

Badgerwatch (Ireland)
5, Tyrone Avenue
Waterford
Ireland
16th February 2010

Committee for the Environment
Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill

Please accept submission by Badgerwatch (Ireland) for the abolition of snares in Northern Ireland.

Badgerwatch (Ireland) is a Non-Government Organisation concerned with the welfare and conservation of wildlife in general and badgers in particular. We are affiliated to the Badger Trust (U.K.) and the Irish Wildlife Trust. We are a voluntary group, funded by our members' subscription and donations. We liaise with Badger Groups in Northern Ireland.

Introduction.

The use of snares, the scourge of the countryside cause untold suffering to any creature, whether it enjoys protected status or otherwise, who is unlucky enough to get trapped. Large numbers of animals, including domestic and farm animals regularly fall prey to the device. They suffer prolonged terror and mutilation from hours of struggling to free themselves which usually ends in strangulation. Wounds caused by wire cutting deep into flesh eventually, through the prolonged cutting off of the blood supply, turns gangrenous and sadly, rescued animals often succumb.

Snares may be free-running or self-locking, the latter being illegal in the U.K. but still in use. Both are capable of causing the injuries referred to in the previous paragraph and are generally used by gamekeepers to control predators e.g. foxes or any other animals preying on gamebirds being reared on shooting estates, by farmers controlling rabbit populations on their land and indeed by persons for no other reason than animal abuse.

Unnecessary suffering.

The definition of this is unclear. It suggests there are situations or where suffering is acceptable or justified. All types of snares, legal or otherwise cause terror and suffering to their unfortunate occupants.

Monitoring of snares.

Introducing regulations on snaring are largely unworkable. In the Irish Republic, for example, badger-snaring for 'research purposes' is carried out by Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries under licence from the National Parks and Wildlife

Services. Snares are by order to be checked at least every twenty four hours. It is not known for certain who is accountable for enforcing this ruling. It would appear to be self-regulatory.

Snares need only be checked twice in almost forty eight hours without an offence being committed, e.g. first hour of twenty four hour period and last hour of the second twenty four hour period covers the regulations. This gives rise to serious welfare problems for animals trapped. They are abandoned in a state of high risk (from other animals and indeed, humans) for almost forty eight hours.

Decomposed carcasses of animals have been seen in snares that were simply left unchecked. Such cases cannot be proven.

The case for an outright ban on snaring.

- It is impossible to regulate snaring on the grounds that people involved are unlikely to adhere to regulations.
- It is impossible to monitor snares. Wildlife officers, police and conservation rangers would need to cover vast areas of rural countryside on a regular basis. Snares are set in locations often far from public view and difficult to locate. Few countries have the resources necessary to accomplish the task.
- Snares are indiscriminate.
- It is impossible to prove ownership as users do not require a licence.
- It is impossible to prove that snares have not been inspected during the required periods.
- Snares, whatever the type, whether they be legal or illegal, regulated or unregulated, cause untold suffering to all animals.
- The use of humane methods needs researching.

The enclosed pictures demonstrates the horrors of legal and illegal snares. They speak for themselves.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Powell (Conservation)



