

ANIMAL CONTROL PLAN

for

BAYOU SAUVAGE  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Animal Control Plan for Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge.

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Date: 12-17-92

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Date: 12-22-92

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Date: 1-18-93

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Associate Manager, RF-1

Date: 1-25-93

Approved by: James Williams  
Regional Director

Date: 01/26/93

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I. FERAL HOG

1. Description

For the purposes of this control plan, the term feral hog shall be used to refer to both domestic pigs which are now free living and not under the ownership of humans and also to the introduced European wild boar. Feral hogs were present on the area now known as Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) prior to its acquisition by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Prior to acquisition wild boar had been introduced to the area by "hog hunters". Even though illegal, these individuals had introduced wild boar in an effort to establish a huntable population. This activity began about 1973 and was successful.

The introduced hogs reproduced and spread and are now found throughout the refuge and the adjoining areas of New Orleans East. Prior to the area becoming a refuge the population was kept somewhat in check by the activities of the hog hunters. These hunters pursued and caught hogs with the aid of specially trained dogs. However the purpose of these hunts was more to provide sport than to control hog numbers. A large, healthy population was desirable and a reproductive base was maintained.

Following acquisition of the refuge, hunting was no longer allowed and the hogs found on the refuge reproduced unchecked. Since then refuge staff have noted an increase in the number of hogs seen and in the severity of resource damage.

B. Consultation and Assistance

Assistance has been provided to this station by a number of other offices, agencies, and individuals and has emphasized proper control techniques. A brief summary of contacts made concerning feral hog control efforts is given below.

1. Consultation with Dr. Reginald H. Barrett, University of California, Berkeley, CA. Discussions included control techniques and population estimation techniques.
2. Consultation with personnel of the National Park Service, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Discussions centered around control techniques and the success of control efforts on the National Park.
3. Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge. Provided advice on control techniques and constructed 4 live traps for use by this station.
4. Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Provided advice on control techniques and the success of control efforts on the refuge.

## Control Methods Recommended and Alternatives

### 1. Control Methods

Methods of control proposed for use on Bayou Sauvage NWR are those which have been proven effective in other areas and under a variety of circumstances and which have been proven to be species specific. These methods include incidental control, live trapping, and pursuit with the aid of specially trained dogs. Initially, all control efforts on the refuge will be conducted by refuge staff. The goal of control efforts shall be the eradication of hogs from Bayou Sauvage NWR. A measure of success of control efforts shall be the incidence of hog sign and hog sightings following initiation of control efforts.

Incidental control will be conducted by authorized refuge personnel in accordance with 50 CFR 30.11, 50 CFR 31.14, and 7 RM 14.9.

Live trapping shall be conducted using specially designed hog traps baited with whole corn or other suitable bait. Traps are designed to be species specific and allow non-target animals to escape from the trap. Trapping shall be conducted primarily in the winter months when the refuge is closed to public use. Areas to be trapped shall be those showing repeated use by hogs. These areas should be pre-baited prior to setting of the live traps and once set the trap doors should be wired open until the hogs are acclimated to entering the trap. Such steps should result in multiple catches per trap, increasing the effectiveness of trapping efforts. Feral hogs caught in traps shall be humanely dispatched and disposed of in accordance with federal and state law.

Pursuit with the aid of specially trained dogs shall be carried out in areas where trapping is no longer effective due to the remaining hogs becoming "trap wise", and in areas where trapping is not practical due to difficulty of setting and maintaining traps. Hogs obtained using this method will be humanely dispatched and disposed of in accordance with federal and state law. This control method shall be conducted in the winter months when the refuge is closed to public use. Such a restriction eliminates the danger of visitors coming into contact with pursued hogs and with hog dogs. This method is species specific and eliminates the possibility of 'taking' non-target species.

## 2. Alternatives

Several alternatives to the proposed action were considered during development of the control plan for this station. Those considered include no action, utilize sport hunting, utilize contract trappers.

One of the objectives of Bayou Sauvage NWR is to provide habitat for the protection of fish and wildlife. A proposal of no action would result in an increase in the number of feral hogs present on the refuge. This would result in continued and increased damage to habitats on the refuge and damage to several levees recently rehabilitated at great expense to the government. Rooting by hogs would result in increased maintenance costs on containment levees as well as present dangers to equipment and personnel involved in the mowing and maintenance of those levees. Rooting and wallowing diminishes habitat quality by removing ground litter and vegetation. Disturbance of logs and other ground litter important to many species of birds, amphibians and reptiles, small mammals, and insects also diminishes habitat quality. In addition, the expanding hog population has begun to create a chronic hazard to vehicles on the highways which bisect the refuge.

The use of sport hunting is considered impractical at this time. By state law that area of Orleans Parish which includes the refuge has been closed to all hunting. In addition sport hunters would seek to ensure that a reproductive base was maintained and would not actively work to eradicate hogs from the refuge.

The use of contract trappers is an option that may be explored in the event that efforts by refuge personnel are unsuccessful at achieving desired goals. If employed, contract trappers would be restricted to the same methods and time periods as refuge personnel. Additional information on the effectiveness and use of contract trappers would be obtained from stations currently using contract trappers prior to implementing this alternative.

## D. Justification of Pest Control

One of the objectives of this station is to provide habitat for the protection of fish and wildlife. The marshes and hardwood forests of the refuge provide the habitat base to achieve this objective. The problems created by feral pigs on other areas are well documented. They include soil erosion, leaching of minerals and nutrients, habitat destruction, native plant species destruction, exotic plant species invasion and maintenance, and changes in vegetative succession rates. Other problems include competition for food with native wildlife, predation on native mammals, predation on nesting sea birds, predation on terrestrial ground nesting birds, and disease transmission to livestock, native wildlife and man. Many of these problems are becoming evident on the refuge.

The USFWS has spent considerable time and expense on the rehabilitation of levees on the refuge. Already hogs have caused damage along some areas of the levees. Such damage will result in increased annual maintenance costs, danger to personnel and equipment, and a shortened lifespan of the levees requiring frequent and costly rehabilitation. The presence of feral hogs provides no benefits to the refuge and an increase in the present population would certainly lead to an increase in the damage already occurring.

AMENDMENT TO ANIMAL CONTROL PLAN

FOR

BAYOU SAUVAGE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

FERAL HOG

Control Methods Recommended and Alternatives

1. Control Methods

Efforts by refuge personnel to keep the feral pig population reduced by trapping have been unsuccessful. Destruction to levees and habitat by feral pigs is increasing and must be prevented. Because of the amount of time required to successfully reduce the population by trapping, contract trappers should be used instead of refuge staff.

Methods for live trapping described in the 1993 Animal Control Plan for Bayou Sauvage (attached as Appendix A) will be utilized. By this amendment, the only deviation from the plan is that, instead of refuge staff, trapping efforts will be conducted by a contract trapper according to the conditions of a Special Use Permit (SUP).

Approved by:



Howard E. Poltevin, Project Leader

Date:

4/26/96



## SECTION 7 EVALUATION

REGION: 4

### LOCATION (ATTACHED MAP):

Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

### LISTED SPECIES OR CRITICAL HABITAT CONSIDERED:

American Alligator	Bald Eagle
Brown Pelican	Peregrine Falcon

### NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF ACTION:

Animal Control Plan: Feral Hog. Control of feral hogs on Bayou Sauvage NWR using methods detailed in attached plan.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION:

Control of feral hogs on Bayou Sauvage NWR.

### EXPLANATION OF IMPACT OF ACTION ON LISTED SPECIES OR CRITICAL HABITAT:

All proposed methods of control are species specific with little or no effects on non-target species. No potential impacts on listed species.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO AVOID ADVERSE IMPACTS OR ENHANCE SPECIES CONSERVATION:

No adverse impacts likely.

SECTION 7 EVALUATION

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PROJECT LEADER: Howard Portman DATE: 12/22/92  
MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT: \_\_\_\_\_ NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT: X  
COMMENTS:

FIELD SUPERVISOR: David W. King DATE: 1/10/93  
MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT: \_\_\_\_\_ NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT: X  
COMMENTS:

RD: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT: \_\_\_\_\_ NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT: \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENTS:

RD - WE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT: \_\_\_\_\_ NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT: \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENTS:

REGIONAL DIRECTOR: James Williams DATE: 1/22/93  
MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT: ✓  
COMMENTS:

BIOLOGICAL OPINION: \_\_\_\_\_