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# Irving finally getting a leg up in fight with wild pigs

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Irving residents stopped complaining about wild pigs tearing up their yards around the same time the city caught a handful of the meddlesome animals.

That was more than two months ago. Since then, the city has caught more than 150 additional pigs, and it doesn't plan to slow down any time soon.

"We're just going to keep at it," said Jonathon Bazan, the city's assistant intergovernmental services director.

In October, the city responded to residents' complaints that wild pigs were romping through a south Irving neighborhood at night. The swine were destroying lawns as they dug for grubs and acorns.

The animal services department, which Bazan oversees, called in the help of a wildlife expert and tracked the pigs to an area near the Trinity River where the city abuts Grand Prairie.

Animal experts say thousands of hogs have considered the Trinity River bottoms home for decades. Because the river is far enough from developed areas, the pigs aren't typically a problem.

'Been there for years'

Irving officials believe that heavy rains in the fall caused the river to swell and forced the pigs to seek new places to sleep and eat. They believe the pigs used an empty field between the river and the south Irving neighborhood as a way to get to residential lawns.

Once the animals realized that certain yards were a food source, the lawns became part of their regular rotation in the hunt for a meal.

The city placed corn-lined cages in the field, caught a handful of pigs and stopped the residential invasion. Once residents' property seemed protected, officials decided to move into the hogs' natural



**ROBERT W. HART**/Special Contributor  
**A 100-pound wild hog** was trapped near Santa Anita Boulevard in south Irving in October.

habitat.

"By going out there and meeting them a little closer to the river, they're not getting to go into the subdivision," Bazan said.

So far, the tactic has been successful. In all, the city has trapped more than 160 pigs.

The hogs travel up and down the Trinity in packs as large as 60. Bazan said Irving has compared notes with other cities to see who else has experienced problems.

Bazan said Irving is trying to be proactive to prevent the pigs from invading more lawns and neighborhoods.

Cliff Moore, a wildlife expert with Animal Services Inc., which trained city workers, said the population could rebound in less than two years if the city quits now. He said damage to lawns is usually the last symptom of an overrun pig population.

"They've been there for years by the time they get to a front yard," Moore said.

#### City making money

While Irving initially used cages that caught one or just a few pigs at a time, it's now using larger corral-type traps that can snag about 20 hogs at once. It has brought some relief to residents such as Fred La Vail, whose yard on Lookout Circle was damaged by pigs three times.

La Vail said he hasn't had any problems since the city started trapping at a high rate. But, La Vail said, it's hard to feel completely relieved, knowing how fast the hogs reproduce.

"I will tell you, if I get up in the middle of the night, I go look out front," La Vail said. "That's habit now."

The city bought a trailer that connects to the door of the traps so they can collect the hogs once they're captured. The pigs are then taken to Fort Worth's Frontier Meats.

For every pig the city brings the company, Frontier donates \$30 to the city, which so far has garnered more than \$5,000.

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