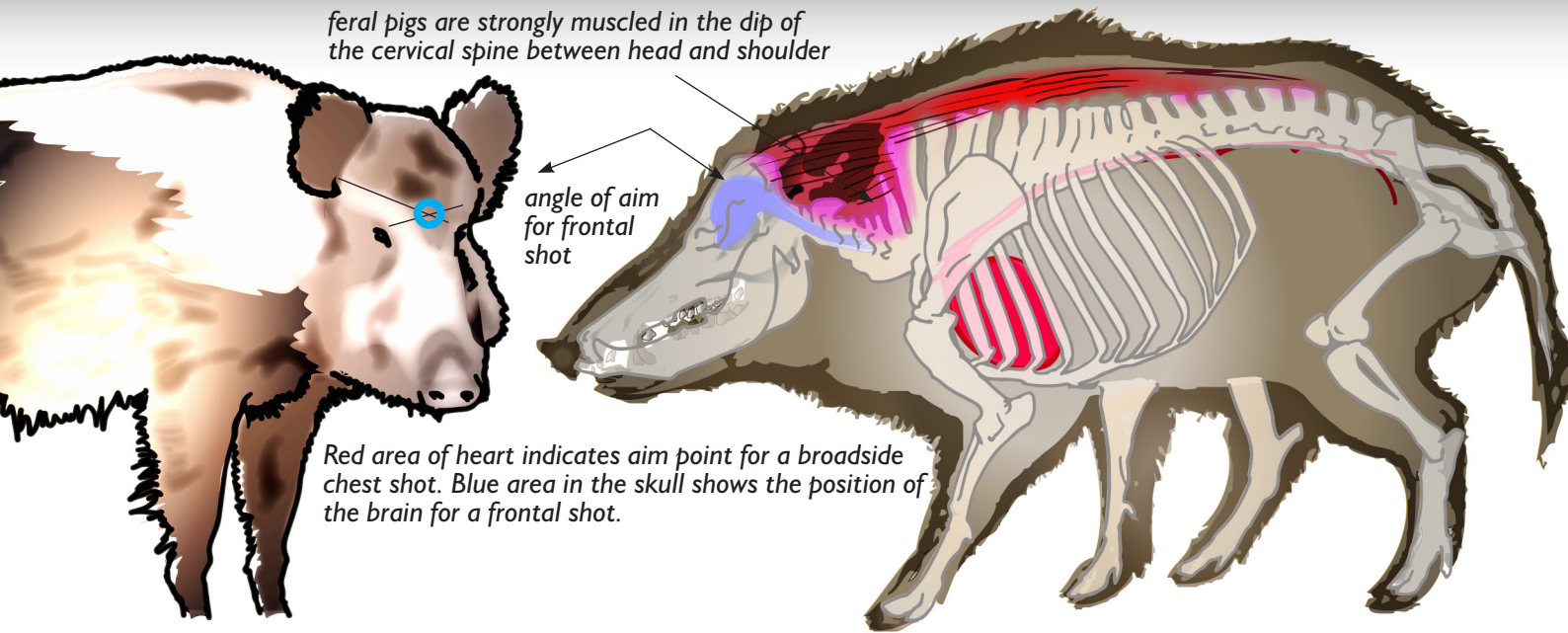


FERAL PIGS SHOOTING



feral pigs are strongly muscled in the dip of the cervical spine between head and shoulder

angle of aim for frontal shot

Red area of heart indicates aim point for a broadside chest shot. Blue area in the skull shows the position of the brain for a frontal shot.

Introduction

Shooting feral pig is likely to be one of the main methods of controlling their numbers. This guide describes how to shoot feral pig humanely and safely with due regard to meat hygiene standards.

Firearms

Rifles

Use a minimum of .270 Win calibre using an expanding bullet of not less than 150 grains or non-lead equivalent e.g. Copper 110 grain in .270 Win. A rifle, rather than a shotgun, is the recommended firearm.

Shotguns

The minimum requirement for a shotgun is: 12 bore, 3 inch chambers, 2 or more cartridges. When using lead shot cartridges the shotgun should be three quarters or full choked, using full loads of AAA or SSG shot. The alternatives to lead with recommended shot size and gauge is continuing. This guide will be updated as that information is available. Note that any cartridge containing less than 5 pellets or any shot pellet bigger than .36 inches in diameter (LG size) require a firearms certificate. Ranges should be kept to 25 metres or below.

If rifled slug is used it should be at least 350 grains in weight. A group size of 4 inches should be considered the maximum and will determine the

maximum sensible range. Currently only lead rifled slug ammunition should be used as alternatives are further developed. Rifled slug ammunition can only be purchased on a firearms certificate.

Firearms safety is subject to the same guidance as that given in deer best practice guidance

Shot placement

A pig has two main vital zones – areas inside the body where a bullet will cause a rapid death. These are:

The heart and lungs (chest shot)

This is the preferred target area as it is by far the largest. The centre is just above the heart. From outside the animal, the aim point for an animal standing broadside is in a vertical line with the foreleg and 1/3 of the way up the body. If the nearside leg is forward this may avoid the bullet striking the leg before the chest, potentially resulting in a cleaner shot. For angled shots the aim point should be adapted to ensure that the bullet still passes through the heart area. Shots at more than 30 degrees either side of broadside should not be attempted.

The brain (head shot)

The brain is located very high in the head roughly in line with front of the root of the ears. A shot to the brain is lethal but the brain is a very small target area and there is a higher risk of wounding than

with a chest shot. For this reason head shots are not recommended. However, at close range a head shot from the front, preferably angled downwards into the body is the preferred method for humane dispatch. Larger pigs may have a significantly thickened skull and a head shot from the side could be considered.

Shooting from high seats

Pig are often shot from high seats, sometimes at short range and you should be aware of the trajectory of your bullet at shorter ranges and whether you have to adjust your point of aim.

Night shooting

Because of their nocturnal habits feral pig are often shot at night. This should be done using spotlights with standard telescopic sights or thermal sights. Pig quickly become wary of spotlighting using artificial light.

The target and a safe background must be clearly identified before a shot is taken and safe shooting areas should have been thoroughly checked out in daylight beforehand.

Shooting females

It will be necessary to shoot female pigs since they are responsible for annual recruitment to the population. As far as is practicable the shooting of female boar known or suspected to have dependent young should be avoided. If circumstances require such a female pig to be shot, every reasonable effort should be made to kill any dependent young before, or immediately afterwards. The use of corral trapping** mitigates against this welfare risk.

Baiting

Artificial baits (usually maize) can be used to attract feral pigs to safe shooting areas. Because the productivity of breeding sows is heavily dependent on feeding conditions, amounts of bait used must be kept to a minimum to avoid artificially increasing breeding potential.

Baited sites also give an opportunity to monitor population size and can make selective culling easier. Baited sites should be shot infrequently as pig will quickly become wary of frequent use.

The extent to which feral pig will respond to baits will depend on a number of factors including the time



piglets/ dependant juveniles

of year, the natural food supply, the natural wariness of boar, and competition for the bait from non-target species.

Baits should not be placed in sites where attracting feral pig would aggravate pig damage or nuisance, or cause a danger to the public e.g. near roads.

Dogs

Dogs can be used to flush or locate wild boar, to locate shot carcasses and to find injured boar. The use of dogs for these purposes is similar to the use of dogs for deer (see BPG Use of Dogs*).

Because feral pig may injure dogs it is advisable to keep dogs on a leash unless the owner is certain that the dog is sufficiently experienced to avoid injury, or that it can be called to heel at any time. Protective body harnesses are available for dogs.

Humane dispatch

For humane dispatch of sick or injured feral pig a rifle of the calibre recommended above is preferred for stationary animals. Injured adult feral pig can be very unpredictable and even dangerous. It is recommended that two persons are present when following up injured adult pig, and that the leader carries a shotgun in case the boar runs. The other should carry a rifle. Both firearms should be ready for use but in a safe condition.

If possible the approach should be made from the rear and from downwind.

It is advisable to shoot from a safe distance i.e. not less than 5 metres, with a rifle or rifled slug, rather than approach too closely. If a shotgun has to be used on a running pig the distance should be no more than 25 metres with the chest as the aim point.