



Briefing for the Welsh elections 2021 on the use of animal snares

Campaign Aim: to ban the selling, buying and use of any snares (or implements used in the style of a snare)

Executive summary:

A snare is a thin wire noose used to catch animals (such as foxes or rabbits) around the neck and hold them until the trapper comes to kill them. They can cause serious injuries or even death before the trapper arrives. A large proportion of the animals caught are likely not be the target species, and this can include cats and dogs.

Animal Aid is calling for a complete ban on snares. A 2021 YouGov poll in Wales found that 78% of people wanted them to be illegal.

What is a snare?

A snare is a thin wire noose, which is meant to catch animals around the neck and hold them until they are 'dispatched' by a person. They are usually used to catch 'pest' animals, such as foxes or rabbits, but often catch non-target species.

Why are snares controversial?

Snares can cause animals serious injuries and even death.

The UK is one of only five European countries where using snares is still permitted, the others being the Republic of Ireland, France, Spain and Belgium.⁽¹⁾

In 2005, the report of the UK Independent Working Group on Snaring (IWGS)⁽²⁾ estimated that the proportion of non-target captures was between 21% and 69% in the UK. It's useful to note that this group included no consistent representation from animal rights or welfare groups.

According to Scottish-based group OneKind, snares commonly catch other wild animals including: protected badgers, otters and wildcats; deer, cattle and sheep; and even pet cats and dogs. A DEFRA report recorded that 60% of users interviewed said they had caught a non-target animal at some time and, in field trials, the non-target capture rate was up to 68% in one case.⁽³⁾

What do the public think of snares?

A recent poll commissioned by animal welfare charity the League Against Cruel Sports, carried out by YouGov in January 2021, found that 78 per cent of the Welsh public wanted snares to be made illegal and 72 per cent thought the use of cages to breed pheasants and partridges should be made illegal.

What does Animal Aid want?

A ban on snares.

Snares are used to capture wild animals who are deemed to be a 'nuisance' or 'pest'. Studies have shown that not only do snares cause immense suffering, but they also capture non-target species. Regulation of snares in Wales has proved a failure, so Animal Aid is calling for a ban on the selling, buying and use of any snares (or implements used in the style of a snare).

References

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2. http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=9872_wm0315-humaneness-snares.pdf
3. <http://www.snarewatch.org/about#:~:text=The%20DEFRA%20report%20recorded%20that,and%20wildlife%20persecution%20in%20Scotland.>