

Louisiana Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force

Dr. Kim Marie Tolson, Chair

Vic Blanchard, Vice Chair

Dr. Bret Collier

Blake McCartney

Blaine Sheets

William Ard

Gene Cavalier

Dr. Jim LaCour

Dr. Dearl Sanders

Buck Vandersteen

Chip Vosburg

1 February 2018

TO: Representative Stuart J. Bishop, Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment

Senator Norby Chabert, Chair
Senate Committee on Natural Resources

FROM: Dr. Kim Marie Tolson, Chair
Louisiana Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force

CC: Representative Major Thibaut
Secretary Jack Montoucet
Commissioner Mike Strain

RE: Report on House Concurrent Resolution No. 9 of the 2016 Regular Legislative Session

Dear Sirs:

Please find the attached annual report that is submitted in compliance with HCR NO. 9 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. HCR NO. 9 created the Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force and charged members *“with the responsibility to make recommendations with respect to issues pertaining to feral hog management efforts, including public awareness programs, to the various state agencies charged with the responsibility for managing the feral hogs in this state, including the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the legislature.”*

If you have any questions on this report or the Task Force, please feel free to contact me at 318-342-1805 or the LDWF representative, Dr. Jim LaCour, at 225-765-0823.

Respectfully submitted by: Dr. Kim Marie Tolson, Task Force Chair and LAPB-LaTWS Representative

Louisiana Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force Annual Report 1 February 2018

Introduction

The Louisiana Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force was created by House Concurrent Resolution No. 9 during the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. This Resolution charged members of the Task Force “*with the responsibility to make recommendations with respect to issues pertaining to feral hog management efforts, including public awareness programs to the various state agencies charged with the responsibility for managing the feral hogs in this state, including the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the legislature.*”

This Resolution further stated that “*The Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force shall submit an annual report to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources no later than February 1st of each year.*”

Current members of the Task Force and their affiliations are listed below.

8 Voting Members:

Dr. Kim Marie Tolson, Chair – Louisiana Assoc. of Professional Biologists, La Chapt. TWS

Vic Blanchard, Vice-Chair – Louisiana Landowners Association

William Ard – Louisiana Hog Hunters Association

Dr. Bret Collier – LSU College of Agriculture

Blake McCartney – Louisiana Farm Bureau Association

Dr. Dearl Sanders – Bob R. Jones Wildlife Research Institute

Buck Vandersteen – Louisiana Forestry Association

Chip Vosburg – Louisiana Quality Deer Management Association

3 Non-Voting Members:

Dr. Jim LaCour – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Gene Cavalier – Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Blaine Sheets – Association of Levee Boards of Louisiana

The Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force (FHMATF) is pleased with the responses to the recommendations that were submitted in the 1 February 2017 Annual Report. By acknowledging and acting on our recommendations, the Task Force feels the Legislature, LDWF, and LDAF recognize the serious problem with feral hogs that the state of Louisiana is facing. And for that, we are appreciative.

In response to the 2017 Task Force recommendation to strengthen movement restrictions of feral hogs and expand enforcement of restrictions, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has submitted a Notice of Intent (Appendix I.) that would allow LDWF enforcement agents to cite individuals who are found to be in violation of LDAF feral swine transport regulations (Appendix II.).

In response to the 2017 Task Force recommendation that all feral hog toxicants be evaluated by LDWF, the Louisiana Legislature passed HCR No. 62 (Appendix III.) during the 2017 Regular Session.

Actions of the Task Force, 1 February 2017 through 31 January 2018

- Worked closely with LDWF and LDAF personnel to bring recommendations in 2017 Annual Report to fruition.
- Voted unanimously to support investigations pertaining to biological control agents for control of feral hogs.
- Submitted official comment to USDA APHIS Wildlife Services to state support for the Draft Environmental Assessment: Field Evaluation of Hoggone® Sodium Nitrite Toxicant Bait for Feral Swine. The Task Force voted unanimously in favor of the Proposed Action (Alternative 2) to conduct a study on the toxicant's impacts on environmental resources.
- Worked with LDWF Legal Division to craft a NOI that would give LDWF Enforcement Agents the authority to cite individuals found illegally transporting feral hogs as a Class IV violation.
- Elected a Chair (Tolson) and Vice-Chair (Blanchard) for 2018.
- Reported to the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission on activities of the Task Force.

Task Force Recommendations as of 31 January 2018

Recommendation 1: Strengthen movement restrictions of feral hogs and expand enforcement of restrictions.

Members of the FHMATF recommend the Louisiana Legislature adopt a bill that would make any violation of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry feral swine transport regulations (Appendix II.) a state law under Title 14 of the Criminal Code.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has a Notice of Intent (Appendix I.) currently under the Public Comment Period that modifies the Feral Hog Trapping regulations (LAC 76:V.130) to state that "Feral Hogs shall not be transported alive unless done so by a feral swine authorized transporter registered with the Board of Animal Health of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, who has proof of said registration in his/her possession. Feral Hogs being transported in violation of this Rule will be confiscated and disposed of in accordance with LDWF policy." The Task Force would like to see the Legislature expand the enforcement of the LDAF Rule to include any authorized enforcement agent in the state of Louisiana.

Recommendation 2: Expand public awareness of the laws/regulations and other issues pertaining to feral hog management.

Members of the FHMATF recommend that Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries dedicate personnel (perhaps interns or student workers) to work with the LDWF webmaster specifically on developing space on the LDWF website that contains comprehensive and up-to-date legal and scientific information on feral hogs. This would involve links to other agencies involved with feral hog control in Louisiana. No members of the FHMATF have the website expertise or time to dedicate to this task.

Recommendation 3: Cost-share feral hog control efforts on private lands.

A. Through trap loan programs: The Bob R. Jones Idlewild Research Station has high-tech traps that utilize remote cameras that interface with a cellular data network. They are willing to loan these traps to private landowners and provide instruction on their use if a cost-share agreement could be developed to cover the cellular data usage fees.

B. Providing cost-share funds to offset the expense of aerial gunning by USDA Wildlife Services, where feasible, on private landowner cooperative projects would lower the cost per acre paid by private landowners and encourage more individuals to participate, thereby increasing the acreage covered.

Recommendation 4: Identify and support scientific research pertaining to feral hog control.

The FHMATF feels that there are research needs regarding the negative impact that feral hogs have (both directly and indirectly) on native wildlife species and ecosystems in Louisiana. Of particular interest is the impact that feral hog presence has on the Louisiana Black Bear. What cost is our Black Bear population having to pay when feral hogs are present on a shared landscape? Are food and space competition, possible disease transmission, and habitat disturbance by feral hogs negatively impacting Black Bears? Does the presence of feral hogs reduce the population growth rate (female survival, reproductive output, litter survival) of Black Bears?

What effect(s) does the presence of feral hogs have on other wildlife species native to Louisiana such as deer and turkeys?

These are just a few of the questions that have been asked by the Task Force, but there are no published answers to the questions.

APPENDIX I. Notice of Intent to modify Feral Hog Trapping Regulations

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Feral Hog Trapping
(LAC 76:V.130)

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby give notice of its intent to modify the Feral Hog Trapping regulations (LAC 76:V.130).

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part V. Wild Quadrupeds and Wild Birds

Chapter 1. Wild Quadrupeds

§130. Feral Hog Trapping

A. Feral hogs may be trapped in cage or corral traps year-round by holders of a valid basic hunting license. Feral hogs may be captured by use of snares year-round by holders of a valid trapping license.

B. Cage or corral traps must have an opening in the top of the trap that is no smaller than 22 inches x 22 inches or 25 inches in diameter.

C. Feral hogs shall not be transported alive unless done so by a feral swine authorized transporter registered with the Board of Animal Health of the Louisiana Department of

Agriculture and Forestry, who has proof of said registration in his/her possession.

1. Feral hogs being transported in violation of this Rule will be confiscated and disposed of in accordance with LDWF policy.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:115 and 56:116.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 38:1997 (August 2012), LR.

The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the Commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent and the Final Rule, including but not limited to, the filing of the Fiscal and Economic Impact Statements, the filing of the Notice of Intent and final Rule and the preparation of reports and correspondence to other agencies of government.

Family Impact Statement

In accordance with Act 1183 of 1999 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Poverty Impact Statement

The proposed rulemaking will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S.49:973.

Provider Impact Statement

This Rule has no known impact on providers as described in HCR 170 of 2014.

Public Comments

Written comments may be addressed to Jim LaCour, DVM, State Wildlife Veterinarian, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, PO Box 98000 Baton Rouge, LA 70898, or jlacour@wlf.la.gov, no later than 4:30 pm, March 2, 2018.

Chad J.

Courville

Chairman

APPENDIX II. Current LDAF Regulations on Movement of Feral Swine



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

MIKE STRAIN DVM, COMMISSIONER

OFFICE OF ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY, 5825 FLORIDA BLVD, SUITE 4000, Baton Rouge, LA 70806 Office (225)925-3980, Fax (225) 923-5555

**** NEW ****

STATE OF LOUISIANA FERAL SWINE REGULATIONS

(pursuant to *LAC 7:XXI.1301, 1311, 1312 and 1321*)

- DEFINITION OF *FERAL SWINE*
 - **"Feral Swine"** - any hog, pig, or swine species (*Sus scrofa*) including, but not limited to, Russian and European wild boar and their hybrids that are running at large, free roaming, or wild upon public or private lands in this state, and shall also include any hog, pig, or swine species that has lived any part of its life running at large, free roaming, or wild. The term feral swine shall also include any feral phenotype swine, whether or not running at large, free roaming, or wild.
- It is now illegal to transport Feral Swine within the State of Louisiana without first obtaining authorization from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry, Animal Health and Food Safety. An authorization certificate must be carried on person or in transportation vehicle. Feral Swine Authorized Transporter information 225-925-3980.
- Feral Swine movement restrictions in place:
 - Live Feral Swine can only be transported to Approved Feral Swine Holding Facilities, Quarantine Swine Feedlots, or to a recognized state/federally inspected slaughter facility.
 - No live Feral Swine may enter this state unless in a sealed trailer accompanied by a VS Form 1-27 restricted movement permit going to Approved Feral Swine Holding Facilities, Quarantine Swine Feedlots, or to a recognized state/federally inspected slaughter facility.
- Permitted Approved Feral Swine Holding Facilities and Quarantine Swine Feedlots:
 - Permit application available from LDAF AHFS, 225-925-3980. Permits are temporarily free, but will eventually be on a fee basis.
 - Swine proof fencing required.
 - ✦ Owner of facility is responsible for escaped swine.
 - Annual inspection plus impromptu inspections by LDAF personnel.
 - Feral and Quarantine swine kept at least 200 yards from other domestic swine.
 - Only feral swine can be kept in Approved Feral Swine Holding Facilities.
 - ✦ Feral swine can be brought back to domestic status by identification and testing.
 - All swine can be kept in a Quarantine Swine Feedlot.
 - ✦ Movement of live swine from Quarantine Swine Feedlot is restricted to recognized state/federally inspected slaughter facilities.
- **Penalty for violating these regulations up to \$1000 fine and 60 days in jail.**

APPENDIX III. HCR No. 62

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 62

BY REPRESENTATIVE BISHOP

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry evaluate any hog toxicant prior to approval in Louisiana as to its potential impacts on wildlife and the effects of consumption of that wildlife on humans and to seek opportunities to cooperate where the exercise of each department's duties and responsibilities significantly impacts the other department.

WHEREAS, feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*), including European wild hogs and hybrids, commonly weigh two hundred pounds but can easily weigh up to four hundred pounds, are quickly becoming the most serious problem facing land managers and hunters in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, feral hogs destroy crops, golf courses, levees, hayfields, tree farms, and even lawns; a vector of disease for both animals and humans; are extremely prolific with virtually no natural predators; and

WHEREAS, with their high proliferation and lack of natural predators, the difficult task of feral hog management has sought several approaches including, expanding opportunities to take feral hogs, restrictions on feral hog movement, and chemicals that act as either toxicant or birth control; and

WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency recently approved the toxicant Kaput that is a bait infused with warfarin, the active ingredient in the anticoagulant drug Coumadin for humans and is extremely toxic to other mammals; and

WHEREAS, despite efforts to reduce the risk to other mammals, concerns continued as the toxicant's effects on the black bear, secondary intoxication of predators and scavengers, and effects on humans also prescribed Coumadin; and

WHEREAS, recognizing these issues, particularly the possible impact on the black bear only recently taken off the endangered species list, the commissioner of agriculture and forestry rescinded the registration of Kaput, rendering it ineligible for sale in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, both a Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission resolution and a recommendation by the Louisiana Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force called for a joint evaluation of any hog toxicant's impacts prior to use in this state; and

WHEREAS, the duties and responsibilities of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry often coincide as actions taken to manage wild animals often impact the management of domestic animals and vice versa; and

WHEREAS, the people of Louisiana, whether farmers or outdoorsmen and women, are well served when the decisions and resources of these departments align in cooperation for the betterment of both agricultural interests and the health and diversity of wild habitat.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry evaluate any hog toxicant prior to approval in Louisiana as to its potential impacts on wildlife and the effects of consumption of that wildlife on humans and to seek opportunities to cooperate where the exercise of each department's duties and responsibilities significantly impacts the other department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE