

Greetings,

This is the monthly report for the BCA hog management program for March 2017. Jesse Paul took 78 hogs in March. This brings the calendar year total to 186. This month 36 hogs were taken with dogs vs. 42 in traps.

March marked the beginning of the cowbird trapping season. However, the cowbirds were a bit late showing up this year. Jesse Paul reported that he started catching a few birds around mid-month, and by the end of the month had all traps in operation and stocked with decoys. Just in the past few days, traps have started filling up, so April should be a good month for trapping. Late migration by the cowbirds gives some songbirds a chance to get ahead of the game. For example, golden-cheeked warblers migrate early and get started with their nesting early in March, so most of their first brooding attempts escape parasitism. If they lose their first nest to weather or predation and have to start over later in the season, they are much more likely to end up raising a cowbird chick. Black-capped vireos, on the other hand, don't get their nests going until early April, when the cowbirds are already on-site and actively looking for hosts, so they are much more susceptible to parasitism. Their strategy for dealing with this is persistence; they will renest as many as 5 times over the course of the summer to try and successfully raise a brood.

Due to a generous donation from a HOGMOP landowner, we were able to put another cell-phone activated trap into service in March. That trap was initially deployed on the Browning place and promptly captured 21 hogs, good enough for first place this month. That catch included a bunch of young piglets, so we know they are hitting the ground now. Please call JP promptly when you have a hot tip about recent activity on your place.

HOGMOP renewal letters will be going out this week, so please look for that in the mail and get your renewal fees turned in promptly. The new trapping period starts May 1. I will be attending the BCA meeting on the 22nd and you can give your payment directly to me if you like.

John Cornelius
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