

AVOID SNARING WHERE YOU SEE THESE NON-TARGET SPECIES TRACKS

GET TO KNOW THESE TRACKS!



PINE MARTEN



BADGER



DOMESTIC DOG



DEER



DOMESTIC CAT



OTTER

SETTING RABBIT SNARES

1. You must not set any snare without the permission of the land owner or occupier.
2. Rabbit snares should not be set where there is evidence of regular use by non-target species.
3. Rabbit snares should be set on well-used rabbit runs, in short vegetation. They should not be set in areas cluttered with obstacles such as saplings, hedges, fences or gates. Snares set in such areas are rarely effective.
4. Snares must be free running (not self-locking) and must contain a safety stop fixed at least 5" (13cm) from the running end of the snare. Snares that are frayed or damaged should not be used.
5. It is a legal requirement to inspect the snare and ensure it is free running at least once a day at intervals of no more than 24 hours. If the snare is not free running it must be removed or repaired.
6. Rabbit snares should be constructed with 3 or 4 stranded brass wire (doubled so that whilst there are 3-4 strands round the eye, there are 6-8 strands round the noose), ideally creating a loop of 7" (15cm) across and 5" (13cm) deep for the head of the rabbit.
7. Snares should be supported by a suitable "tealer" or set-stick and set firmly in the ground. The bottom of the loop of a rabbit snare should ideally be positioned at least 3" (8cm) above the ground.
8. Snares should be securely tethered by a strong, rot-proof cord (e.g. baler twine) attached to a peg driven firmly into the ground.
9. It is an offence to set a snare where the animal is likely to become fully or partially suspended or drown. Snares may be set parallel to or near to fences, so long as any restrained rabbit cannot become entangled. Snares should be set away from cover and in short vegetation, where rabbits are likely to be moving relatively fast.
10. It is an offence to fail to release or remove an animal, whether alive or dead, from a snare during the course of the inspection. During inspection you should make a detailed note of any snares that have been damaged or removed since the last inspection. You should inform your local WCO if you suspect an offence of interference or tampering.
11. Rabbits restrained by a snare should be dispatched quickly and humanely. Wherever possible non-target species must be released unharmed. In the rare circumstances that a protected species is found dead or has to be humanely dispatched your local WCO should be informed. You must ensure that the snare is still free running and free of kinks before resetting.
12. Daily records of snaring activity should be kept. This should include a map or GPS record showing the location of snares, and this should be copied to the land manager. A daily diary should record the success of individual snares along with other information, such as mis-catches, problems from interference and general observations.

ANNEX A – LEGAL SUMMARY

Under the **Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994**, as amended by the **Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007** it is illegal to:

- Deliberately or recklessly capture, injure or kill a wild animal of a European protected species, such as wild cat and otter.

Under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**, as amended by the **Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004**, it is illegal to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal in Schedule 5, such as otter and red squirrel
- Set in position or otherwise use any self-locking snare (or a snare of any other type specified in an order made by the Scottish Ministers)
- Set in position or otherwise use any other type of snare which is either of such a nature or so placed (or both) as to be **calculated** to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal coming into contact with it or knowingly cause or permit such acts to be done
- Set in position any snare **likely** to cause bodily injury to any wild animal included in Schedule 6, such as badger, pine marten, otter, red squirrel, wild cat, polecat and hedgehog
- Set in position a snare or knowingly cause or permit a snare to be so set and fail to inspect it or cause it to be inspected at least once every day at intervals of no more than 24 hours
- Fail to release or remove an animal, whether alive or dead, while carrying out such an inspection of snares
- Be in possession of, sell or offer for sale any snare capable of operating as a self-locking snare, without reasonable excuse
- Be in possession of any snare on land or to set any snare on land without the permission of the owner or occupier.

Under the **Deer (Scotland) Act 1996** it is an offence to:

- Set in position any trap or snare calculated to cause bodily injury to any deer
- Use for the purpose of taking or killing any deer any trap or snare.

Under the **Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007**:

- Unless licensed by SNH it may be an offence to snare mountain (blue) hares if the outcome of the snaring is disturbance to the hare population or it deliberately and significantly affects their local distribution or abundance.

Under the **Snares (Scotland) Order 2010**:

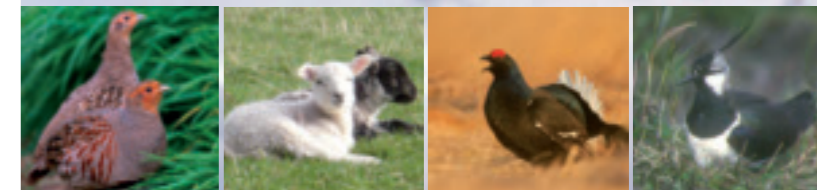
- Snares must be free running and checked to be free running at least once every day within a 24 hour period. If a snare is found not to be free running then it must be removed or repaired.
- All snares must be fitted with an effective safety stop – for foxes 9" (23cm) from the running end of the snare and for rabbits 5" (13cm) from the running end of the snare.
- Snares must be firmly anchored, either staked to the ground or attached to an object in a manner that will prevent the snare being dragged by the animal caught in it.
- It is an offence to set snares in places where captured animals are likely to become fully or partially suspended or drown.

This comprehensive list of restrictions means that before even considering setting a snare you must ensure that everything you do is both legal and humane. This can be achieved by following this Practitioners' Guide. For further practical advice and training, contact GWCT, SGA or BASC at the numbers on front cover.

Snaring in Scotland

A practitioners' guide

Third edition - September 2010



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WHO IS THIS LEAFLET FOR?

This new practitioner's guide is for all those working in the Scottish countryside who are involved in pest and predator control. This guide provides advice on using snaring methods that are humane, legal, and carried out in accordance with best practice and with respect for other countryside users.

INTRODUCTION

Fox and rabbit control in Scotland is necessary to ensure that damage to crops, livestock, trees, game and other wildlife and their habitats can be reduced to acceptable levels to maintain Scotland's unique rural biodiversity. Snaring is a vital tool to achieve these ends in Scotland due to diverse landscape and types of cover.

Snaring is subject to many legal restrictions. When conducted in accordance with this practitioners' guide, snaring is an effective and humane form of control.

This guide has been drawn up by the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Scottish Gamekeepers' Association and British Association for Shooting and Conservation (Scotland). It is endorsed by the Scottish Government and supported by the Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime, the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association, Scottish Estates' Business Group, National Farmers Union Scotland, National Sheep Association, the Scottish Countryside Alliance, Heather Trust, Scottish Crofters Foundation, British Pest Control Association, Veterinary Association for Wildlife Management, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Cairngorms National Park Authority and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

There are five sections to this Guide. The first two advise on General Considerations and Future Considerations. We strongly recommend that you read these two sections before reading the next sections on setting fox and rabbit snares and the legal summary in Annex A.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Remember that as a snare user YOU alone are responsible for ensuring that each snare you set is legal and humane.

When setting snares every effort must be made to avoid the capture of non-target species and protected species. Knowledge of the tracks, trails and signs of both target and non-target species is essential. (See Figure 1.) You should adapt your procedures for setting snares in the light of experience, particularly to minimise the risks to non-target species.

The use of signs to alert the public that snares are being employed may be used near to access routes.

BADGER

Always look for signs of badger activity, such as well worn paths, badger tracks and coarse grey hairs with black tips. Do not set snares in the vicinity of badger setts or near their "dung pits", in holes through or under fencelines, gateways or hedges clearly used by badgers.

DEER

Always look for signs of deer activity, such as tracks, droppings and signs of fraying or browsing and hair. Do not set snares attached to fences, or in holes through or under fences. Wherever possible avoid setting snares along the back of fence lines, particularly through woodland, as deer often travel alongside them.

OTTERS

Always look for signs of otter activity such as tracks, food remains, droppings or spraints. Do not set snares on footbridges, trees, logs or planks over watercourses and avoid setting snares on tracks alongside rivers or water courses.

DOMESTIC PETS

Whenever possible, snares should not be set on or near public footpaths, rights of way, near housing and areas regularly used for the exercise of domestic animals.

FARM LIVESTOCK

Do not set snares where livestock are grazing or along the back of fence lines – cattle often lean over or push against fences to graze on the opposite side.

You should consult the farmer before setting any snares, ensuring you have his or her permission.

CAPercaillie

If snares are to be used in capercaillie areas avoid setting snares within woods known to hold capercaillie. It is recommended that snares be used at middens on farmland or moorland at least 500 metres away from woods known to hold capercaillie.

WILDCAT

Always consider the possibility of wildcats in Highland Scotland. Key features that help distinguish them from feral and domestic cats are tabby markings but no white feet; unbroken flank stripes; a thick, blunt tail with distinct aligned bands and no stripe down the tail.

INTERFERENCE WITH SNARES

It is an offence to damage or remove snares and to disrupt a lawful activity, such as snaring. Any such incidents should be reported to your local Wildlife Crime Officer (WCO) and a case number obtained.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill to be considered by the Scottish Parliament in 2010/11 proposes a number of changes to the current law on snaring.

ACCREDITATION AND TRAINING OF SNARE USERS

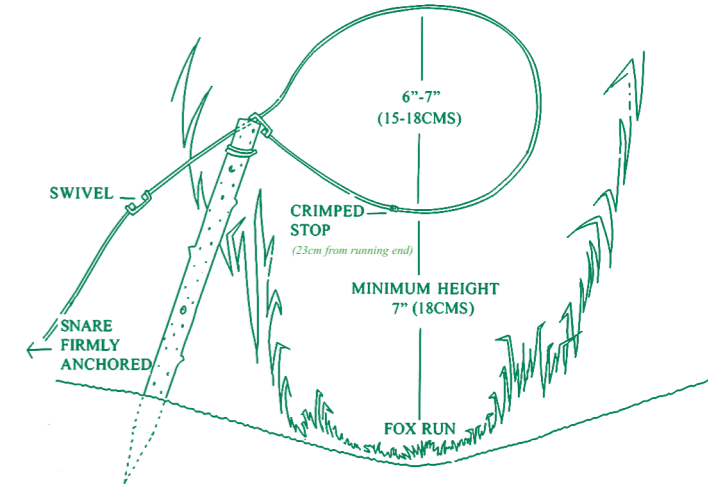
It may become a legal requirement that all snare users undertake an approved training course.

TAGGING OF SNARES

Tagging of all snares may become a legal requirement. The information required on the tag will likely be an operator number issued through your local WCO (following completion of approved training), possibly prefixed with a target species ID.

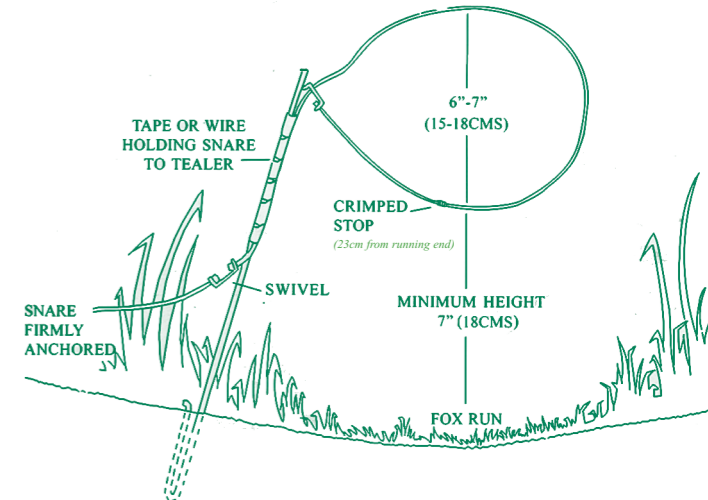
SETTING FOX SNARES

1. You must not set any snare without the permission of the land owner or occupier.
2. Fox snares should not be set where there is evidence of regular use by non-target species.
3. The presence of foxes can be indicated by tracks, long reddish-brown hairs caught on brambles, twigs or wire, by a strong, musty smell, scats, sightings and kills.
4. Snares must be free running (not self-locking) and must contain a safety stop fixed at a minimum of 9" (23cm) from the running end of the snare. Check the action of each snare to ensure that it is free running and free of kinks. Snares that are frayed or damaged should not be used. It is a legal requirement to inspect the snare and ensure that it is free running at least once a day at intervals of no more than 24 hours. If the snare is not free running it must be removed.
5. Use good quality snares that incorporate a strong swivel. All components should withstand 460lbs (208 kilos) breaking strain.
6. Snares should be held over the selected run by loose attachment to one or more supports known as tealers which are placed firmly in the ground. Tealers made from fence wire or wooden sticks are easy to make, set and conceal. (See Figures 2 and 3.)
7. Snares should be set so that the bottom of the loop is at least 7"(18cm) above the ground. The loop of the snare should be 6-7" (15-18cm) at its deepest point.
8. Snares must be firmly staked to the ground or attached to an object in a manner which will prevent the snare being dragged by an animal caught in it.
9. It is an offence to set a snare where the animal is likely to become fully or partially suspended or drown. Snares may be set parallel to or near to fences, so long as any restrained fox cannot become entangled.
10. Snares must be inspected at least once every day at intervals of no more than 24 hours. It is an offence to fail to release or remove an animal, whether alive or dead, from a snare during the course of the inspection. During inspection you should make a detailed note of any snares that have been damaged or removed since the last inspection. You should inform your local WCO if you suspect an offence of interference or tampering.
11. Foxes restrained by a snare should be dispatched quickly and humanely. The body should be disposed of responsibly. Wherever possible, non-target species must be released unharmed. In the rare circumstances that a protected species is found dead or has to be humanely dispatched your local WCO should be informed. Remember, you must ensure that the snare is still free running and free of kinks before resetting.
12. Daily records of snaring activity, including each set snare, should be kept. This should include a map or GPS record showing the location of snares, and this should be copied to the land manager. A daily diary should record the success of individual snares along with other information, such as mis-catches, problems from interference and general observations.



FOX SNARE ATTACHED TO TRADITIONAL HAZEL STICK TEALER

Figure 2



FOX SNARE ATTACHED TO A TEALER MADE FROM FENCE WIRE

Figure 3