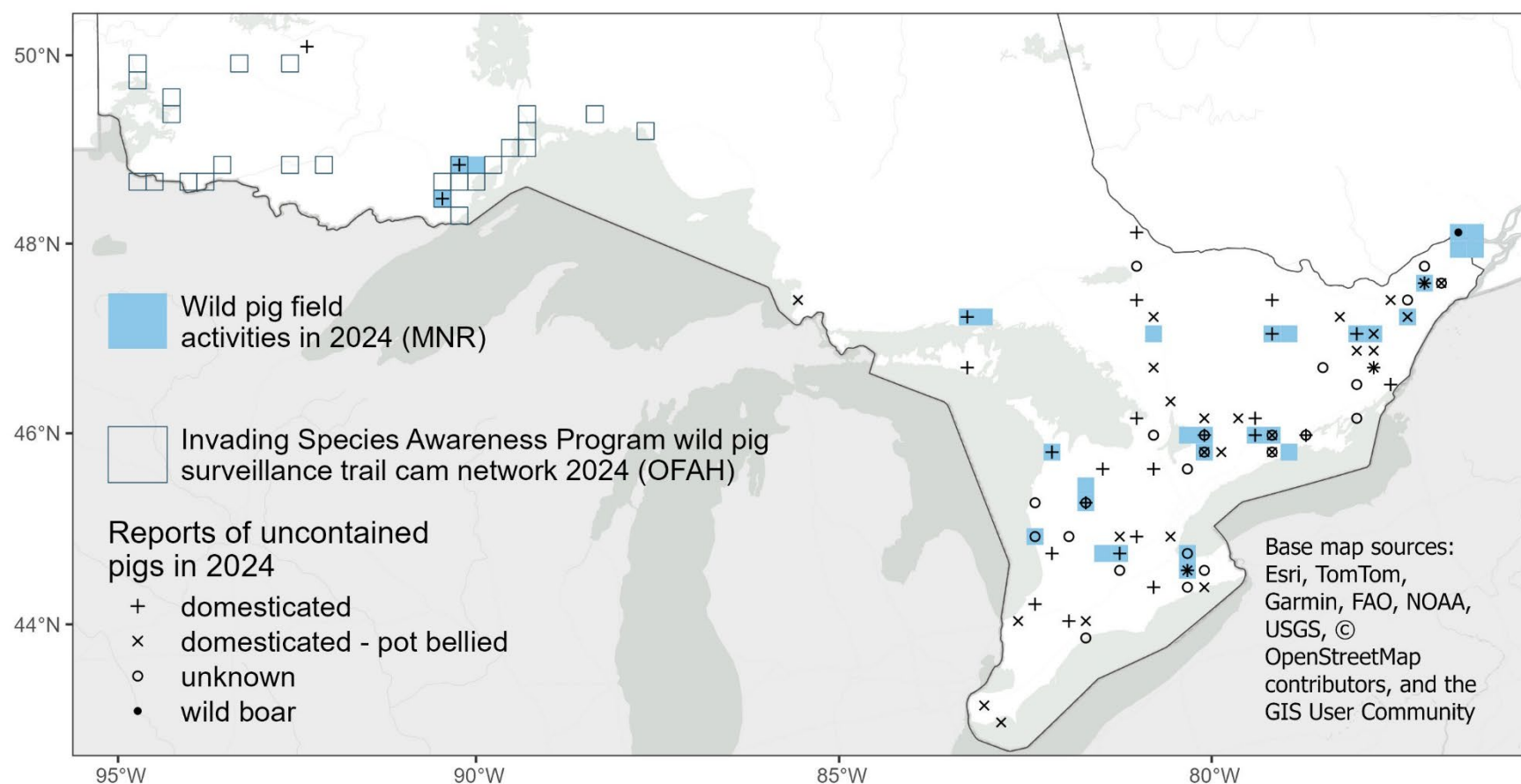


Figure 3. Sightings of wild pigs (domesticated, pot bellied, Eurasian wild boar, and hybrid pigs outside of a fence) and field activities related to the detection, prevention, management, or removal of wild pigs in Ontario between January 1 and December 31, 2024. Data are aggregated to a 20 x 20 km grid, or the centre of those grid squares. The map includes sightings defined as “resolved” — including dead or removed wild pigs, owned pet pigs, and recently escaped or free roaming livestock that have since returned to captivity. Locations where the ministry investigated wild pig sightings on-site between January 1 and December 31, 2024, are highlighted in blue. Investigated locations that do not overlap a sighting occur for a variety of reasons. In some cases, the associated sighting was received prior to the reporting year; the sighting was low confidence (the animal may not have been a pig); or the sighting was determined through investigation to be another species. In other cases, no sightings have occurred, but the ministry or partners are proactively monitoring for wild pigs (as in northwestern Ontario), or an investigation occurs over a larger area.

During site visits, MNR staff canvassed neighbourhoods and spoke with residents to gather additional information, such as number of pigs roaming freely, type of pigs, whether they caused damage, and the wild pigs' locations.

This year, staff spoke with people at 40 properties, and left fact sheets and contact information at an additional 112 properties to facilitate the return or removal of the pigs. Where evidence was sufficient that wild pigs were present in the area, staff deployed trail cameras to help locate them.

Between January 1 and December 31, 2024, the MNR received 90 unique moderate or high confidence wild pig sightings from the public, MNR staff, other agencies, internet, and media (Figure 2). Another 19 low confidence sightings were reported. Low confidence means that the individual reporting the sighting was not sure if what they saw or heard was a pig. Overall, 109 reports were submitted during the reporting period, averaging about 9 per month (Figure 4).

This past year, MNR staff removed 2 Eurasian wild boar, 1 domestic heritage breed pig and assisted with the recapture of 1 escaped domestic pig in southeastern Ontario. An additional 15 wild pigs connected with ministry investigations

were known to be removed or recaptured by residents and other partners. Since 2020, the Ministry has removed 21 wild pigs and has assisted with trapping and the return of 10 wild pigs to captivity. A further estimated 205 wild pigs associated with Ministry investigations were reported to have been removed or recaptured by residents and other partners since 2020.

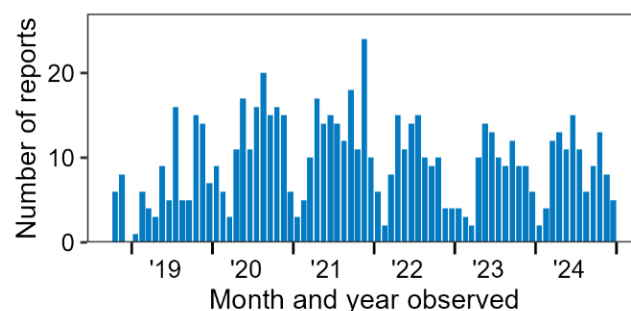


Figure 4. The number of reports submitted to the wildpigs email and phone line from December 2018–December 2024.

Pig escapes or releases

Escapees continue to make up most of the wild pig reports in the province. Most of these pigs returned to their enclosures or were recaptured by their owners.



Figure 5. Domestic escapees from Manitoulin Island, ON.

Pigs are a restricted species under the [Invasive Species Act, 2015](#) and prohibitions apply (e.g., pig escapes must be reported by their owners to the Ministry and escaped pigs must be captured or killed as soon as possible). If you see a wild pig, speak with neighbours; ask if they have a pig that has escaped and find out if it has been reported or recaptured. For more resources, see the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness's page on [dealing with escaped livestock in your community](#) and [fencing best practices](#).

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' (OFAH) Wild Pig Surveillance Program.

The MNR collaborates with OFAH on wild pig surveillance in Ontario. Through OFAH's Invading Species Awareness Program, 50 trail cameras were deployed

in northwestern Ontario in 2024; no wild pigs were detected.

Public and outreach

The ministry continues to engage with the public to raise awareness of the threats of invasive wild pigs. Program staff from the Science and Research Branch attended two events in 2024: the Toronto Sportsman Show and the International Plowing Match in Lindsay, Ontario.

Eurasian wild boar and their hybrids

Eurasian wild boar and their hybrids have characteristics that make them more likely to survive and successfully reproduce in the wild; therefore, they are more likely to establish self-sustaining populations that could pose a substantial risk to ecosystems in our province.

As of January 1, 2024, it is illegal to import, possess, transport, propagate, lease, trade, buy, and sell live Eurasian wild boar and their hybrids. These prohibitions apply to everyone in the province. These prohibitions related to live Eurasian wild boar and their hybrids do not apply to domesticated pigs (for example, *Sus scrofa domesticus*), including commercial and heritage breeds of pigs or pot-bellied pigs.



Figure 7. Photo of a Eurasian wild boar captured by a ministry trail camera.

Research and control of invasive wild pigs would not be possible without the many people who have reported their wild pig sightings. The Ministry thanks all contributors for their participation in our monitoring program.

For more information about wild pigs, including our approach on how to address them and current regulations, please visit www.ontario.ca/wildpigs.

Have you seen a wild pig? Report your sightings to wildpigs@ontario.ca or 1-833-933-2355.

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