

# Wild Boar in Spain

The ancestor of the domestic pig is fairly common in many regions in Spain. They don't have sweat glands so look for muddy puddles to wallow in to cool down and for this reason the wild boar is rarely seen in the drier, arid areas.

With the exception of the wolf the wild boar has no natural predators in Spain. The Spanish people look upon these pigs as sport, meat and an occasional nuisance, pretty much in that order. Some 60,000 are killed by man each year during the hunting season. In agricultural areas such as Catalonia, where they



are found in greater numbers, the start of the hunting is brought forward in an attempt to cull the boars and prevent the damage to crops etc.

Boars are generally nocturnal creatures and a fully-grown adult can weigh up to 180 kilos and measure around two metres from snout to tail. They have poor eyesight but an excellent sense of smell and can usually sniff humans out long before they are themselves found. At about two years of age the male wild boar grow tusks from both the upper and lower canines which curve upwards. The top tusks are hollow and act as sharpeners for the lower tusks. Females only grow smaller lower tusks but are still pretty sharp. They are very vocal and communicate with each other through a series of grunts and squeals.

They breed twice a year, producing litters of up to eight piglets and usually live in family units. The sows make 'nests' in the vegetation for sleeping, choosing dense vegetation and forests in which to live, mate and reproduce.

These creatures are omnivorous and play an important role in woodland ecology by foraging with their powerful snouts and overturning the earth in search of roots, worms, grubs and small snakes. This promotes new seed growth, attracting insects and birds.

Wild boar are generally not dangerous to people provided they are left alone; they will normally only charge if cornered or if their young are threatened. However, the sows can be aggressive to one another when establishing dominance within the family or when feeding, which involves pushing and biting only. Mature males are much more aggressive to each other during the autumn when potentially fatal injuries can be inflicted on each other from their sharp tusks.