

Subject: Hog Management Report for BCA – October 2020

From John Cornelius:

Jesse Paul took **138 hogs** in October, bringing the calendar year total to 789. This month 50 hogs were taken with dogs vs. 88 in traps... **Wow.... 53 hogs from a single property in a single month!** That may be a program record. I'm not sure whether I should be happy or worried. Hog capture numbers are way up this month in the BCA service area, and I have seen a similar jump in numbers in the Austin area where we have a smaller hog trapping operation in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. Certainly, there are a lot of young pigs on the ground increasing the local population, but that isn't really new; we've had litters dropping since the middle of spring. We had a really hot, dry summer, and this has dramatically affected production of acorns, pecans, and other 'hard mast'. Consumption of mast is important for hogs and other wildlife to put on fat for the winter; if it isn't available, they will seek out other sources of starch and fat, namely corn. Deer processors in Central Texas are reporting higher than usual deer harvests, and they feel that this is a result of low mast availability that is driving deer to deer feeders. If this is in fact what is going on with the hogs as well, then this is a golden opportunity to maximize our impacts to overall hog numbers in our program area. I've read in the scientific literature that it is necessary to remove 70% of the hog population every year just to keep up with production. I think we have been holding the line in the Bandera Canyonlands, but if the hogs are particularly susceptible to trapping right now due to environmental conditions, this might be the year that we are able to suppress the population rather than just stemming the tide. We will be closely monitoring trapping numbers over the next several months to see how the situation develops.

Speaking of really good timing, we have 2 new corral traps and 3 new cell-operated gates that are going on line this month. The Bandera Conservation Corridor has provided funding for 2 corrals and a gate to be used on enrolled properties, and a private grantor has provided funding for 2 gates. These will all be put in service as soon as possible. Jesse Paul and I want to send out a heart-felt Thank You for these contributions to the program.

If you would like to help, but a gate or set of corral panels is out of your comfort zone, here's a thought. Every cell gate system is essentially controlled by a cellphone that allows communication between JP, the camera, and the gate itself. That means a monthly charge for a line of service on somebody's cellphone bill every month. Camera phone service is cheaper than a standard cellphone, but it still represents approximately \$25/month, (\$300 a year) for each cell gate in operation. A couple of our gates were paid for by landowners for use on a single property, and they assumed the cell service charge. However, most of the cell service is either paid through the hog management program, or by Jesse Paul himself. If 'adopting' a gate for a year is something you might be interested in, please let me know. If you are able to deduct charitable contributions from your taxes, I will provide a letter that you can pass on to your tax preparer.

Keep passing along those observations of hog activity. This is very helpful in determining where to take the dogs on any given day. The fresher the sign, the more likely that the dogs will catch the hogs nearby. Thanks for your continued support of HOGMOP.

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