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The National Anti Snaring Campaign is a United Kingdom based animal welfare group campaigning to outlaw the use of cruel and indiscriminate methods of trapping and snaring animals. We make the following contribution to the EU **consultation on regulation on attitudes towards trapping in the EU**:

1. Banning the Sale and possession of leg hold traps in the EU

- ☐ Council Regulation (EEC) No [3254/91](#) of 4 November 1991 prohibits the use of leg-hold traps in the European Union. In England and Wales the leg hold trap known as the Gin trap was banned in 1958 and in Scotland in 1971. However, an anomaly exists insofar as the sale and possession of these traps is not outlawed.



Photo of leg hold trap, **Frankonia Shop, Berlin**, February 2009
This photo was supplied to NASC by a British visitor to Berlin

- Gin Traps: Despite being banned for half a century in England and Wales, the continuing illegal use of the Gin trap provides a stark warning that unless the sale and possession of illegal traps is banned, the problem never goes away:



Above: cats caught in Gin traps in England in 2008, 50 years after their use was outlawed



Above: fox died a slow agonising death with a Gin Trap attached to its front leg

Some recent examples of Gin Trap incidents from the National Anti Snaring Campaign Website:

January 2009: [Cat Chews off Own Leg](#)

January 2009: [Cat Found in Gin Trap](#)

May 2008: [Cat Loses Leg in Gin Trap](#)

February 2008: [Cat Caught in Gin Trap](#)
February 2008: [Slow, Agonising Death for Fox in Gin Trap](#)
January 2008: [Cat Loses Leg in Gin Trap](#)
January 2008: [Cat Returns Home with Gin Trap](#)
November 2007: [Cat's Gin Trap Horror](#)
November 2007: [Trauma of Cat Gin Trap Cruelty](#)

August 2007 - A fox with a gin trap stuck on its head and through its eye sockets in Reading, Berkshire. It was put to sleep to end its suffering.

December 2007 - Michela a stray cat which had to have her leg amputated after being caught in a gin trap for a prolonged period of time in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. She was successfully re-homed in time for the New Year.

2. Snares and Snaring: Indiscriminate and Cruel

As far as we are aware the UK is one of only five EU members that still allow snares to be used for trapping alongside, Ireland, France, Spain and Belgium.

❑ In the United Kingdom self locking snares were banned in 1981 but no official ever checks to see what is going on with regard to snaring and trapping. Whilst Scotland allows free access to private land, England and Wales do not allow public access. Consequently anyone can set any type of snare knowing they are highly unlikely to be checked.

❑ No limit to the amount of snares set in any location

Snares cause carnage with no limit on the amount of snares that can be set. In 2002 in one wood measuring two miles by three miles at Llangybi in Wales we found 400 snares. No badger could survive in this wood. A check of the Mammal Society records showed that the three badger setts recorded were all derelict. The gamekeepers were trying to destroy foxes to preserve birds for shooting, but in the process were killing all the badgers as well. When we raised concerns for badgers to the police, the gamekeeper's response was: "There are no badger setts in this area." He could rightly claim such a thing, because he had systematically destroyed all the badgers over several years!



Above: an Otter killed by a snare in the UK



Above: a cat injured by a snare in the UK

Some recent examples of cats snared in the United Kingdom:

Pet Snare Carnage:

http://www.antisnaring.org.uk/news_wire/snare_pet_carnage.html

Cat Suffers Appalling Injuries in Fox Snare:

http://www.antisnaring.org.uk/news_wire/cat_badly_injured_in_fox_snare.html

Cat Loses Leg in Snare Trap:

http://www.antisnaring.org.uk/news_wire/cat_loses_leg_in_snare_trap.html



Above: Snare caught fox around its body in Scotland in January 2009. The snare hadn't been checked in over two weeks and the fox died in the snare.



Above: A badger caught in a snare in the UK



Above: a deer caught in a fox snare in the UK

The United Kingdom allows almost uncontrolled snaring to take place under the guise of pest control. The principle targets are rabbits using brass snares and foxes using steel strand snares. Fox control measures are mainly carried out for game bird shooting interests.

The law requires that snares are not set where “calculated to cause bodily injury to an animal listed in Schedule 6“, such as a badger. However, a simple defence is to claim no intention to trap a badger and thus evade the law. Likewise private property laws and a lack of any spot checks by officials mean cruel and indiscriminate trapping is widespread.





Above: Indiscriminate - a typical snaring scene in the UK

Only a ban on snares can protect animals because:

Snares are Cruel

The above photos are just a few examples of hundreds of shocking incidents that can be seen on our website www.antisnaring.org.uk

Evidence of Cruelty

In March 2007 the UK Government's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) were involved in snaring experiments to see if they could be used in any future badger cull for TB control in cattle. **DEFRA's experiments showed that, 'one in three badgers caught in "body snares" suffered "severe" injuries which breached**

the criteria for "humaneness".

Trials of a body snare designed to catch and hold badgers, A Report to the Wildlife Species Conservation Division, Defra, 19 June 2007.



Post Mortem Evidence

On 31st May 2007 six rotting badgers were discovered in various states of decomposition on the Stockbridge shooting estate in Hampshire, England. Two badgers found complete were taken for post-mortem. One had been shot after being snared



Radiographs revealed that, in addition to a snare being very tightly encircling the neck the animal had been shot in the back of the head causing the rear of the skull to be shattered. The bullet had become fragmented within the cranium.

Post mortem results on the badger that had not been shot indicated death by asphyxiation:

Radiographs revealed a linear indentation circumventing the neck which corresponded to visible contusions around the throat. This was consistent with a ligature (conceivably a snare) having been placed around the throat prior to death. There were also recent wounds to the pads (notably digit 3 left fore and main pad right fore) which were consistent with this animal having scrabbled violently to try to get free prior to death and Badger.

There were old bite wounds and scratch marks to the right foreleg which were most likely the result of conflict with other badgers. There were also contusions to the gums just caudal to the upper canine teeth which were consistent with this badger having tried to bite at a hard thin object (such as a wire tether) prior to death. Internally, there was evidence of mild decomposition. No abnormalities were found in the abdomen.

The trachea exhibited significant bruising at the level corresponding to the position of the external skin indentation. The upper trachea contained stomach contents and the bottom of the trachea contained bloody frothy mucous. The lungs were already showing significant post mortem changes and no further abnormalities were detected in the chest cavity.

My opinion is that this animal died as the result of asphyxiation caused by a ligature placed around its neck, probably a snare.

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Snaring of the scarce Mountain Hare

In 2008 together with the League Against Cruel Sports, we revealed how Mountain Hares were being snared in Scotland and left to die because gamekeepers blame them for the spread of Looping Ill to grouse due to harbouring ticks.



Above: remains of a Mountain Hare which died in the snare.



Above: many snares had been set and it was clear that they hadn't been checked for weeks.

Why Only a Complete Ban on Snaring will Work:

In England and Wales there is no public access to private land and no officials check to see if traps are causing unnecessary suffering



Consequently, where there is no public access to private land without committing the civil tort of trespass, it is possible to set snares (as above), leaving an animal to die slowly, knowing there is little chance of ever being discovered.



Or leaving it at the mercy of those who will set dogs on them (as above). In this case a young boy uses his dog to kill the fox caught in the snare.



Above: The suffering is written all over this fox's face calls for higher standards for humanness in the EU.

3. Banning spring traps that pose a danger to protected wildlife



Above: a woodpecker trapped by the Kania 2000 spring trap in England in 2008. This is an imported Canadian trap intended to kill squirrels when set in trees, but poses a significant danger to birds.



Britain's native red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) is now so rare that it is included as a priority species in the UK government's conservation initiative the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Despite this red squirrels often victims to the indiscriminate nature of spring traps as shown above. Above photo right, copyright of Animal Cruelty Investigation Group (ACIG).



The entrance to this trap is so large that any number of non-target animals or birds could be killed by it.



The rabbit above was found alive in a spring trap in 2008, it died of its injuries but not before spending at least 24 hours in the trap.



Above: The declining hedgehog is a target for gamekeepers



And it isn't just wildlife that suffers at the hands of spring traps, the cat above died after becoming trapped by a spring trap

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