



Dear Mr Johnson and Mr Eustice,

Animal Aid, supported by the undersigned, urge you to implement an immediate ban on the manufacture, sale, possession and use of all snares. Defra's recent 'Action Plan for Animal Welfare' states the intention to 'Launch a call for evidence on the use of snares' - but this is unnecessary. The evidence is already clear that snares are indiscriminate, and that they inflict horrendous injuries – sometimes leading to death – and so they should be banned immediately.

Snares, thin wire nooses typically set to trap foxes and rabbits, are notoriously indiscriminate. According to Defra's own figures,* in two field trials of snares set for foxes, 15 out of 18 animals caught in the first trial were NOT foxes. In a second trial, 30 out of 44 of the animals caught in the snares were NOT foxes. Snares may catch and kill lactating mothers, meaning that her young are left to starve to death. Companion animals, such as cats and dogs, and farmed animals such as sheep and lambs, have all been recorded being caught in snares – some of them dying as a result.

Snares, designed to catch animals around the leg or neck, and hold them until they are killed by a human, can easily cut into an animal's skin. As they struggle, due to pain or panic, the wire can cut through deeper tissues, muscle and bone. Animals have been known to try to chew off their limbs in order to escape. According to Defra's own 2012 report on snares: 'The use of snares was found to be strongly correlated with the employment of a gamekeeper and thus with a game-bird shooting interest'. The same report also highlighted how 'The number of fox snares set by gamekeepers...was significantly higher than the number set by farmers'.

In 2016, a backbench business debate took place in the House of Commons, where MPs discussed the motion: *'That this House notes the indiscriminate and cruel nature of snares, the failure of previous attempts at voluntary and self-regulation amongst operators, and the continued suffering caused to thousands of animals every year by these traps; and calls on the Government to implement a full ban on the manufacture, sale, possession and use of snares at the earliest opportunity.'*

The motion was agreed, meaning that Parliament supports a full ban. However, instead of a ban, a 'Code of Best Practice' was implemented. The 'Code' is clearly failing animals – consequently they can, and do, suffer distress, immense pain and suffering and a prolonged and torturous death. There are numerous examples of these failures including a fox hanging by their neck, from a snare, who is then bludgeoned; badgers caught by, and dying in, snares; and lambs caught by their necks in snares. These examples, and others, can be seen here: <https://www.animalaid.org.uk/snares> and here <http://www.snarewatch.org>

During the 2016 debate Professor Ranald Munro, Professor of Forensic Veterinary Pathology, was quoted as saying:

“From the veterinary perspective, snares are primitive indiscriminate traps that are recognised as causing widespread suffering to a range of animals. At their least injurious, snares around the neck can result in abrasion and splitting of the skin. However, being caught in a snare is extremely distressing for any creature and vigorous attempts to escape are natural. These efforts cause the snare wire to kink, thereby changing a free-running snare to a self-locking one. Strangulation and choking follow. It is commonplace for snares to lodge around the chest, abdomen, or legs rather than the neck. In such instances the stop restraint is ineffective and the wire cuts through skin and muscle and, eventually, bone. Badgers may be eviscerated when the abdominal wall is cut through. Amputation of the lower limb and foot by a snare is well-documented in deer. These unfortunate animals suffer immensely.”

We hereby call on you to ban the manufacture, sale, possession and use of all snares immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Animal Aid
A-LAW (UK Centre for Animal Law)
Animal Interfaith Alliance
Animal Defenders International
Badger Trust
Battersea
Blue Cross
Born Free Foundation
Cats Protection
Christian Vegetarian Association
Dogs Trust
FOUR PAWS UK
Freedom for Animals
Hunt Investigation Team
Professor Andrew Knight MANZCVS, DipECAWBM (AWSEL), DACAW, PhD, FRCVS, PFHEA
Dr Helen Lambert BSc Hons, MSc, PhD
League Against Cruel Sports
Mahavir Trust
National Anti-Snaring Campaign
Naturewatch Foundation
OneKind
PETA
RSPCA
Viva!

*Determining the Extent of Use and Humaneness of Snares in England and Wales, Defra (2012):
<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/files/DEP2012-0577/Document.pdf>