

# Wild pigs plague Aptos hills residents

*Animals*  
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APTOS — In the Chinese New Year, it will be the year of the boar in 1995.

No kidding, say those who live in the Aptos hills.

The wild pig problem has reached a new high this winter, according to residents of the rural countryside.

In November, a jogger reported that he and his two dogs were chased by three galloping pigs near Cabrillo College.

This month, Philip Ottinger was walking up his driveway late one night when he felt something against his leg.

He jumped into the bed of his pickup truck and listened to the sound of the pigs below.

"I have never seen them like this before," said Ottinger, a 22-year resident of the Porter Gulch area.

Pigs have rooted all around his home. They have even left tusk marks on the 4-by-4 redwood posts that hold up his solar heating panels.

"They come whenever they want to, usually at night, rip everything up and

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Porter Gulch resident

go their way," said a frustrated Ottinger.

He has even taken a gun-handling course and obtained the necessary permits to hunt the beasts.

He said he will continue to be careful and will use a flashlight when he walks his driveway at night.

With all the loose dirt left behind by the hungry pigs, he said, his greatest worry is what will happen to his land in the heavy rains.

Steve Tripp, another longtime resident of the area, agreed he hasn't seen as many pigs this early in the year.

Tripp killed a couple of pigs last win-

ter. This season, he plans to build a fence to keep the animals off his land because of the dangers of shooting in the neighborhood.

Licenses are required to shoot the animals.

The numbers probably are increasing, according to Jeannine DeWald, biologist for the state Department of Fish and Game.

The animals were introduced into Carmel Valley around the 1930s and spread out from there, she said.

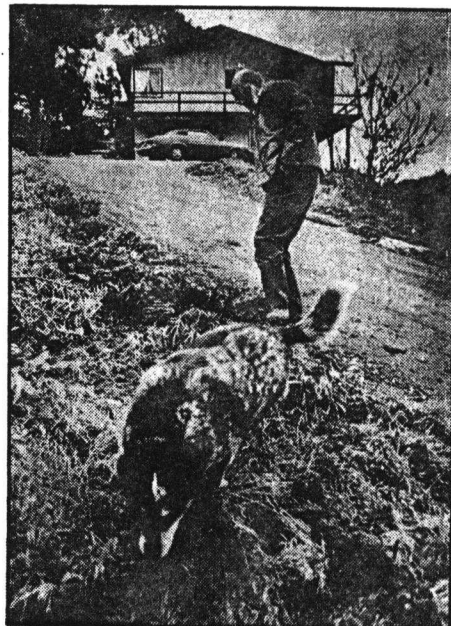
There have been no studies to track their population, DeWald said.

Aptos residents say the pigs are coming into their neighborhoods from the nearby Forest of Nisene Marks State Park.

Hunting is not allowed in the state parks, and the state agencies have no plans to kill the animals.

Contrary to some opinions, the park is not the center of the pig population, Gray said.

"Nisene Marks is 16,000 acres of land in the middle of 200,000 acres of pig habitat," Gray said.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Philip Ottinger inspects property damaged by wild pigs.