



Get outdoors and connect to nature in your backyard! An invasive pig is any pig that is not fenced, including wild boar, domestic pig that escaped, or hybrids. Whether invasive pigs are known to be in your area or not, you can be a nature detective to learn about backyard biodiversity and how invasive pigs might impact it. Discover invasive pig behaviours, their impacts on the environment and on native wildlife, and the tracks and traces they leave behind.



A NOTE ON SAFETY AND NATURE ETIQUETTE: Head out with a buddy or adult. Learning about animal signs can help us discover what wildlife lives near and how we can safely share our environment with native animals like deer, bear, cougar, and others. Consider leaving the area if you see fresh signs of any predator or invasive pigs. Stay on the trail to protect sensitive habitats and to prevent the spread of invasive plants.

THE MUDDY MYSTERY:

An Invasive Pig Scavenger Hunt

Grab something to write with, get all your detective tools ready (your senses!) and head outdoors!

Optional materials: magnifying glass, camera, measuring tape or ruler, field guide to local plants, animals, or tracks. Share your observations with a friend or family member!



PART 1: Backyard Biodiversity

Who lives here? How might invasive pigs impact native wildlife?

Observe 3 animals that fly

- _____
- _____
- _____

Close your eyes and listen until you hear at least 5 sounds that do not come from people

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Find 3 creatures smaller than your finger. Look on plants, tree trunks, or in/on the soil.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Find 3 different leaf shapes

- _____
- _____
- _____

Find 3 different shades of green

- _____
- _____
- _____

Compare and describe 3 different smells (such as flowers, leaves, the soil, the air)

- _____
- _____
- _____

Find 3 signs that animals have been nearby (fur, feathers, leaves with feeding damage, etc.)

- _____
- _____
- _____

Feel 3 textures and describe them

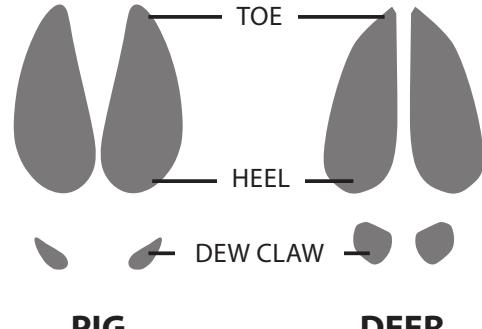
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PART 2: Signs of Invasive Pigs

Invasive pigs are smart and secretive! How can you tell if they've been here?

- Ground that is dug up or trampled.** Invasive pigs use their snouts and hooves to dig for food, including insects, invertebrates, seeds, and roots.
- Animal tracks.** Best places to look are in mud/wet soil, sand or snow. Who does it belong to? How many toes are there? How big is it compared to your hand? *Pigs have hooves with 2 toes. Their tracks are similar to deer's but are more square in shape/less 'heart' shaped, and their dew claws are angled out to the sides. Look at the examples on this page!*
- Mud pit or wallow.** Invasive pigs create muddy areas to wallow in to cool down on hot days, protect their skin, and mark their territory. This damages sensitive habitats and the native animals that live there.
- Tree trunk with scrapes or the bark rubbed off.** Invasive pigs rub against trees and posts after wallowing in mud, to clean and scratch themselves, remove parasites, and mark their territory. If a lot of bark is removed the tree may die. (There are many other native animals that rub against, scratch, or gnaw on trees, including deer, bear, cougars, porcupine and beaver).
- Trampled plants or crops, or tunnels through thick vegetation.** Invasive pigs live in a family group called a sounder, which may be a few animals or up to 30. They love to eat crops and will trample plants as they travel and look for food. They also make resting areas that are shallow pits that may be lined with soft plants. In cold snowy places they make "pigloos" by burrowing under the snow to stay warm!
- Scat (poop).** Invasive pig scat is irregularly shaped, about 2.5-5 cm thick, and in small piles. It may look like dog poop but with bits of acorns, grains and seeds, and even feathers, scales, or animal fur.



PIG

DEER

Draw something you discovered!

If invasive pigs arrived in your area, how might they hurt native plants and animals or farms?