

Letter from the Associate Editor

Considering the wide world of wild pig management



IN WORKING to assemble a special issue for *Human–Wildlife Interactions* (HWI) on wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*), one is immediately struck by the incredible diversity represented in the management of this species worldwide. Although HWI is certainly a journal with roots in the wildlife damage and wildlife conflicts native to North America (indeed reflected in the original name of this journal, *Human–Wildlife Conflicts*), we strive to reach beyond the political boundaries of the United States to bring together the best science related to managing such human–wildlife interactions. Few issues are so universal as that of the wild pig, one of humanity’s oldest domesticated animals (Price and Evin 2019), that still present novel challenges to managers. Standing amidst a world turned upside-down by a pandemic caused by a zoonotic disease outbreak, we are all reminded how small our world is when considering the conflicts and damages associated with wildlife.

As we look out over the constituent parts of this special issue, particular attention should be paid to the global scope of submissions—Europe, North America, Asia—that present robust data and perspectives on issues that a manager of wild pigs will recognize, regardless of their particular geography. This shows us that we have more in common with our wild pig management issues than we may have previously thought. Indeed, there seem to be few species globally with the widespread distribution and impacts to their invaded range—save humans, of course—than wild pigs. In many areas, as recently as the 1980s, governmental bodies largely regarded issues associated with wild pigs a problem of negligible scope, or one easily solved by those experiencing damage. Concomitantly, both attention to wild pigs by government and science, as well as the scope and scale of problems associated with wild pigs, have grown since that time to garner considerable attention. We are part of a global effort to curtail and control the negative effects of this species on our world.

This shift did not happen overnight. Wild pig problems have grown over the last century, whether from exotic, invasive wild pigs in the New World, or native wild boar and their feral counterparts in the Old World. Changes in management of these species precipitated problems not experienced before, or at least not in living memory. Although doubtless many pieces of gray literature predate it, one of the earliest papers on the subject detailed the ability of wild pigs to vector diseases (Pullar 1950), damages to timber lands in the southeastern United States (Hanson and Karstad 1959), followed by many manuscripts on discussions of agricultural and environmental damages (Seward et al. 2004, Barrios-Garcia and Ballari 2012), disease risks (Witmer et al. 2003, Hutton et al. 2006, Wyckoff et al. 2009), and even human safety (Mayer 2013). From the first scientific insights until today, the science of wild pig ecology and management grows ever more complex as we work to turn the tide of their invasion.

Fittingly, this issue of *Human–Wildlife Interactions* does not seek to introduce wild pigs as a new or emerging issue to the field. We explore pastiches of the ever-growing field of managing human–wild pig interactions worldwide. It is the hope of this editor that, as the problems associated with wild pigs increase in scale and complexity, so too does the science of their management. For all who concern themselves with managing wild pigs, this special issue should spur greater communication and collaboration with our counterparts worldwide. We who fight the “Wild Pig Wars,” hope for the day when we can turn our minds to other pursuits, but until that time, we are engaged in purposeful science to protect the environment, wildlife, water, agriculture, and humans worldwide.

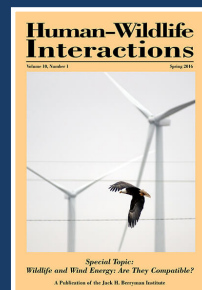
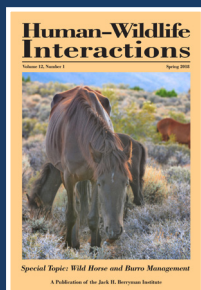
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