
Population monitoring and management

Efficacy of wildlife deterrents in minimizing white-tailed deer consumption of bait used for attracting wild boar

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Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) is a globally distributed species that causes extensive damage to native plant and animal communities throughout their native and introduced ranges. Trapping is a widely used method for controlling populations of wild boar (native range) and wild pigs (introduced range) that has been shown to be effective in reducing damages. When trapping, individuals are typically captured using traps baited with whole-kernel corn or similar baits. However, these bait sites often serve as attractants to non-target species including cervids (e.g., white-tailed deer [*Odocoileus virginianus*]), which may consume substantial portions of bait and reduce the likelihood of wild boar visitations, ultimately interfering with trap success. Thus, research is needed to identify baits and/or deterrents that optimize wild boar and wild pig visits while limiting non-target species consumption of bait. Using remote cameras paired with bait stations treated with commercially available wildlife deterrents (bloodmeal, natural capsaicin, synthetic capsaicin, and Liquid Fence®), we examined the efficacy of wildlife deterrents in repelling deer while maintaining wild pig visitations. We found that deer consumed corn less frequently at sites treated with liquid fence, bloodmeal, and natural capsaicin than controls, with the most pronounced response at sites treated with liquid fence and natural capsaicin. Wild pig visitations to bait stations were similar between controls and all treatments with the exception of our lowest concentration of synthetic capsaicin, suggesting the treatments evaluated were effective at reducing deer visitations while maintaining consumption by wild pigs. This research provides valuable information regarding the effectiveness of wildlife deterrents, aiding in effective wild boar and wild pig management.