

**YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT BOARD**



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July 23, 2018

Honourable Ranj Pillai, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources
Honourable Pauline Frost, Minister of Environment
Government of Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada, Y1A 2C6

Minister Pillai and Minister Frost,

Re: Issue of Escaped Wild Boar in Mendenhall Subdivision

The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board would like to express our concerns regarding the issue of escaped wild boar in Mendenhall subdivision, near Whitehorse. The Board appreciates the efforts Yukon Government has undertaken to date to work with the owner whose wild boar escaped several weeks ago. Given the readily available evidence documenting the insurmountable negative impact wild boar pose to the environment in other jurisdictions, we feel this is the time to act decisively to avoid any possible scenarios of this kind in the Yukon.

Wild boar are pervasive and difficult animals that pose many challenges to wildlife managers and land owners in many parts of the world. In Canada this includes Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, as well dozens of states south of the border, the worst affected being Texas, Arizona and California. There are also tens of thousands of articles citing the damage they have caused internationally. Wild boar are known to be damaging to almost all types of ecosystems, especially sensitive wetland habitats where they can consume large amounts of vegetation, root up ground, and exist in their new ecosystems with no natural predators in most areas they invade. To be fair, many of these jurisdictions are in the south, but in Saskatchewan, new evidence is being generated to document that wild boar are adapting to northern climates.

The Board is deeply concerned about the ability of wild boar to pass on diseases such as tuberculosis and brucellosis to our native species. The boar in Mendenhall have the potential of coming in to contact several indigenous species including bison, which would be at risk of contracting these diseases and potentially affecting many animals in the population. The Yukon's Aishihik Bison herd, one of the largest free ranging disease-free herds in Canada, is a very significant conservation milestone. To jeopardize this for the sake of a few farmed or privately owned wild boar would be catastrophic and profoundly unnecessary.

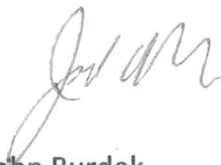
While the Board understand that all the escaped wild boar were reported to be female, and therefore the potential for reproduction is nil, there remains the remote possibility of these females being pregnant before having escaped and delivering a litter in the wild, or in a rare case the possibility exists of hybridization with domestic stock at large.

The Board is deeply concerned for the risk these wild boar pose to the habitat and wildlife of the Yukon, and we hope the Yukon Government will take a firm stance in dealing with these animals. This is already taking place, including the short-term and immediate removal of any free ranging animals. However, the Board urges the Departments to work collaboratively to develop a long-term strategy that should include policy and/or legislation that would effectively ban wild boar ownership, imports, and exports - and a ban on raising boar in the Yukon. Additionally, we would like to see an immediate removal of wild boar from the list of agriculture species permitted in Yukon.

Finally, it is worth noting that Dr Ryan Brook from the University of Saskatchewan sent correspondence including this quote in regards to the escaped wild boar: *"I will say and everyone I know in the US will say the same thing - drop anything you are doing and put any and all resources into getting those pigs dead as quick as possible"*.

We thank you and your Departments for your work on this issue to date and we hope this can be resolved in an efficient and timely manner. If you have any questions on this matter, please contact our Executive Director Graham Van Tighem at 667-5835.

Sincerely,



John Burdek
Chair, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board

cc: Matt Ball, Director of Agriculture, Department of Energy Mines and Resources
Christine Cleghorn, Director of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Environment