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#### BOOK REVIEW

### Wild Pigs of the United States

Wild Pigs of the United States. Their History, Morphology, and Current Status. J. J. Mayer and I. L. Brisbin, Jr. The University of Georgia Press, Athens and London, 1991, 313 pp. ISBN 0-8203-1239-8.

The book is devoted to wild pigs and more precisely to certain aspects of their presence in North America. These aspects include: history of introductions, comparative morphology, and current status of pigs in USA. The book says nothing about biology and ecology of these animals. Authors were interested mainly in physical presence or absence of pigs, as well as in morphological characters helpful in tracing their origin.

True pigs from the family *Suidae* are not native to the New World. Fossil remnants of *Sus scrofa* are known only from Palearctic, Oriental, and Ethiopian realms. As stated in introduction the recent natural range of this species includes the region south of 60°N in the steppe and broadleaf woodland zones of the Palearctic and Oriental realms from western Europe to the Amur River valley in eastern Siberia; eastern and southern Asia, including isolates in Japan, Taiwan, Malaya, Sumatra, Java and Sri Lanka; the Middle East north of approximately Saudi Arabia; and extreme northern Africa from Tunisia to Rio de Oro.

Feral hogs, Eurasian wild boar, and hybrids between these two living in USA in unrestrained populations – this is what this book is all about. History of introductions of feral hogs and those of wild boar received a very thorough description in the book. We learned that the earliest pigs brought to the continental United States were the descendants of domestic swine that Christopher Columbus brought to Cuba in 1493 on his second voyage. They were followed by successive importations and the present feral hog populations have originated through (1) the escape of domestic swine, (2) free-ranging of domestic swine as a method of husbandry, and (3) intentional release of domestic swine or wild-trapped feral hogs for the purpose of establishing wild-living populations. All this is documented in a very orderly way – state by state and county by county.

Extremely interesting is the history of wild boar introductions. The first pure wild boar were brought to the United States in 1889. They came from Germany and were settled in a fenced estate in the mountains of Sullivan County, New Hampshire. Another release occurred around 1900 in the Adirondack Mountains of Hamilton County, New York. This introduction was unsuccessful and the animals disappeared within several years. Unknown is the origin of wild boars forming the Hooper Bald introduction in Tennessee and North Carolina. This introduction, started with 13 wild boars put into pen in 1912, was a success. By now the wild boar have increased their range in both states through natural dispersal and as a result of numerous releases. There were also two introductions of wild boar into central coastal Texas. Along with other exotic species 11 European wild boars were released there in 1933 and 10 – 15 again in 1939. Minor introductions of wild boar have been also carried out in Bexar County, Texas and recently, in 1981, illegally in north-central Washington State where 40 – 60 animals were released. For more than sixty years there were no new importations of Eurasian wild boar in the United States.

As a result of numerous introductions and translocations the present stock of wild-living pigs have produced populations with varied phenotypic characters. The second part of the book deals, therefore, with comparative morphology of these animals. It included skull morphology, external body dimensions and proportions, coat coloration patterns, and hair morphology. All these characteristics were used to determine different pig morphotypes. This was done to my knowledge for the first time. The results show that the four morphotypes of *Sus scrofa* can be distinguished on the basis of a combination of above mentioned morphological characters.

Best specimens for morphotype identification are crania and skins from adult males. Moreover, examination of about 25 specimens is sufficient to assess the variation in the population in question. This seems to be the most useful sample size for the identification of an unknown group using a stepwise discriminant function analysis.

All the morphological analyses were needed to prepare the third chapter of the book. This chapter contains an updated consensus of the current status of free-ranging *Sus scrofa* populations in the United States. Of the 19 states where wild pig populations currently occur, only two (New Hampshire and Texas) have animals that still morphologically resemble pure Eurasian wild boar. Only in Texas all three wildliving morphotypes are still present. Populations of both feral hogs and hybrids are found in 8 states, while 7 and 2 states, respectively, currently have populations of feral hogs and hybrids alone (Table 22). Wild pigs have been eradicated in Iowa, Missouri, Oregon, and Washington.

The book contains besides a very useful survey of 23 subspecies of Eurasian wild boar with their morphological characteristics.

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