

Drones over Texas reveal agricultural damage caused by wild pigs

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Credit: *Wildlife Society Bulletin* (2023). DOI: 10.1002/wsb.1437

There are an estimated 6.9 million wild pigs in the United States, and the population has been rising in recent decades. In research published in

Wildlife Society Bulletin, investigators used drones to capture images of the agricultural damage caused by these animals.

Drones took pictures of corn fields at different growth stages during 36 missions over an agricultural region in Delta County, Texas in 2019–2020.

Most damage occurred in later growth stages, when corn ears were maturing, seed was most nutritious, and producers had already invested in the majority of annual crop inputs.

Wild pigs damaged up to 9.2% of a single monitored field, which resulted in an average loss of 3,416 kg of corn per hectare and a direct cost to producers of \$17.18 to \$48.24 per hectare of damage.

"Drone technologies are advancing quickly and becoming a more common practice in the wildlife and agricultural industry," the authors wrote. "Drones can be a great tool for landowners and producers to accurately estimate wild pig damage and crop yield loss, and to receive compensation for their lost income."

More information: Bethany A. Friesenhahn et al, Using drones to detect and quantify wild pig damage and yield loss in corn fields throughout plant growth stages, *Wildlife Society Bulletin* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/wsb.1437](https://doi.org/10.1002/wsb.1437)

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