

AVOID SNARING WHERE YOU SEE THESE NON-TARGET SPECIES TRACKS

GET TO KNOW THESE TRACKS!



PINE MARTEN



BADGER



DOMESTIC DOG



DEER



DOMESTIC CAT



OTTER

Figure 1

SETTING RABBIT SNARES

1. You must not set any snare without the permission of the owner or occupier.
2. Rabbit snares must 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. Only use free running snares that contain a safety stop 5" (13cm) from the eye 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 must not be used.
5. 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) with a loop of 4" (10cm) diameter for the head of the rabbit.
6. Snares should be supported by a suitable "tealer" or set-stick and set firmly in the ground. The loop of a rabbit snare should be positioned 3" (8cm) above the ground.
7. Snares should be securely tethered by a strong, rot-proof cord attached to a peg driven firmly into the ground.
8. Snares should not be set on posts or planks over watercourses, or under gates, fences or in holes in fencelines. Snares can be set parallel to or near to fences, so long as any restrained rabbit cannot cross the fence. Snares should be set away from cover and in short vegetation, where rabbits are likely to be moving relatively fast.
9. Snares must be inspected at least once every day at intervals of no more than 24 hours.
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 interference or tampering – this is currently an offence and will soon be a specific offence.
11. Where practical, rabbits restrained by a snare should be approached upwind and dispatched humanely. Wherever possible non-target species must be released unharmed. Severely injured animals should be humanely dispatched. In the rare circumstances that a protected species is found dead or has to be 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 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 pine marten 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 uses 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.

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.



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SNARING IN SCOTLAND

A PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE

SECOND EDITION – May 2009



WHO IS THIS LEAFLET FOR?

This new practitioners' guide is for all those working in the Scottish countryside who are involved in pest and predation control. This guide provides advice on using snaring methods which 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. 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 practitioners' guide has been drawn up by the Game and 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 Scottish Countryside Alliance, the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Estates' Business Group, National Farmers Union Scotland, National Sheep Association, Heather Trust, Scottish Crofters Foundation, Scottish Natural Heritage and the British Pest Control Association.

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

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.

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 fence lines and avoid setting snares through hedges or under gateways.

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 and droppings. 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

Wherever 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.

CAPERCAILLIE

If snares are to be used in capercaillie areas avoid setting snares within woods known to hold capercaillie. Snares can be used at middens established on farmland or moorland at least 500 metres away from woods known to hold capercaillie.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

TAGGING OF SNARES

Tagging of all snares is likely to become a legal requirement. The information that will be required on the tag is the operator or estate ID number. This number will probably be the same one that your local Wildlife Crime Officer (WCO) has issued for your crow cage and Larsen traps.

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 WCO.

ACCREDITATION AND TRAINING OF SNARE USERS

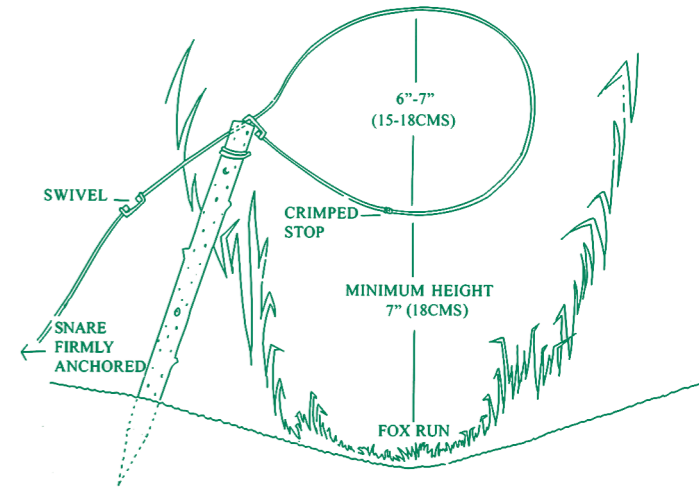
Accreditation and training of all snare users is likely to become a legal requirement and will be available through the industry's own scheme, endorsed and supported by those organisations endorsing this code of practice. Accreditation may also be achieved by demonstrating prior learning.

SIGNAGE

The use of signs to alert the public that snares are being employed may become a legal requirement near to access routes.

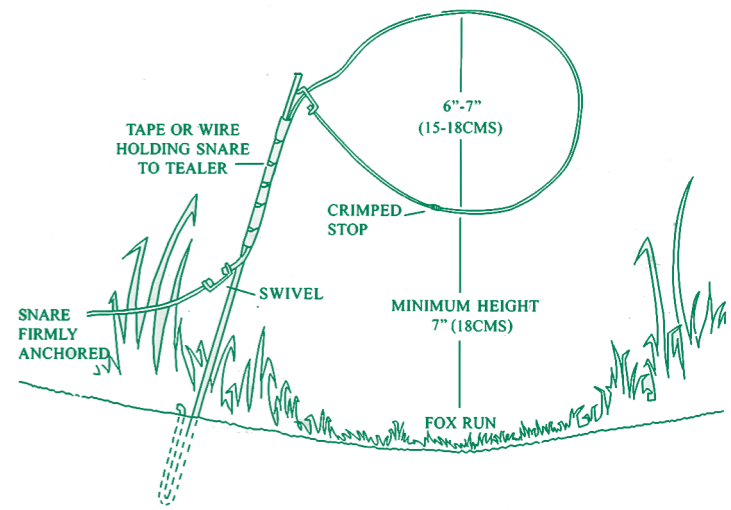
SETTING FOX SNARES

1. You must not set any snare without the permission of the owner or occupier.
2. Fox snares must 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 and sightings.
4. Only use free running snares that contain a safety stop 9" (23cm) from the eye 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.
5. Use good quality snares that incorporate a strong swivel. The wire should be not less than 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 set sticks are easy to conceal, set and make. (See Figures 2 and 3.)
7. Snares should be set so that the bottom of the loop is at least 7" (18cm) off the ground. The loop of the snare should be 6-7" (15-18cm) at its deepest point.
8. Snares must be firmly anchored, either staked in place or fixed with an anchor that cannot be moved outwith a reasonable inspection distance. (The recommendation is that the anchor should weigh more than 45lb (20kg) or be a minimum length of 8' (2.4m).)
9. Snares should not be set on posts or planks over watercourses, or under gates, fences or in holes in fencelines. Snares may be set parallel to or near to fences, so long as any restrained fox cannot cross the fence.
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 interference or tampering – this is currently an offence and will soon be a specific offence.
11. Where practical, foxes restrained by a snare should be approached into the wind and dispatched humanely. The body should be disposed of responsibly. Wherever possible, non-target species must be released unharmed. Severely injured animals should be humanely dispatched. In the rare circumstances that a protected species is found dead or has to be 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 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