



Pigs

Recreational hunting in Nelson/Marlborough

History and dispersal

Pigs were first introduced to New Zealand by Captain Cook in 1773 when he made three liberations in Queen Charlotte Sound.

Maori transported them by canoe to settlements in the area. Early whalers and gold miners also took them to other areas where they escaped or were abandoned.

By the time European settlers arrived, feral pigs had spread throughout the entire lowland and much of the hill country of the Nelson/ Marlborough area. Subsequent releases by Europeans, of different domestic breeds, increased numbers.

In the late 1850s, 25,000 were reported killed in the Wangapeka district over 18 months, without noticeable reduction in numbers!

Current distribution and habits

Feral pigs mostly live on farmland and rough hill country which includes thick and extensive scrub cover. In native forest they prefer to be adjacent to farm and scrubland margins, but in larger forests they are present throughout. In winter they descend to warmer areas on sunny hill faces and river flats.

Pigs can be more sensitive to scent and sound than deer, so hunters should keep down-wind and quiet.

Due to recent liberations, land development and changes in land use, they have extended their range since 1972. They can be found right through the Nelson/Marlborough area although there are only light numbers in parts of Nelson Lakes National Park and the Wakamaramas. They are absent in most western areas of Kahurangi National Park.

Environmental impact

Feral pigs are a major predator of the rare Powelliphanta land snail and are threatening their survival in Kahurangi National Park and the Marlborough Sounds. They not only eat the snails, but they also eat potential snail food and destroy snail habitat by rooting up the litter and low vegetation.

Pigs also threaten regenerating native vegetation by browsing the tops of plants and uprooting undergrowth. They open areas up to infestation from noxious weeds, make areas more prone to erosion and threaten soil and water values. Feral pigs damage crops and pastures and kill lambs.

Hunting opportunities

Kahurangi National Park

The best hunting is on the fringes of the Wangapeka, Ellis, Pearse and the Riwaka and Motueka Valleys and north of Murchison; also found in the Aorere goldfields, Parapara and Anatoki.

Abel Tasman National Park

Good hunting in the northern end of the park and to a lesser degree the southern end from Marahau to Anchorage and around Tonga.

Marlborough Sounds

Everywhere including D'Urville.

Nelson Lakes National Park

Low numbers in the lower D'Urville and Matakotaki/ Glenroy, but good hunting in areas adjoining the park, around Murchison and in Big Bush.

Mt Richmond Forest Park

Most areas in the Park.

Marlborough

Ferry Gair, Spray/Waihopai.

Kaikoura

George, McLean, Clarence Reserve, Kaikoura North.

