



## **Rewilding: Restoring Ecosystems for Nature and People** **Addendum: Wild Boar**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Trust's Rewilding Policy was adopted by Trustees on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015. Under the section 're-introducing keystone species' the policy specifically refers to beavers, lynx, wolves and bears. This addendum sets out the Trust's position on wild boar (*Sus scrofa*).

Wild boar are native throughout Britain but became extinct for the second time around three hundred years ago<sup>1</sup>. As a native keystone species, **the Trust supports the re-introduction of wild boar following international<sup>2</sup> and national guidelines<sup>3</sup>**. Wild boar can benefit woodland regeneration -through soil disturbance and seed dispersal and can also reduce dominance of bracken, by digging up and eating the rhizomes. In Europe, wild boar (especially young) are prey to lynx, wolf and bear but also feed on carcasses killed by these predators. Wild boar can impact on road safety, agriculture, commercial forestry, fencing etc. as well as having negative impacts on some habitats e.g. 'bluebell woods'. In the absence of predators, wild boar populations might require management by culling, if other methods such as dispersal or exclusion prove ineffective where their presence proves problematic.

### **OFFICIAL AND LEGAL STATUS OF WILD BOAR IN THE UK**

Over recent decades several populations have become established as a result of accidental or deliberate release or escapes<sup>4</sup>. The Scottish Government has an interim position statement on feral pigs<sup>5</sup> that states: *'Although formerly native, wild boar are now considered to be outwith their native range in Scotland. This means that it is an offence under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Section 14)** to release any type of pig including wild boar....as an interim measure [Scottish Government] has adopted a precautionary approach to managing feral pigs in order to contain their spread whilst a long term policy position is developed'*.

Under the **Infrastructure Act 2015** (extending to England and Wales only) beaver and wild boar were added to **Part 1B of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** as [native] *'animals no longer normally present'*. They are therefore now considered native species. Control orders can only be used against animals that have been reintroduced unlawfully (i.e. unlicensed). Before control orders can be used the environmental authority must be satisfied that there is no alternative way of addressing any adverse impacts. There are currently no specific legal restrictions governing how wild boar can be controlled, other than they are given general protection against cruelty in certain circumstances by the **Animal Welfare Act 2006** and the **Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996**, and there is guidance on what weaponry that may be used. Since none of the escapes or releases of wild boar now living free were sanctioned through licensing, then the provisions for species control will apply to them. A Code of Practice for species control orders will be out for public consultation soon.

### **TRUST POSITION ON RE-INTRODUCTION**

As a native species, the Trust supports the official re-introduction of wild boar following international and national guidelines which detail the need for full public consultation, involvement and support. The Trust believes that in principle, the benefits to our ecology in the public interest outweigh the potential localized

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.britishwildboar.org.uk/index.htm?britain.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2013-009.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/wildlife/CodeTranslocationsGuidelines.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Moore, D. 2015. Stakeholder attitudes towards re-establishment of wild boar in Scotland. BSc Thesis. University of Edinburgh/Scotland's Rural College

<sup>5</sup> A1596788 revised July 2014

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impacts. The Trust believes that prior to any re-introduction being carried out there needs to be comprehensive political, public and local support. The Trust does not support or condone illegal re-introductions. Any consultation on reintroduction should include a proposed code of management or draft licensing provision.

The Trust is supportive of allowing existing animals, living freely in the UK, to remain but be subject to management, by government approved protocols