



NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 162305 · Atlanta, Georgia 30321 · phone: 1-800-209-3337 · DEERASSOCIATION.com

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission
#1 Sportsman's Lane
Frankfort, KY 40601

20 February, 2023

RE: Support for the Prohibition of Feral Hog Hunting in Kentucky

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the National Deer Association (NDA), I am writing to provide our comments in support of prohibiting the hunting of feral hogs in Kentucky. We are a national non-profit conservation organization with the mission to ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting. We represent 30,000 members nationwide, including hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

The NDA respectfully asks the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to vote in favor of prohibiting feral hog hunting in Kentucky at the upcoming vote on March 3, 2023. The NDA's mission – the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat, and hunting – relies on wildlife management decisions founded in sound scientific principles. With respect to feral hogs, an effective way to control this invasive species is to ban the transport and release of live animals for any purpose. Fortunately, a vast majority of states have laws prohibiting the public from transporting and releasing live hogs. Still, opportunities to hunt feral hogs can incentivize hunters to transport and release hogs in new areas – legal or not. States that have eliminated hunting opportunities for feral hogs have made the most significant gains in reducing or eradicating hogs in their jurisdictions.

Feral hogs are a highly destructive and invasive species that cause significant problems for deer and other wildlife. Populations can spread locally at an alarming rate due primarily to their adaptive nature, human assistance, and their phenomenal reproductive capabilities. Feral hogs impact wildlife management programs in a variety of ways. For example, research shows that deer actively avoid hogs, resulting in some situations where deer lose access to the best food sources. Feral hogs directly compete with deer for food like acorns and soft mast. In fact, research suggests that as much as 64% of a feral hog's diet is mast. This means less availability for deer and other wildlife species when hog numbers are high. In addition, hogs destroy food plots and commercial crop production, damage forest roads, and may even contribute to the spread of EHD by creating shallow mudholes that are ideal habitat for the gnats that spread the disease. In total, it's believed that feral hogs can be blamed for nearly \$2 billion in damages every year in the United States.

The NDA encourages all wildlife agencies to allocate the resources necessary to control feral hog populations and reduce their spread to new areas. Prohibiting the hunting of wild hogs is an effective method for doing just that. Still, it's crucial to continue to educate the public on the dangers of hogs to human health, wildlife and habitat, and the control efforts taking place.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or for more information.

Sincerely,

Torin Miller
Senior Director of Policy