



Craig Whittaker MP

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Response to Snares Scotland – February 2017

Thank you for contacting me about snares.

I understand the strength of your feeling on this issue, and I am committed to animal welfare; the UK has some of the highest standards in the world. Wildlife management is, however, vital for conservation, farming, animal husbandry and sustainably harvesting wild game birds. Snaring is one of a range of measures that must be used.

Used to a high standard and according to the law, snares can be effective at restraining target animals before they are humanely managed. Nevertheless, I accept that if used incorrectly, they can cause injuries and suffering to animals and may accidentally capture species that were not targeted.

While free-running snares are permitted for targeting certain species (mainly foxes and rabbits), self-locking snares, which place animals at greater risk of harm, have been banned since 1981. Animals, including any caught in snares, are protected from unnecessary suffering under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and trappers must check their snares at least once every 24 hours.

Based on research commissioned by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, land management organisations have developed a new code of best practice on the use of snares in England. It emphasises the importance of taking the behaviour of the targeted animals into account when setting snares, stating that if non-targets are likely to be caught, snares should not be used. Meanwhile, improvements in snare design have significantly reduced the risk of injury.

I have been assured that this new code of practice will be published very soon, and I am confident it will improve animal welfare.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP