

# Hunting WILD Hogs

...the Pros share their secrets!



- **Why Hunt Hogs?**
- **How Challenging are Pigs?**
- **Strategies for Success.**
- **When Hogs Attack!**

**HAYALON**<sup>®</sup>  
*KNIVES*

By Havalon's Hog Hunting Experts  
Editor - Steve Sorensen  
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## Introduction

Wild pigs (or wild boars—it matters not that some of them are females) go by the scientific name *susscrofa*. They're part of the biological family *Suidae*. So at a pig calling contest when you hear the contestants holler "Suiey," or something like that, you know those crazy sounds they make are variations on that Latin word.

But I'm betting you don't care about calling barnyard pigs—you care about killing that prolific wild variety, so we're going to tell you how, why, where, when and with what.

I start with the *why*. Chapter 1 outlines eight great reasons. You need only one, but everyone doesn't have the same reason, so take your pick. If you have more, let us know.

Next up, Gene Wensel will tell you how to plan a pig hunt, and share some secrets you probably don't know. Then in Chapter 3, I'll explain why a pig hunt is such a challenge. But don't worry—expert North Carolina hog hunter Mike Marsh follows with strategies to overcome those challenges.

Of course, part of your strategic approach to any game animal is firepower. Pigs can soak up a lot of lead, and wring out a lot of blood before they're ready for the skinning knife, so Max Prasac tells us the good news—that if you shoot proper loads, just about any center fire rifle (not to mention bows) suitable for whitetails can also be used on pigs.

Not to be outdone by his brother Gene, younger brother (by a few minutes) Barry Wensel tells you just how dangerous wild pigs are. He was attacked by two (count 'em, 2) wild pigs *on the same day!* The second tangled him up in a prickly pear cactus patch and gave him a broken... well, I'll just let you read his story in Chapter 6.

Finally, about that reference to the skinning knife. We conclude with two reports on the knife Havalon touts as the best in the field. If our word for it isn't enough, Havalon President Patrick Carrothers delivers testimonies from Max Prasac and Texas hunter Mike Weathers. If there's any doubt, Prasac elaborates on his experience with the Havalon knife in the final chapter.

Once you're loaded with all this great information, it's time for you to go out and write your own chapter. And take a Havalon knife for all your hunting. (Fishing, too!) The field dressing and skinning (and filleting) will be so much easier!

**Steve Sorensen, Editor**



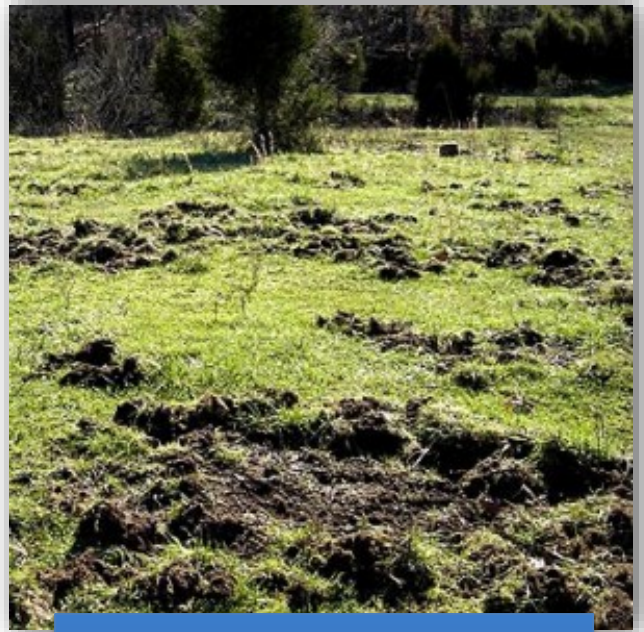
## Why Hunt Wild Pigs? Eight Great Reasons

By Steve Sorensen

***Wild hogs will send shivers up your spine when you think about those tusks shredding an abdomen or severing a calf muscle like a scythe.***

Wild pigs. Russian boars. Feral hogs. Whatever you call them, Hogzillas are not traditional North American big game animals. They're alien invaders, and they can be big. Real big. And they're animals. Deadly animals.

I remember as a kid reading a magazine article about hunting wild pigs. It sounded exciting and I remember seeing pictures of a big bristled pig with long, razor-sharp tusks. It probably told the where-to and the how-to, but the why-to of hunting pigs is more relevant than ever because the population of wild pigs is exploding across North America. And they can be a lot of fun to hunt.



*Feral pigs do tremendous damage to the landscape and habitat.*

Why hunt pigs? To be blunt, because they need killed. It's just that simple. Wherever they are, they reproduce rapidly, and are almost impossible to control. You might have your own reasons for hunting pigs, but if you need reasons here are eight great ones...

### **Reason #1 - Pigs are destructive.**

This is the number one reason why game departments never close the season on wild pigs. Pigs compete with other wildlife. They'll eat anything they come across. They'll devastate turkey populations because they're so methodical in their rooting that they can't miss turkey nests. Nor do they miss fawns. If you have pigs in your deer or turkey hunting area, they need to die.



**Reason #2 - Feral pigs destroy farm crops.**

Feral pigs destroy farm crops, costing farmers megabucks!

Hunting pigs is an exercise in conservation. Conservation is first and foremost about habitat, and killing pigs is a necessity to save habitat for other species. Pigs in North America are an invasive species—and they destroy the habitat for native species. To put it mildly, they don't play nicely with turkeys, deer, nor songbirds and other non-game species, and in most places they have no natural predators other than man.

**Reason #3 - Pigs are prolific.**

Pigs have been described as the most prolific large mammal on the face of the earth. They reproduce so quickly some people say they're born pregnant! No, that's not possible, but a female pig can bear two or three litters per year and some are mature enough to breed at eight or nine months. And if a litter averages about six piglets, one adult pair becomes 20 porkers in a year. That makes normal exponential growth look anemic. Hunting is the best way to deal with explosive populations tearing up the landscape.

**Reason #4 - Pigs are delicious.**

Leaner than domestic pork, it has a flavor that many people think surpasses grocery store pork. In fact, some high class restaurants prefer serving wild pork. Those might be subjective opinions, but it's a fact that wild hogs don't have the hormones that domestic pigs are fed. Don't let wild pigs go to waste—the Internet is full of recipes, so get one and eat healthy.



*Feral pigs destroy farm crops, costing farmers megabucks!*

**Reason #5 - Pigs are trophies.**

They may not have the mystique and the uniqueness of antlers, but they have a lot of bone in their skulls. A good skull with long, curling tusks makes an impressive display and invites people to ask about the story behind it.



Photo by Jeffrey Wagner

*A pig skull is a great conversation piece and a unique trophy.*

**Reason #6 - Pigs are exciting.**

They're perhaps the most accessible dangerous game in North America. They'll send shivers up your spine when you think about those tusks shredding an abdomen or severing a calf muscle like a scythe. Don't underestimate tuskers. They are known to come after hunters, so make sure you're well-armed and know how to shoot.

**Reason #7 – You can hunt pigs with any weapon.**

Want to try out your new crossbow? Practice on live game with your recurve? Test the performance of your muzzleloader? Get the excitement of handgun hunting? Virtually any style of weapon, suitably equipped, properly powered, and in capable hands is great for wild pigs.

**Reason #8—Pigs can be hunted anytime.**

Porkers can be vicious—so make sure you're equipped with adequate firepower.

Spring, summer, fall, winter. Wild pigs are a great way to extend your season because in most places with wild pigs, hog time is all the time. And don't think hunting inside an enclosure means they're tame. Guys from southern states where pigs are overpopulated are capturing them and selling them to the fenced ranches. So when you're hunting a Pennsylvania ranch you're helping to control pigs in, say, Georgia or South Carolina.

If you need more reasons to hunt pigs, you can probably find them. But the bottom line is that it all adds up to fun. So, get with a buddy and make plans to go pig hunting. Once you've done it, you'll be looking for an opportunity to do it again.

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*Porkers can be vicious - so make sure you're equipped with adequate firepower.*



## Steps to Planning a Pig Hunt

By Gene Wensel

***Wild pigs are smart, tough, elusive, and dangerous enough to ratchet up some excitement. And dead ones taste great.***

The disease that plagues many hunters between the end of deer season and spring turkey or bear is winter cabin fever. For many decades now, my brother Barry and I have cured our cabin fever with annual pilgrimages south to hunt feral hogs with friends.

**Hunting wild pigs is becoming more popular every year.** Not only are licenses inexpensive, but hogs are a very challenging quarry. They're smart, tough, elusive, and dangerous enough to ratchet up some excitement. And dead ones taste great.

Unlike the similar but smaller javelina, which all essentially look alike, wild hogs come in all sizes and colors. Unchecked populations multiply quickly, and regions infested with them suffer damage to crops, habitat, and game bird eggs, and aggressive rooting causes tremendous soil disturbance which can dramatically change the landscape.

I hope I've convinced you that hogs need killing. So, how do you go about planning a wild hog hunt? Here's my story, and I'm stickin' to it because it works!



*Here's a trophy tusker in anyone's book!  
(Photo by Gene Wensel)*



**Locate Land with Pig Problems** Feral hogs are wide-spread but concentrated in the south, from Georgia and Florida through Texas. In many states, wild hogs are considered pests and are not listed as game animals. They're often in direct conflict with the most popular game species—whitetail deer, turkeys, and quail—threatening their habitat and reproduction.

When looking for good places to hunt, **target known deer leases or farmers trying to grow crops.** In places like Texas, where private land is often leased for deer hunting and deer feeders are used, feral hogs not only aggressively run whitetails off feeders, they also eat tons of expensive deer feed. We hunt several leases where members don't shoot hogs during deer season under the presumption killing pigs will disrupt their chances for a big whitetail buck. That makes off-season pig hunters welcome.



*Hunting near a water source turned this pig into pork.  
(Photo by Gene Wensel)*

A great way to find a place to hunt is to **run inexpensive classified ads in rural weekly farming/ranching community newspapers** a month or two before you plan to hunt. You might try to sell yourself as a “pig extermination service,” but be prepared to pay reasonable trespass fees because America’s farming economy is under stress these days.

Get to know locals—it's a great way to get your foot in the door among landowners who have hog problems. During any pig hunt, **whenever you go to town for gas or groceries, make local residents aware that you're there to hunt pigs.** We've picked up several new opportunities by simply telling people what we're doing. Whenever you gain access, make landowners happy and they'll often invite you to return annually. So, keep in touch.

I'm always fascinated that many Texas ranchers will hire professional hog trappers or even pay top dollar helicopter teams to aerial shoot wild hogs, when it's a whole lot cheaper to trust responsible hunters looking for recreational opportunities. **If you're honest, reliable, and respect the land, seems to me like it's all pros with no cons for the landowner.**



*Even the pigs take a lunch break!  
(Photo by Gene Wensel)*

### When To Go

Anytime is good, but in Texas right after deer season is the best time to strike. Southern winters often bring competition for food sources—and you can capitalize on that. If you wait until things green up, hogs often utilize green grass and become harder to attract no matter how much you “corn” the ground. (Texas is one of the few places on earth where the word “corn” is a verb!)

### Where To Stay

Ranchers sometimes offer ranch cabins, or will recommend nice places to erect tents. If you prefer small town motels, always ask about less expensive weekly rates. You might need four-wheel drive vehicles to get into the ranch, as southern soils are conducive to mud. The good news is that sunny days quickly dry up access roads.

Your trail camera will be as valuable for pigs as it is for deer.  
(Photo by Gene Wensel)



### Final Tips

Undisturbed hogs move quite a bit during daylight hours, although **just before dark is always prime time**. Wild pigs are very smart. As soon as they realize they're being hunted, they become even more nocturnal. Night hunting over baited sites with some sort of light is also popular where legal.

Stalking bedded hogs is also a productive technique, especially along drainages or in heavy bedding cover.

**Take trail cameras.** They can tell you when and how many pigs are coming to a food source – natural, or ones you provide – or water source. We concentrate our efforts near drainages or other water sources.

**Pigs are tough animals,** and mature boars develop heavy cartilage “shields” over their vitals from fighting. Most hunters prefer a gun or bow suitable for deer—with proper shot placement they work well on most wild hogs.

Pigs might not have the best eyesight, although I personally think **they can see better than most hunters give them credit for**. Their hearing is superb but **their noses are by far their best defense**. Always play the wind and driving around too much—vehicles can alert them that they are being hunted.

Off season feral hog hunting opportunities are not only exciting, but are lots of fun. Plus, **for a guy from Iowa, it sure beats shoveling late-winter snow!**

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## Six Challenges of Hunting Wild Hogs

By Steve Sorensen

***Wounded Pigs Have Been Known to Charge, and Some Say “This is Where the Fun Starts!”***

Wild hogs are nothing like the stuttering, pink Porky Pig of cartoon fame, nor common barnyard swine oinking at the feed trough. Pigs are a non-native, invasive species in North America. They’re not wanted, so get after them. But it won’t be easy—here are five reasons hunting pigs are a challenge:

### 1. They’re Tough

Whatever you call them—feral hog, Russian boar, or barbeque—wild pigs are better protected from arrows and bullets than any species in North America. More than one hunter has bounced an arrow off, thanks to the armor-like cartilage covering the ribcage of a hog. That means shot placement, angle, and ballistic energy are critical to making clean kills.

Pigs are lean, quick, and athletic, so a hunter needs to be on the ball. The little ones are the quickest. “Pigs under 100 pounds make the best eating,” says Larry LeBlanc, Executive Director of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association. “Leave the big ones lie for the coyotes to scavenge.”



*Wild pigs are tough to hunt, tough to skin, but darn good to eat. Get yourself some.*

## 2. They'll Smell You

Pigs have long snouts—with an olfactory sense on par with deer, coyotes and other animals with long schnozzolas. That means lots of surface area to translate your stinky scent molecules into the fight or flight response, so getting close to pigs while hunting isn't easy.

Because hunters put lots of pressure on pigs, pigs don't stick around to find out where the bullet or arrow will be coming from. Like deer and other animals with sensitive noses, they have a low tolerance for human odor.



*The Rage broadhead passed its test on Texas hogs.  
(Photo by Tracy Breen)*

## 3. They're Hard to Find

Pigs are crepuscular—a big word that comes from the Latin word for “twilight,” and it means pigs feed at dawn and dusk. So, you have no guarantee of finding them. Their daytime haunts are thick, nasty places where only thick, nasty critters go. (Despite what you think of humans, most people—even hunters—aren't nearly as nasty as pigs!)

Finding where they feed can be a challenge because they don't focus on specific foods. They're omnivorous—with the emphasis on *omni*. That's another 50-cent word that means they'll eat anything, animal or vegetable—and it might take a little luck to know where and what they're eating tonight.

#### 4. They're Targets for Any Weapon

Among the most popular of safe and sure pig killers are on the order of a .308 rifle or a .223 semi-auto carbine, but lots of hunters use more adventuresome artillery.

A handgun for hunting pigs? Yes, Dirty Harry's .44 magnum, with a carefully placed shot, adds adrenaline to the hunt. A bow? Yes, an arrow can skewer a pig and give you proof of the reliability of your broadheads. A crossbow? As crossbows become more popular, they're more and more aimed at pigs. (I'd love to try my new [Kodabow](#) crossbow on oinkers.) A muzzleloader? When the smoke clears, you find out if you scored. But—keep in mind that whenever you're pig hunting with a weapon that delivers a single shot, **make your shot count—or count yourself in trouble.**

#### 5. They'll Get You

This is really the number one reason pigs are a challenge—they're the most accessible dangerous game in North America. They're not the killers brown bears can be, but brown bears don't live where people are common. Pigs do, and pigs aren't afraid of you. They can be very aggressive, capable of slashing muscle with razor tusks and crushing bone with powerful jaws.

Wounded pigs have been known to charge their hunters. "This is where the fun starts," as they say. Ask Barry Wensel, a friend of mine who bowhunts pigs with his recurve bow. A couple of years ago, on his annual "Pig Gig" in Texas, he fought off a wounded porker with his hands and ended up with a broken wrist and countless cactus spines embedded in his flesh. He was lucky it wasn't worse (don't miss his story ["When Wild Hogs Attack...They Come FULL Boar!"](#)).





## 6. Wild Pig Hide Is Murderin' Knives

Havalon's most rabid fans just might be pig hunters. If you've ever skinned a wild pig, you know how quickly that tough, hairy hide dulls knives. **Yet many Havalon customers rave about these replaceable blade knives as the best pig hunting knives around.** With [Havalon Knives](#), you don't need to stop and resharpen over and over again to finish the job. Once you've experienced the super sharp edges of Havalon knives, and then just popped on a new blade when you need it (which is not often, even on hogs) you'll think you died and went to hog heaven.



### So, Are You Courageous Enough to Hunt Pigs?

If you think you're courageous enough for hunting pigs, read on and you'll see one hunter's story about how he was attacked twice in a single day. If you can get past that, you'll find some great information useful for hunting wild hogs. You'll find plenty of opportunities wherever they roam. That's because they're a dominant species that destroys habitat for other animals, so no one wants them.

Only one species is more dominant, and it's the one reading this book! So, go out and get after some pigs!

Be sure to read these reviews, ["How Many Times Have You Had to Change Knives in the Middle of a Job?"](#) and ["I Skinned Four Hogs with the Havalon!"](#)

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## Six Strategies for *WILD* Bacon

By Mike Marsh

***Yes, wild hogs are a challenge, but here are some strategies that will bring home the wild bacon!***



Most first-time hog hunters think hunting them will be easy. However, while rookie hog hunters may have experience with deer, consistent success with hogs comes at the end of a steeper learning curve. Hogs possess a keen sense of smell and unrivalled intelligence among animals, giving them advantages over hunters who rely on their deer hunting skills.

*The author - left, with Dusty Jones, took this hog from a ladder stand over a baited wallow in an eastern North Carolina swamp.  
(Photo by Mike Marsh)*

Nevertheless, hunters can adapt deer hunting strategies to hogs. The most important skill a hog hunter must master is persistence. Although a hunter may see a host of hog sign, many days may pass before getting a shot opportunity. Here are six tactics that will help you climb that learning curve quickly, and get those shooting opportunities sooner.

## 1. Take a Stand

Hunting from an elevated stand is a popular strategy. Stands may overlook bait stations, fields, hardwoods, wallows, rubs, or trails. Freshly tilled fields create fresh dirt, an irresistible attraction for hogs—animals naturally programmed to root up the soil searching for food. You shouldn't be surprised to know that pigs will find dirt.

## 2. Slop the Hogs

Hogs eat the same foods as deer. Certain baiting techniques keep hogs returning. Corn and other feed grains make the best hog baits. However, anything a human eats will attract hogs, so hunters can clean their freezers of outdated meat, fish, and vegetables and use that to ring the dinner bell for hogs.

Hogs move around a lot, gleaning resources *en masse* before moving to another area. However, a well-stocked bait station can keep them returning periodically. The best bait is corn soaked in water until it sours. Hunters use rubber boots to stomp the mash into a wallow. Pigs churn the mud to eat the corn, along with the invertebrates that good organic slop produces.



*Pouring water-soaked, soured corn into a wallow and stomping it into the mud keeps pigs returning as they make their rounds over a large area.  
(Photo by Mike Marsh)*



### 3. Tread Lightly

I've hunted extensively at an educational property called Howell Woods Environmental Learning Center ([www.johnstoncc.edu/howellwoods](http://www.johnstoncc.edu/howellwoods)). In the early years of its hog control program, hunters set up stands and began hunting the next day. That changed when hunters' reports showed that success increased substantially when they used these three more productive stand-hunting tactics:

- **Setting up stands and baits four days prior to hunting.**
- **Hunting in late afternoon.**
- **Limiting hunts to two days.**

These tactics reduce the risk that hogs will abandon the stand area. Hogs can detect human scent several days after a hunter has passed. They are intelligent animals, so they stay away until long after the scent dissipates.



### 4. Hit 'em Hard

The percentage of hogs hunters hit and lose is high. That's why many control hunts prohibit certain weapons and ammunition. I have seen pistols, archery gear and buckshot prohibited because underpowered projectiles may leave no blood trails. A hog's cartilage mantle slips over projectile wounds, reducing external blood loss. Some companies manufacture rifle ammo specially tailored to taking hogs, such as [Remington Hog Hammer](#).

*Remington's Hog Hammer ammo is available in .223, .30-30, .308 and .30-06. Its solid copper bullets turn even a .223 into a reliable hog round.  
(Photo by Mike Marsh)*

The best target is the heart. Lower in the chest than that of a deer, a hog's heart is just above the sternum and behind the foreleg. Hit the heart and the pig dies right there. Hunters taking head shots can miss because the small target is in constant motion.

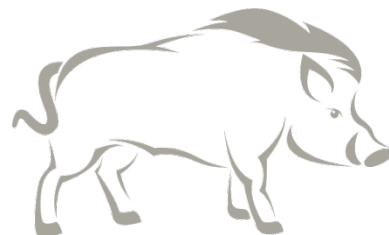
### 5. Get Up and Go

When stand hunting is unproductive, hunters should move. Pigs range over huge areas, so having access to lots of acreage increases the odds for stalking success.

Pigs are noisy and boar musk is pungent, so hunters often hear or smell them before seeing them. Moving into the wind and watching carefully is the best strategy, and a binocular is a big asset. When a hog is in a wallow with just its eyes and ears showing, only the flick of an ear may give it away.



*The author - left, tested Remington's new Hog Hammer ammunition, with outstanding results, at Hog Heaven Outfitters in eastern North Carolina.  
(Photo by Mike Marsh)*



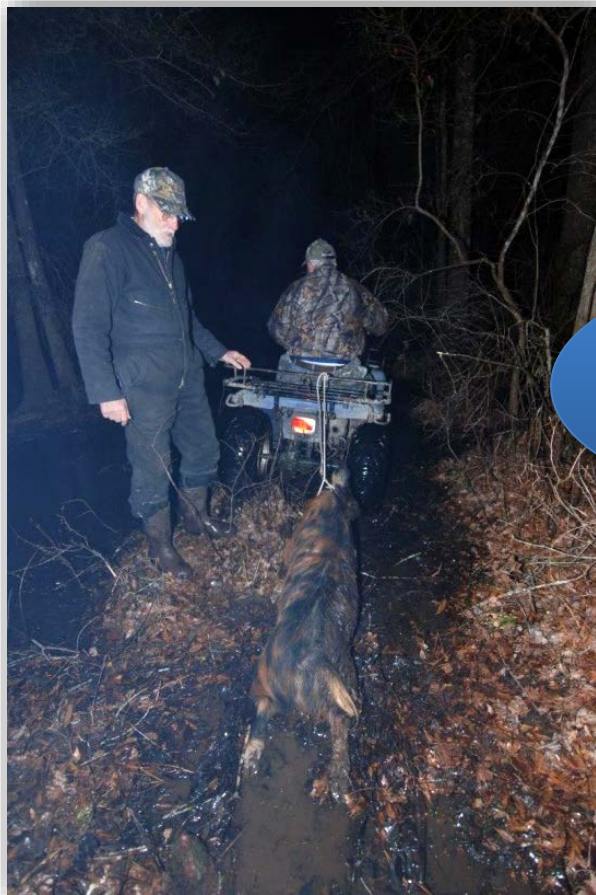
## 6. All's Fair Because *Hog Hunting Is War!*

When stand hunting or stalking are not effective, hunters should try hound hunting or night hunting. Many areas allow night hunting, with or without special restrictions (such as limitations on weapons or taking pigs only under crop depredation regulations).

In areas where artificial lights are legal for night hunting, hunters use spotlights, motion-sensitive lights attached to feeders, night vision devices, and scope-mounted lights with filtered lenses. Milton Turnage makes a scope-mounted light that casts a beam to illuminate hogs at 300 yards (Hog Heaven Outfitters, [www.assassinatorhuntinglights.com](http://www.assassinatorhuntinglights.com)).

Wild boars, feral pigs, wild bacon—whatever you call hogs—they're fast becoming a favorite pursuit of hunters because wherever they are, there are just too many of them. Go get 'em.

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*The easy way to get a hog out of a swamp – drag it, head first, behind an ATV.  
(Photo by Mike Marsh)*



## An Elephant Gun For Hog Hunting? Why Not?

By Max Prasac

***A hog hunting expert's insights about the proper firearm for a big ol' pig.***

I have to admit that I harbor dreams of Africa. What hunter doesn't? A number of years ago I was determined to hunt Africa, so the first logical step was to acquire a rifle that was up to the task of taking the biggest and most dangerous animals Africa has to offer. I bought a custom-built Mauser bolt-action rifle in .416 Remington Magnum. Not a gun for plinking, no fun off of the bench, and even less fun to feed (on the wallet, that is). But I would get to Africa... eventually!



*Not every hog dies easily, especially the big ones. (Photo by Max Prasac)*

Fast forward a number of years, a mortgage, a family, bills to pay, mouths to feed, and African dreams get filed away to a corner of the mind you rarely visit. But that elephant gun? You can still use it on hogs! OK, the outfitter will look at you funny when you start loading cigar-sized rounds into your rifle. But my outfitter already thinks I'm crazy—particularly when I showed up in camp with a rifle, when he knows me primarily as a handgun hunter.

### Why such a big gun?

Isn't a .416 a bit much? Isn't it overkill? Isn't it TOO MUCH gun? Why use such a big caliber on hogs? Well, why not? Yes, it kills on both ends, but it makes for really potent hog medicine. Is it necessary to hunt hogs with such a large caliber rifle? Nope, they don't wear Kevlar vests—at least not yet—and are a bit smaller in stature than elephants and Cape buffalo.

*We settled on Double Tap's lightest load for the .416 Remington Magnum, loaded with a 300 grain Barnes TSX at an advertised 2,920 feet per second. We sighted in our old Mauser at 100 yards and headed out for real-world testing.  
(Photo by Max Prasac)*



**What ammo for a big gun?** Before I booked my hunt with [Hog Heaven Outfitters](#) of Johnston County, North Carolina, I contacted Mike McNett, president and CEO of [Double Tap Ammunition](#) and talked to him about my upcoming hunt. He loads the .416 Remington in a number of different flavors, and I settled on the lightest loads, throwing a 300 grain Barnes TSX at a scorching 2,920 fps. Should be enough for hogs... so I ordered up a box. Why not? Do you see a pattern here? Light load? In a big gun, doesn't matter!

### What gear for a big gun?

First I mounted an [Ultradot 30](#) red dot on Warne scope bases, using the supplied rings from Ultradot. After a morning range session to get reacquainted with my rifle, I was ready for the hunt.

Arriving in camp an hour before dark, outfitter Milt Turnage handed me a flashlight and told me to strap it on to my red dot sight. The light came with a contoured base and a Velcro strap, and is called a “Kill Light,” produced by [Elusive Wildlife Technologies](#), a company out of Texas. The red light purportedly doesn’t spook the hogs, enabling you to hunt in the dark. I was skeptical, but I mounted the light and headed out to my stand for the evening.



*We mounted this XLR 100 red light onto our Ultradot sight with the supplied mount and Velcro strap. Produced by Elusive Wildlife Technologies, this little gem made hunting in the dark possible without the cost associated with military-style night-vision equipment.*

*(Photo by Max Prasac)*

### Too big for a pig?

All was quiet till about 9:15 when I heard slight rustling of the brush about 50 yards to my left. The movement seemed too careful and quiet for a hog, but you never know. So, I cranked up my Ultradot, flipped the switch on the Kill Light, and bathed in the red light was a big boar hog.



I took the shot that was offered me, a less than perfect shoulder shot with the animal quartering towards me. When .416 roared, the hog crashed off into the North Carolina swamp. My ensuing investigation revealed no blood, and no hog. Did I miss?

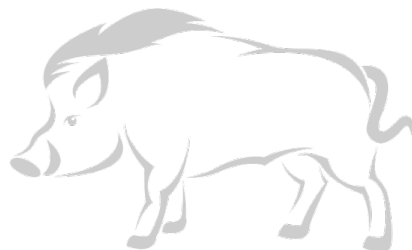
After turning up no evidence of a hit, I headed back up to my stand. Maybe the hog would come back knowing I'm evidently no great shot with a rifle. Boy, I was never going to hear the end of this back at camp. Milt and his crew came to pick me up and with our flashlights we searched the area. Nothing.

That's when the teasing started. I swallowed my pride, went to bed, and got up at the crack of dawn. The stand I was sitting on in the morning was about 100 yards from last night's scene of embarrassment. When no pigs made an appearance (they must not have heard about my shooting prowess), I climbed down and went back to where I hunted the night before. It took all of ten minutes for me to find one large, and very dead boar, with a .416 caliber hole through him. He made it only about 25 yards from where I shot him. Guess I'm not so bad with a rifle after all.

*A dead pig doesn't always bleed, so conduct a thorough search.*

### **OK, so why the .416?**

You don't have to have a good reason to use a particular firearm for wild hog hunting. If you have a rifle that gets little use, collecting dust in your safe until you are able to realize your African, Alaskan, or fill-in-the-blank dream, why not use it to knock over a pig? You might as well clean it up, order up some ammo, get reacquainted with it, and then put some pork chops in your freezer. No reason is as good a reason as any. When someone asks why, simply reply, Why not?



### **Five Take-Aways:**

- **Wild pigs don't require a specialized caliber. Any caliber will do, from the popular .223 on up. So use the gun you have.**
- **In a light gun, make sure your bullet is well-constructed for deep penetration.**
- **In a heavy gun, use a light to mid-weight bullet that will penetrate and expand.**
- **Whatever gun you carry, use accessories suitable to the hunting conditions.**
- **A dead pig doesn't always bleed, so always conduct a thorough search.**

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## When Wild Hogs Attack... They Come *Full Boar!*

By Barry Wensel

***Everyone says pigs are dangerous, but few can tell you first-hand. Two different pigs came after Barry Wensel – both on the same day. If you head out to hunt wild hogs, read his story. Heed his warning.***

Hunting wild hogs is a lot of fun, but this story isn't about fun.

My brother Gene and I have been organizing bow hunts for feral hogs for twenty-plus years with absolutely no problems (see [www.brothersofthebow.com](http://www.brothersofthebow.com)). Then came March 11, 2011. I got charged not once but twice in the same day by different hogs. I beat back the first one, but the second one got me pretty good before I got him.



*A face only a mother could love!  
(Photo by Barry Wensel)*

### **Attack #1**

It was the last day of five weeks of bowhunting. The prior evening one of our friends, Bernie Finch, had wounded a big boar right at dark. Early the next morning Gene, Bernie and I took the track.

We came upon the boar and Bernie shot but missed and the boar took off. I ran along behind the wounded porker to try to keep him in sight since his blood trail was petering out.



Apparently the pig decided I was too close and he turned to face me. I knocked an arrow and stood my ground. At twenty yards he dropped his head and charged. I held off until he was about fifteen feet from me to insure it wasn't a bluff charge. He meant business and I drove a single arrow into his carotid artery angling downward. The broadhead came out just behind his opposite armpit.

### ***A perfect shot.***

But a charging pig has momentum, and he kept coming. Unable to put another arrow on my recurve bow quickly, I just threw the bow in his face and shinnied up a small mesquite tree. The boar died right under me. Wow! I have to admit I did pretty good on that one. But the next one I didn't do so hot on.



### **Attack #2**

Later that afternoon I came upon two mature sows plus seven or eight piglets at a water hole. Catching a good wind and using the terrain to my advantage I got close enough to notice the calico colored sow was lactating but the black one wasn't. At ten yards I zipped a shaft right behind the black pig's shoulder—a complete pass-through. The arrow was soaked in blood but to be on the safe side I waited a half hour before starting the track.

*Feral hogs aren't your average barnyard pigs.  
(Photo by Barry Wensel)*

As I topped a small hill I saw her lying on her side. She looked dead and I was thankful, but just to be safe I knocked another arrow. When I got to about 20 yards she rolled up on her stomach, then crawled at an angle to face me. That should have been my first red flag warning.



*The pig that got Barry Wensel. Look closely and you'll see the broken arrow shaft between her eyes., the second of three arrows. The broadhead hit her at five feet – major “pucker factor.”  
(Photo by Barry Wensel)*

I side-stepped enough to avoid the frontal angle and put a second shaft completely through her. Suddenly she spun around to face me, cutting the distance in half. We had the big stand-off. With no trees to climb, I stood my ground. She just stood there at 30 feet popping her jaws. Don't ever show a growling dog (or hog) you're afraid of them—but after the adventure of the morning, it was very scary.

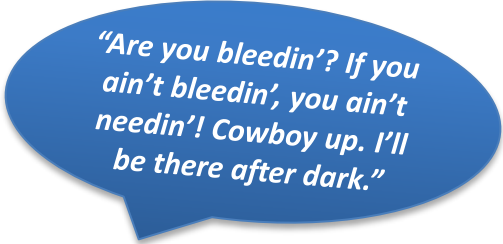
### **Here She Comes**

Word must have gotten around in the pig world that they could challenge me. She dropped her head and charged. I thought it would be a false charge so I stood my ground. As she gained momentum I realized I was in trouble. With no other options I tried to brain shoot her at about five feet. The arrow knocked her off her feet but she got right up and came for me. With no time to reload I threw my bow in her face and turned to run. I didn't take two steps and tripped over my own churning feet falling face down right into a giant bed of prickly pear cactus. It was like a bad dream.

She was taking her aggression out on my bow while I kicked at her face. When she threw my bow in my lap, I threw it right back in her face. The bow was actually saving me because she was venting her frustration on it rather than me.

In the fight I finally regained my feet. She was standing about 10 feet away popping her teeth. I looked her right in the eye and slowly took one step towards her and reached down for the tip of the lower limb of my recurve, taking the bow away from her. I was somewhat in control again, and quickly knocked another arrow.

She started backing away and I thought she was leaving—then realized maybe she was backing up to get a running start for me again, so I sunk another shaft into her chest and she fell over dead. It was over. Wow!



*"Are you bleedin'? If you ain't bleedin', you ain't needin'! Cowboy up. I'll be there after dark."*

### **Brotherly Love**

Then it hit me, I was in a LOT of pain. The palms of my shaking hands were covered with hundreds of cactus thorns. Thousands more were buried in my right arm, shoulder, back, ribs, buttocks, and legs - and my arm was really throbbing.

Walking back to my pick-up point I noticed I had a single bar on my cell phone. I dialed my brother, who was four or five miles away, said I got a hog... had to kill it in hand-to-hand combat... fell in the cactus and was covered with thousands of thorns... thought my arm might be broken... as thirsty as I'd ever been in my life.

He said, and I'm quoting, "Are you bleedin'? If you ain't bleedin', you ain't needin'! Cowboy up. I'll be there after dark." End of quote. He hung up the phone. Brotherly love for sure. You'd think on the last hour of the last day of five weeks of hog hunting, he could help a brother. What can I say?





Well, the truth is despite what he said on the phone, he came right over to help. The next day the hospital confirmed I had a fracture in my lower arm but I was lucky. I had avoided the pig's razor sharp tusks. All I needed was six weeks of pampering and everything would be fine. I didn't expect it to come from Gene, but he turned out to be a pretty nice guy.

A quarter century of chasing hogs and never a problem. Then I get charged twice in one day. There's a lesson in that I'll never forget the rest of my life - we need to respect any wounded animal because they'll fight back. My only regret is it would have made for some great video footage... twice. If your primary weapon doesn't do the job for you, you better make sure you have a [good knife!](#)

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## Field Dressing a Hog? Get the Best Knife for Hogs

By Patrick Carrothers, President & CEO

With Max Prasac and Mike Weathers

### *Hunters review Havalon Knives for field dressing and skinning hogs.*

Ever since we started selling them in the fall of 2005, we've been hearing hunters praise our Havalon knives for field dressing hogs. This was a pleasant surprise. We knew we had the longest-lasting surgical edges in the business. Taxidermists had already been telling us we created a great knife for field dressing and skinning deer, as well as the various small game animals and fur bearers.

But we didn't have any direct experience with the tough, hairy hides of hogs, bears, and mountain goats. Our trapper customers told us our blades worked great on beaver; that was a good sign. But would our blade edges hold up well when cutting through the tough hairy hides that are well known knife killers?

It didn't take long before our phones started ringing. Hunters were calling to tell us how happy they were with their Havalon Piranta knives for skinning hogs. And bears, elk, moose, sheep, goats—you name it. We started getting better feedback that we could even dream about. You could hear the excitement in their voices and read it between the lines of their emails. And at every trade show more than a few guys would stop by and say "This is a great knife for skinning hogs!"



*You think hogs look tough?  
They ARE tough, and not every  
knife is up to the job of field  
dressing and skinning one!*

**Hogs? Really? Yes, *absolutely!*** But don't take it from me. Here are some reviews from hunters in the field that may help if you're looking for the best knife for field dressing and skinning hogs....

## “How Many Times Have You Had to Change Knives in the Middle of a Job?”

By Max Prasac



*Max Prasac took this 175-lb sow with his custom .475 Linebaugh Ruger Super Redhawk in the sweltering summer heat of North Carolina.  
(Photo by Max Prasac)*

Anyone who has skinned a wild hog knows there are few animals that will dull a knife as quickly and efficiently. I have two no-name cheap skinning knives of unknown origin that I’ve used for a very long time that hold an edge reasonably well... on deer. Hogs are a different story. I decided to give my new Havalon a go and handed it to Brad. He looked at the bright orange handled knife with a bit of skepticism, but made the decision to humor me.

How many times have you had to change knives in the middle of a hog skinning job, with yet another couple of sharpened knives on standby? If you only have one knife, maybe you have to stop and sharpen it before finishing the job. That has happened to me more times than I care to remember. It becomes particularly tedious when you kill multiple hogs and have them lined up for skinning.

The first couple of cuts proved effortless, and Brad paused to give me a look of surprise and then a grin formed on his face. He got to work, his pace increased as did the smile on his face. He accelerated as if to prove how fast he could skin a hog with the right tools. I usually help out to speed the process up, but soon found it wasn’t necessary. I would only get in the way, and impede progress. The Havalon Piranta proved to be the right tool for the job. The only “problem” we ran into is that we skinned out the hog expecting to change blades and never got to the point where it was necessary.

## “I Skinned Four Hogs with the Havalon!”

By Mike Weathers

Last Saturday I went hog hunting with some buds and their dogs. We caught six hogs for a party they were planning that night. These were younger guys and none of them had ever gutted a hog before.

Since I'm always hunting or fishing for something, I keep a spare skinner in the truck. One of the guys showed me this knife that looked like a scalpel, so wanting to show these guys the right way to process a wild hog, I took off. I was amazed at the sharp blade and how effortless it was to skin and clean the hog. It usually takes a few sharpenings on one of my best knives, but not so with the Havalon. I skinned four hogs before I let one of the rookies try what I had shown them. My hands didn't cramp up, the light weight of the knife was incredible.

**Safety Note!** [Watch the video on how to change the blade!](#) Even after skinning 6 hogs, one of the rookies almost cut his finger off trying to replace the blade (and it didn't even need changing). *Great Product!* I can't wait to get mine and show all my hunting buddies!!!!



*Mike Weathers is a hunter and a Havalon customer living in Texas.*



## Is the Havalon Knife a Hog Skinner?

By Max Prasac

### *Hog hunting in North Carolina's oppressive July heat.*

It was one of those grueling hot July summer days in North Carolina, a day when even the mosquitoes were loathe to move about. The evenings, when the sun had retreated to the west, offered no measurable relief from the thick, still, oppressive humidity and heat. Only fools hunt in this weather, so what does that say about me? The hogs had all gone nocturnal (who says they aren't smart?), forcing us as hunters to go nocturnal as well.

I don't like hunting in the summer in the south, but deadlines are deadlines, so I found myself in a familiar surrounding at [Hog Heaven Outfitters](#), of Johnston County, North Carolina. I test guns, ammo and gear year round at Hog Heaven (save for deer season), but I normally try to steer clear in the summer months.



*Southern hogs often remain nocturnal and don't show up in the extreme heat of the day.*

This month I was testing an [Ultradot 30](#) red dot-type sight, on one of my favorite custom revolvers, a Ruger Super Redhawk in .475 Linebaugh. The Ruger was fitted with a custom-built, five-shot cylinder by Northern California gunsmith Jack Huntington of [JRH Advanced Gunsmithing](#). The load of choice consisted of a 420 grain wide flat-nosed hardcast bullet over a stiff charge of Winchester 296 for a chronographverified 1,350 fps at the muzzle. This load has proven extremely accurate and has delivered groups even some rifles would be envious of.

We had extensively abused this sight system in the past, and found it to be worth its weight in gold, but I had never before used one at night, and wanted to see just how well it performed. It's legal to hunt hogs in North Carolina at night - which is not the case in every state, so make sure you check regulations before you try it.

Like any optic, it requires a light source on the animal to work optimally. Hog Heaven proprietor Milt Turnage had set up lights in strategic areas on the property just for such occasions, and was putting me in a spot where the hogs regularly root, and he sweetened the temptation with some rotting sweet potatoes. (For the hogs, not for me!) Never mind the smell! The shot would be around 50 yards if the hogs decided to move in the movement-suppressing heat.

### The Hunt

I made my way out to a ladder stand before dusk, to settle in and start sweating. Did I mention that it was hot? It was a long night. Some time around 4:00 in the morning - it may have been earlier or later, I'm not sure as I was delirious by then - I heard the tell-tale grunting that announces the arrival of wild boar. Finally!



*Max Prasac took this 175-lb sow with his custom .475 Linebaugh Ruger Super Redhawk in the sweltering summer heat of North Carolina.  
(Photo by Max Prasac)*

All of my senses came alive and were working at peak efficiency now. The group of hogs cautiously approached the light while I patiently waited and watched. A number of small hogs began rooting around the area, when finally a rather large sow caught my attention. Word of advice - if small hogs show up to eat, there are often bigger ones coming. Large hogs tend to exercise caution more than their younger counterparts and may therefore hang back until satisfied that it's safe to break cover. That's how they get big. So be patient and don't shoot the first animal that shows up.

*Word of advice – if small hogs show up to eat, there are often bigger ones coming.*

I watched mama awhile and waited to see what else might show. When satisfied that no other hogs were en route, I slowly yet deliberately turned my Ultradot on, pulled the hammer back, leveled the red dot on the chosen pig's shoulder, and let 420 grains of lead fly. The shot was true; the hog reared up and took off like it had seen a ghost. When the dust had settled, I slowly made my way down the ladder, flashlight in one hand, revolver on standby in the other, and found blood on the ground. That's always a good sign. I followed the trail into the heavy briar-laden brush (why do they always head into the thickest brush?), and found her piled up about 25 yards from where I had hit her. It was a clean kill. Now the fun part, getting her out. Fortunately, she didn't go far, so I didn't have far to drag.

### **Cool the Carcass Quickly**

When the weather gets this hot, it is imperative to get the animal skinned and the meat on ice as quickly as possible to avoid spoiling it, unlike northern hunting deer in winter where you have the luxury of hanging the deer outside for a couple of days to age the meat. I generally don't gut hogs unless I have a long distance to move them and can benefit from the reduction in weight, so I simply dragged her out to the road. I made the call to Milt and requested a pick up. By the time Milt showed up, the sun was starting to make its appearance and the promise of another sweltering hot day was on the horizon. We loaded her up in the bed of Milt's truck and headed back to camp. She was pretty large and weighed in at just over 175lbs. She would greatly enhance my barbeque.

## Using a Havalon to Skin the Hog

It has been hours since I had quenched my thirst in that North Carolina heat, so I hung her up and replenished some lost fluids. Then my guide, Brad Easley, and I set out to skin the sow. Anyone who has skinned a wild hog knows that there are few animals that will dull a knife as quickly and efficiently as a big porker. So, most guys tackle the job with more than one knife.

*When the blade dulls, pop it out, and put in a new one without missing a beat. You never have to stop skinning to sharpen a knife again.*



Brad, an experienced skinner, grabbed his knives (yes, plural), and I brought out my one knife, a [Havalon Piranta](#). I have two no-name cheap skinning knives that hold their edge reasonably well... on deer. Hogs are a different story. As I handed my Havalon to Brad, he looked at the bright orange handled knife with a bit of obvious skepticism, but made the decision to humor me. Silly gun writers, what do they know?

If what I had heard about these knives was true, we were on to something good. The lightweight, plastic handled skinning knife comes with 12 replacement blades and a handy carrying case that you can affix to your belt. The logic behind this knife system is sound. The idea is to use the blade until it dulls, pop it out, and put in a new one without missing a beat. You never have to stop skinning and sharpen a knife again.

Stopping to sharpen a knife, or juggling multiple knives in order to finish the job has happened to me more times than I care to remember. It becomes particularly tedious when you kill multiple hogs and have them lined up for skinning. Makes me tired just thinking about it.



### First Cuts

The first couple of cuts proved effortless, and Brad paused to give me a look of surprise and then a grin formed on his face. He then got to work, his pace increased as did the smile on his face. He accelerated as if to prove how fast he could skin a hog, now that he had the right tool. I usually help out to speed the process up, but soon found that it wasn't necessary and that I would only impede his progress.

The [Havalon Piranta](#) proved to be the right tool for the job. We had extra blades on hand but never even got to the point where it was necessary to change the one we were using.

What's not to like about the Havalon Piranta? I have to warn the uninitiated that this is one very, very sharp implement that will remove a digit with minimal effort. As with every knife, exercise extreme caution, but exercise a bit more with a Havalon knife.

We got the meat on ice on time, but I had to add ice a couple of hours later. On my drive home I needed to stop twice to dump water and add more ice. In this weather, meat is subject to spoiling in short order, so you should keep checking your ice and add more as necessary.

I spent my first few hours back home in a coma, exhausted from the heat, but thankful the hunt was a success. I'm also grateful that deer and bear seasons are in fall's cooler weather!



*The Havalon Piranta Edge proved to be the right tool for the job, making the skinning of this hg effortless. My guide like my Havalon so much I gave it to him.  
(Photo by Max Prasac)*

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## About the Authors



**Gene Wensel**, a dedicated traditional archer, is a widely known and universally respected hunter. He specializes in whitetail deer but he'll shoot anything, from Iowa to Africa. He has written for just about every bowhunting and whitetail periodical. Gene and his twin brother Barry are known as "Brothers of the Bow." Their website is [www.brothersofthebow.com](http://www.brothersofthebow.com).



**Barry Wensel**, along with his brother Gene, organizes an annual "pig gig." Check [www.brothersofthebow.com](http://www.brothersofthebow.com) for information. He is the author of [The Crooked Hat Chronicles](#), tales of his adventures and misadventures in hunting with traditional archery equipment. Asked why he wears his hat crooked, he says, "So the animals I'm shooting don't think I'm looking at them."



**Max Prasac** contributes regularly to the NRA's American Hunter and to [Bear Hunter's Online](#) magazine. He's a frequent contributor to Gun Digest magazine and is also the author of *Gun Digest's Big-Bore Revolvers*, the *Gun Digest Book of Ruger Revolvers*, and most recently *A History of Ruger Revolvers*.



**Mike Marsh** of Wilmington, North Carolina has written four books about the state's hunting, fresh-water and salt-water fishing. His latest is *Fishing North Carolina*. His articles, columns and photos have appeared in more than 100 magazines and newspapers. To contact Mike, view his award-winning articles and photos or order his books, visit [www.mikemarshoutdoors.com](http://www.mikemarshoutdoors.com).



**Steve Sorensen** is the editor of the [Havalon Sportsman's Post](#), and is the author of [Growing Up With Guns](#). He writes an award-winning newspaper column called The Everyday Hunter®, and has published articles in the top hunting magazines across the USA. Invite Steve to speak at your next sportsman's event, and follow him at [www.EverydayHunter.com](http://www.EverydayHunter.com).