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The History of a Central Texas Feral Hog Management Program

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THE HISTORY OF A CENTRAL TEXAS FERAL HOG MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

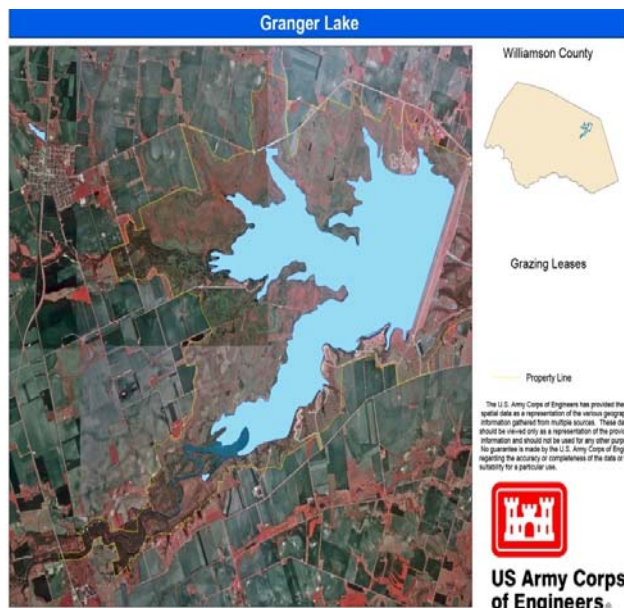
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ABSTRACT: Wildlife Services personnel have attempted to alleviate damage caused by feral hogs to grain crops surrounding a wildlife management area for the past 12 years. The hogs are damaging primarily corn and milo crops which border a 12,000 acre wildlife management area owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and managed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Numerous methods have been attempted to lower the hog population and reduce the amount of damage suffered by the area farmers. Methods employed by Wildlife Services have included live trapping, shooting, snaring, dogs, aerial hunting, spotlighting, and the use of infrared and night vision equipment. The success and results of these methods have been varied and are influenced by a number of limiting factors including cover, public use, and somewhat limited access to certain properties.

KEY WORDS: feral pig, history, Texas,

LOCATION

Granger Lake, Williamson County , Texas.





Some open pasture areas are present at the project site. Dense cover exists over much of the area. Much of the cropland is directly adjacent to the management area which allows the hogs to move freely without ever leaving cover

Much of the management area contains heavily timbered regions. There are a few openings in the dense cover, but they offer limited visibility. There is often no access to the interior acreages of crops

DAMAGE TO CROPS



Hog damage to corn crops



Hog damage to milo crops Photo: Eddie Davis

DAMAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Management
Strategies

The Corps of Engineers implemented strategies such as increased grazing and net-wire fencing

Private land owners often attempt to trap feral hogs year round



Electric Fencing

Discourages feral hogs from entering crops
Can be effective if there are other nearby crops that are not fenced



Net-Wire Fencing

Greatly reduces places where hogs can enter properties



Pasture Grazing

900 acres in 1995
6,000 acres in 2008

Increased grazing greatly reduced heavy cover
The increased visibility resulted in the removal of
greater feral hog numbers



Strategies Used by Wildlife Services



Snaring

Snares were often placed in locations where feral hogs
were entering crops under net-wire fences

There were also placed in cross fences where hog
trails were intersecting them





Cage Trapping

Cage trapping was used on a limited basis
Most of the work was done in the summer months
when food supplies were abundant and cage trapping
is least effective



Shooting

Some shooting was conducted at watering areas and
bait holes

Photo: Dan McMurtry



Turn rows between crops provide shooting lanes to remove feral hogs

Photo: Eddie Davis



Shooting--Night Vision

Night vision equipment can be very effective in removing feral, especially in post-harvest grain fields




Dogs

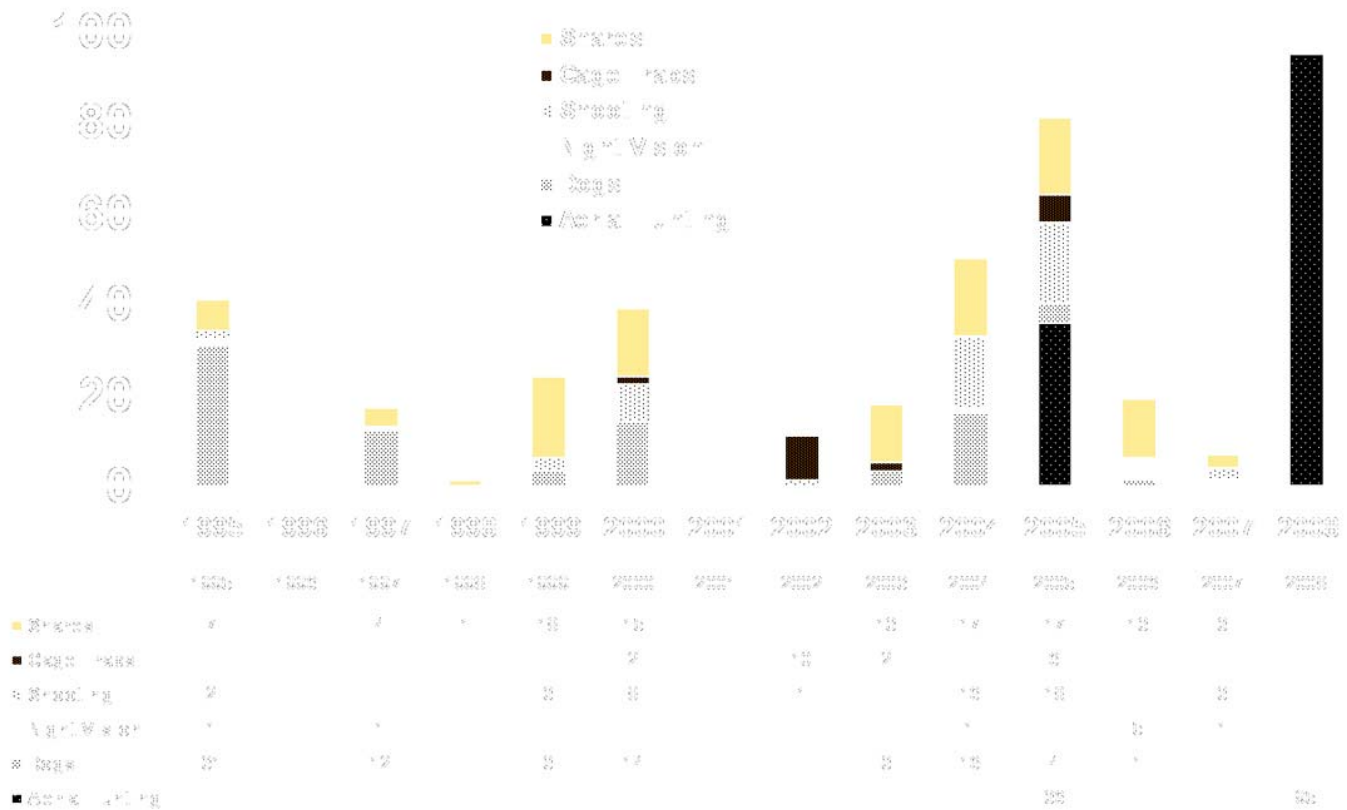
Dogs are very effective at removing hogs from crops and areas of heavy cover

Even if not caught by the dogs, hogs will often leave an area where they have been harassed by the dogs



	 A photograph showing a light-colored dog, possibly a Weimaraner, in a field of tall grass and brush. The dog is facing away from the camera, looking towards a dark-colored feral hog that is partially obscured by the vegetation in the background.
<p>Aerial Hunting</p> <p>Aerial hunting can remove large numbers of hogs in a short time period</p> <p>Usually only effective in the winter months when there is no foliage present to limit visibility</p> <p>Photo: unknown WS personnel in Texas</p>	 A photograph of a helicopter flying over a large, open field with dry, yellowish-brown grass. In the distance, a group of feral hogs is visible on the ground. The sky is overcast and grey.
<p>PROBLEM OF EDUCATED HOGS</p> <p>Many hogs become educated over the years and will avoid certain methods such as snaring and trapping</p>	 A photograph of a black feral hog lying on its side on a patch of dry, sandy ground. The hog is positioned in front of a wire fence that runs across the frame. There are some green plants and trees in the background.

RESULTS



The results varied greatly from year to year. This is due to various factors such as weather events and employee availability