



# Making Pigs Dirty: Conflicting Perspectives on Javelinas and Hogs in Texas

Adam P. Johnson

University of Texas at San Antonio

Dept. of Anthropology



# Pigs and Peccaries

NEWS

## Texas has the most feral hog sightings in the nation: What you need to know

Researchers in the Lone Star State are testing out a potential solution to the growing feral hog problem.

Ariana Garcia, Chron  
Nov. 13, 2023



— Texas leads the nation in feral hog sightings, according to a recent study released by Captain Experiences. Getty Images

## Water-hungry golf courses plague Arizona's native javelina-filled landscape

A herd of javelinas damaged a ritzy golf course in Arizona. Golf courses have done more damage.

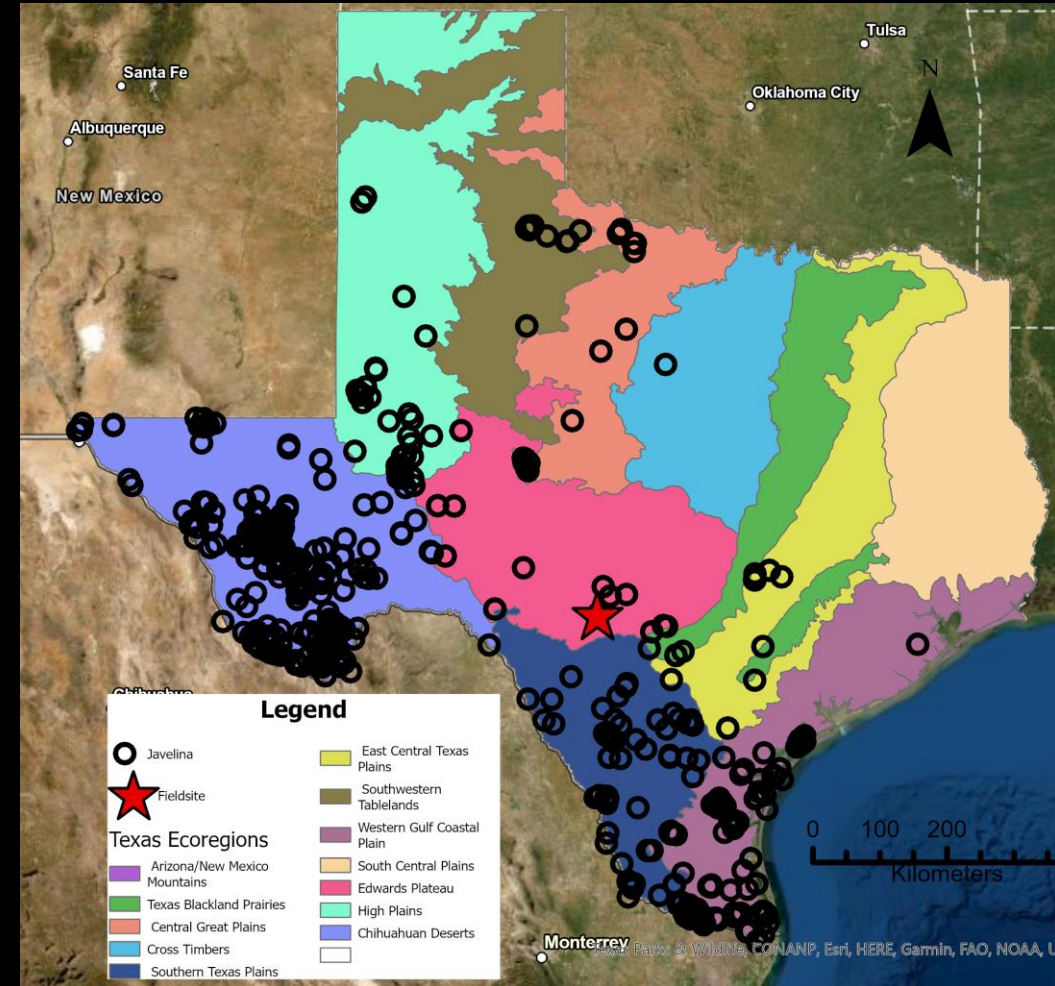
By Benji Jones | @BenjiSJones | Oct 25, 2023, 10:20am EDT



A javelina, also known as a collared peccary. | mlharing/Getty Images

# Who are Javelinas?

- *Pecari tajacu*
- Northern Argentina to the US Southwest





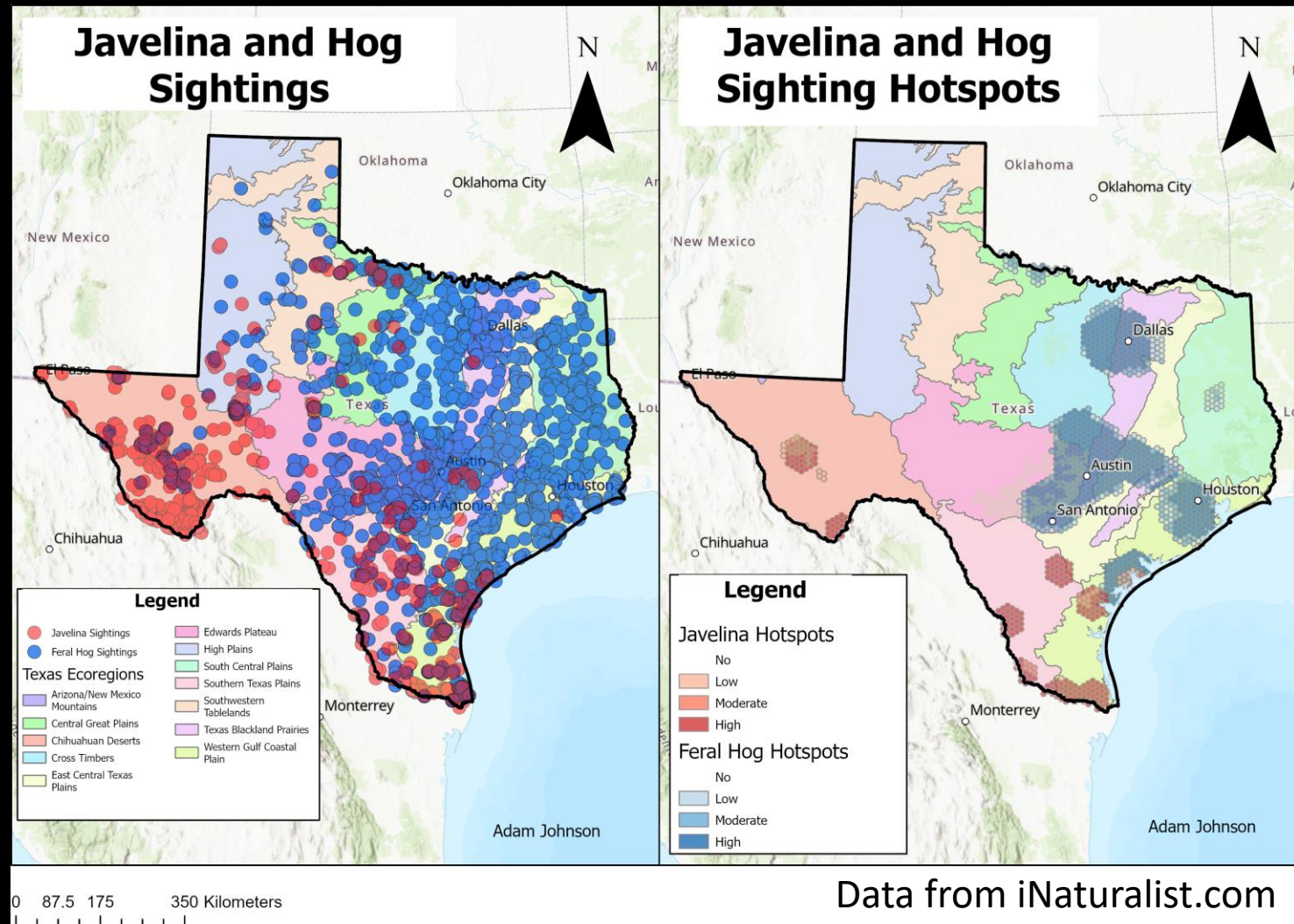
# Who are Feral Hogs?

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- *Sus scrofa* – Eurasian wild boar/domestic pig
- Native to Eurasia
- Introduced by Spanish colonists (1521-1539)



# Confusion and Conflict



# Contested Actors

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- Essentially Contested Concepts: Proper place, proper meaning, and proper use are endlessly disputed (Gallie 1955: 169).
- Feral Hogs
- Questions:
  - How do they become contested?



Photo: Texas Parks and Wildlife Division

# “They don’t belong”

- Participants throughout Texas consistently describe hogs as “not belonging.”
  - Not native
  - Invasive





## Native vs. Non-native

- Early interviews focused on native/invasive distinction.
- “They’re [javelinas] native little animals that belong here and they fit right in with everything else. They are just like a nice little jigsaw puzzle, part of everything else. And the hogs are not. The hogs are just a blight on the land.”  
Roger





Photo by Roger Gray



Photo by Roger Gray

# Confounding Actors

- Feral goats show up
- Natural history of javelinas in the US (Hulbert et al. 2009)
- Why are the feral goats different than hogs?

# Why are Hogs Different?

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- There are two factors at play
  - The presence of feral goats demonstrates the native/non-native distinction doesn't sufficiently explain why hogs are contested.
  - Evidence points to javelinas and hogs showing up in Texas around the same time.



# “Matter out of Place”

- “Non-native” is only part of the picture.
- Hogs “don’t belong” because they disrupt the social and ecological landscape of Texas.
  - Douglas conceptualizes ‘dirt’ as “matter out of place” (1966: 44).
  - Hogs disrupt established order: Pigs belong in pens. Native animals “are just like a nice little jigsaw puzzle” (Roger Gray)
  - Hogs disrupt Texas landscapes
- “Hogs come, hogs have dug up hundreds of yards of trails that I’ve built, they rip it up, they turn over all the rocks, they scrounge in the ground, they tear up shrubs, they do everything. When they come to the feeder, they churn up the ground. When they come to the drip pond, they poop in the water, all around on the rocks around the water. Anytime the hogs have been anywhere out in the open here, you can tell. It’s like a herd of toddlers came through without diapers on. I mean, they’re just horrible.” Roger Gray



Feral Hog Damage at Choke Canyon State Park

## “Matter out of Place”

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- Despite javelinas and hogs showing up in Texas at similar times, javelinas are viewed more favorably than hogs.
  - Javelinas conform to the “ideal” Texas landscape.
  - Feral hogs disrupt the ideal notion of Texas landscapes by failing to conform to Texan expectations of what good Texas animals should do.
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# References

- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London, UK: Routledge; Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Gallie, Walter Bryce. “Essentially Contested Concepts.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56, no. 1 (1955): 167–98.
- Hulbert, Richard C., Gary S. Morgan, and Andreas Kerner. “Collared Peccary (Mammalia, Artiodactyla, Tayassuidae, Pecari) from the Late Pleistocene of Florida.” *Museum of Northern Arizona Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (2009): 543–56.

# Thank you!

- Roger Gray
- National Park Service
- Michael Cepek
- Jamon Halvaksz
- UTSA Graduate School
- UTSA Dept. of Anthropology
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Division
- Sarah Pollock
- Barbara King



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