



November 2010

# British Wild Boar Organisation

[www.britishwildboar.org.uk](http://www.britishwildboar.org.uk)



*‘Interesting happenings occurring with Britain’s free-living wild boar’*

Dear All,

Welcome to November’s newsletter, with further updates on what has been happening with Britain’s wild boar populations, and what may happen in the future.



Young wild boar in the snow (photo by Michael Gäbler, Wikimedia Commons)



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**First 'spotted' wild boar spotted in the UK**

Wild boar coat colour varies from all black to shades of dark or light brown (although occasionally very pale, almost white looking leucystic animals are seen, particularly in the East Sussex/Kent border area). However a spotted coat colour can also occur. Spotted animals are normal wild boar that happen to carry a particular sequence of coat colour genes. No spotted wild boar have been seen free-living in the wild in the UK to-date, although they can be seen in UK wild boar farms.

*A 'spotted' wild boar piglet in  
UK wild boar farm*



*a*

...however, we recently received an email and photograph from a chap in Dorset stating:  
*"Your site [www.britishwildboar.org.uk] mentions that no 'spotted' wild boar have been found free-ranging in the UK. We have been watching a number in the Dorset population & this statement may now need to be reviewed!" I.F.*



The photo below is of the first spotted wild boar alleged to be free-living in the UK that we are aware of. Understandably, there is a strong likelihood that if spotted wild boar have previously been seen in the wild, or are seen in the future, they could be mistaken for an escaped variety of domestic pig.



### **The price of shooting a wild boar in Britain – Part 3**

Previous newsletters have highlighted how the shooting of wild boar in Britain is now being commercially advertised in on-line shooting forums. First it was in Dorset, then the Scottish borders.

Here is another example, advertising boar shooting in Devon:





## Wild boar from December near Exeter

Hi All,

I will be offering wild boar shooting from December on a farm of 300 acres plus which borders forestry near xxxxxx.

However, I believe in being honest, they usually make an appearance maybe a couple of times in a month maximum, do the damage, and disappear into the woods again all within 48 hours.

So you have to hit it right!

I suggest anyone that is interested send me your contact details and I will contact you on a first come first served basis when they make an appearance.

[info@xxxxxxx.co.uk](mailto:info@xxxxxxx.co.uk)

Cost will be **£100** per outing + **£100** per beast shot. No trophy fees on top.

The farmer has first refusal on any boar shot, otherwise its normal rates that you can purchase the boar you shoot.

So, to join the current vogue for price comparison websites, the table below compares the costs of wild boar shooting in the UK to-date:



haggle-daddy Omid Djalili



Area	Cost of outing per night (£)	Cost of shot at a wild boar (£)	Additional trophy fee (£)	Cost of carcass
Dorset	150	50	None	Not stated
Scottish borders	150	50	None	Current game dealer's rate
Devon	100	100	None	Current game dealer's rate (farmer has first refusal)

Conclusion: Not a lot in it really – maybe there's a bit of a cartel developing!

And as always, as the snippets plucked from a single shooting forum shown below highlight, there is no shortage of punters wishing to shoot a wild boar:

- Looking for wild boar/deer shooting around Ross-on-Wye area, willing to pay, pm [private message] details, cheers.
- I too would love to try boar shooting in either Herefordshire or the Forest of Dean areas which are on my doorstep.
- I'm still looking for some boar shooting, either permission or bought days/nights. More than willing to pay going rates and more for good opportunities. PM if you think you can help.
- I would like to organise a night stalking boar in the UK for myself and a good friend (also a regular game shooter) who has for a long time expressed a wish to shoot boar.
- Me and my Dad wish to do some boar shooting with in the UK, anybody got any useful contacts, on a reasonable budget but can't cost the world.



## Shooting - a note of caution (lessons from abroad)

With the increasing shooting of wild boar in Britain comes a concurrent increased risk of shooting accidents, namely shooting someone else. Wild boar shooting involves large ammunition and the outcome of an accident are is likely to be far more serious than being peppered up the backside with buck-shot from a shotgun. As usual we can look into our crystal ball towards continental Europe, where they've been shooting at wild boar far longer than us. We see that accidents do happen, and to highlight this we quote from a recent press article reproduced in part from the [Scottish Herald](#), 14 Nov 2010.



.270 bullet, recommended in the UK for wild boar shooting

### It is wild boar hunting season in the forested hills of Tuscany's Chianti region

“Shots reverberate through the valleys before sunrise as about 100,000 hunters set out with their dogs to bag some cinghiali [wild boar].

Despite the wild boar's fearsome reputation for goring humans and their dogs, the greatest danger to hunters is other hunters – Father Francesco Cassol, 55, a Catholic priest on a spiritual forest retreat, was shot dead recently by a hunter who mistook his sleeping bag for a boar.

Then there was Giuseppe Orlando della Gherardesca, 42, who was a friend of Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York. Gherardesca had emerged from a hide to finish off a wounded boar. A fellow hunter saw movement and opened fire, hitting him in the back.

Gherardesca was one of 30 people killed and nearly 90 wounded during the 2009-10 season, according to the Italian Association of Hunting Victims. **Nearly all of them were hunters shot by other hunters.**”

We mention this topic not to be scare-mongering, but simply to highlight the increasing risk, and to ask:

Is now the time to set up training programmes for wild boar shooting akin to the British Deer Society's programmes for deer shooting? Or are people tired of being told what they should or shouldn't be doing? Please email your opinions to [comment@britishwildboar.org.uk](mailto:comment@britishwildboar.org.uk)

“Hey, let's be careful out there! “  
Sergeant Phil Esterhaus  
(Hill Street Blues)





## Closed season query

All this talk of shooting brings us to the fact that there is no close season for wild boar in the UK, which continually begs the question; is all the shooting sustainable or are the wild boar populations being inadvertently wiped out? A recent post on our [Facebook site](#) highlighted this issue:

*Hello. I'm studying for a BSc in Landscape Management and doing my dissertation on Wild Boar (Sus scrofa). Does anyone know why DEFRA is so reluctant to introduce a close season (other than the obvious cost) despite overwhelming support from NGO's [non-governmental organizations] like BASC [British association for Shooting and Conservation] and the GCT [Game Conservancy Trust]?*

The answer may lie in Defra's opinion on wild boar. At the recent [8<sup>th</sup> International Wild Boar Conference](#) held in York, Defra's Head of Wildlife, Aquatic and Zoological Health remarked during his presentation 'Contingency planning for notifiable diseases in feral boar in the UK' that:

**“The wild boar are an introduced species and NOT a native species of conservation value”.**

Could it be argued that it would therefore suit Defra quite nicely if the wild boar became eradicated by excessive hunting pressures? We would like to hear if you think this suggestion is misplaced or not! Please email your opinions to [comment@britishwildboar.org.uk](mailto:comment@britishwildboar.org.uk)

## Deer and wild boar interacting in the Forest of Dean

We recently received this email and accompanying fascinating photos and video footage from Brian Pendrey, a chap who lives by the Forest of Dean:

"While out watching fallow deer this week, to my surprise a sounder of boar ambled through the middle of the buck's scrape but the buck stood firm and never moved off the rut stand. Is



this unusual or do they get on, because people say boar and deer don't mix but these seem to get on fine there?" Brian Pendrey





The video footage shot by Brian can be viewed via [this link](#) (at the top right of the linked page) – Notice how the big buck's whole body twitches just before the wild boar come into view.



How wild boar and deer interact in Britain is little understood and misconceptions can occur. For example, below is a posting from a shooting forum about wild boar in the UK.

***Hi All,***

***I witnessed something interesting last night.***

***I was watching a herd of approx 50 hinds with their calves, and 15 fallow happily grazing away. Just before 10.00pm I noticed approx 8 reds running away from the wood, it was then I realised why, a huge wild boar running at full speed came out of the woods through the deer, then darting off in several directions causing complete mayhem. So I came to the conclusion he was after a calf but failed.***

***Has anyone else witnessed this?***

The above behaviour would be appropriate for a carnivorous predator species such as a lion or tiger, but not for wild boar which are 95% vegetarian.

However, wild boar do eat carrion, which can include deer carcasses, so the above reasoning is understandable, if incorrect. Also, feral pigs in Oz or New Zealand eat spring lambs, but they are feral pigs (domestic pigs gone wild) and not wild boar.



A feral pig in Australia enjoying spring lamb

There is an interesting YouTube clip showing a wild boar in Italy chomping on a deer carcass (see link below). Quite how the big buck succumbed I'm not sure, but suspect it was shot and deliberately left by the cameraman – *the BBC would never do such a thing, would it?*



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLBWYzgiU-M>

Brian's deer pictures encouraged us to start a new web page aiming to highlight how wild boar interact with other British wildlife species -

<http://www.britishwildboar.org.uk/Native.html> - if anyone has any examples we can add to the page, do please let us know.

And on the subject of you tube videos – this one made us smile!

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELgzBn2\\_uUk&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELgzBn2_uUk&feature=related)



## Further evidence our wild boar are acting all continental

Wild boar rooting at the roadside in Germany



...and in Britain



Photo: Rob Ward ([Rob Ward's Blog](#))



## Pushing your luck!

Finally, and just for a bit of fun, which do you think is the most irresponsible way for a person to behave where wild boar are concerned?

1. Feeding a wild one



2. Feeding a tame one





### 3. Joyriding



### 4. Kidnapping





5. ...or standing by a tree dressed like this



### **The end**

As always, opinions and ideas most welcome. Please email [comment@britishwildboar.org.uk](mailto:comment@britishwildboar.org.uk)  
Do please circulate this newsletter to any other persons or parties who may also have an interest in wild boar.

Do also feel free to contribute to our [Facebook pages](#)  and for the very latest updates, follow us on [twitter](#) 

Kindest regards

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**Primary objective of [www.britishwildboar.org.uk](http://www.britishwildboar.org.uk):** Raise public awareness, and stimulate interest and understanding about Britain's free-living wild boar populations.

Please note that your email address will never be passed to a third party, nor will it ever be used for advertising purposes or to send you junk mail of any kind. If you ask to go on the newsletter list then change your mind, you will be removed as soon as we are notified. – email [comment@britishwildboar.org.uk](mailto:comment@britishwildboar.org.uk). This is a free service purely to keep interested parties aware of what is happening in the world of wild boar, and a way of keeping the [www.britishwildboar.org.uk](http://www.britishwildboar.org.uk) website moving forward. The frequency of updates will depend on what is happening out there, but I envisage an average of about one every other month.