

John F. Robins, Secretary, Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL), c/o Animal Concern,  
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Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) is a recognised Scottish charity: No. SC030982.  
Animal Concern Advice Line was established in 2001 to take on the charitable work of Animal  
Concern which was founded as the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society in 1876.  
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Roseanna Cunningham, the Scottish Government Minister with responsibility for animal welfare, has been asked to ban the use of all snares in Scotland. This follows a decision by the Government Department Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to ban the use of snares to kill mountain hares because the snares cause “unnecessary suffering” to the animals.

SNH has issued guidance on killing injured non-target animals, including cats, after they have been caught in snares and has called for a new Code of Practice on the use of snares. SNH also recommends modifications to snare design to try and reduce the suffering inflicted on animals caught in snares.

John Robins of the charity Animal Concern Advice Line said;

“Enough is enough. Rather than listen to animal welfare experts and totally ban snares the Scottish Government continues to kowtow to the very small minority of people who use these cruel traps to kill native wildlife. For years our Government Ministers have been issuing guidelines and modifying snare designs yet SNH admit snares still catch non-target species and cause unnecessary suffering to animals.

Gamekeepers use these cruel traps to kill native wild animals which naturally predate on the eggs and young of tame non-native pheasants which are bred to be shot. For how much longer are our Government Ministers prepared to ignore public opinion and instead bend over backwards to accommodate gamekeepers? There must be no more tinkering with guidelines and minor modifications to snare designs. The Government’s own agency openly admits that snares cause “unnecessary suffering”. Snares should be totally banned now.”

EDITORS NOTE: You will find the SNH report here:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00515272.pdf>

Our plea to Roseanna Cunningham is copied below.

Roseanna Cunningham MSP,  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change & Land Reform,  
The Scottish Government,  
St. Andrew's House,  
Regent Road,  
Edinburgh,  
EH1 3DG

A Review of Snaring for the Scottish Government Prepared by SNH and published March 2017.

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

In a Government Report on snaring published last week Scottish Natural Heritage stated that they would no longer issue licences allowing the use of snares to kill mountain hares in Scotland as they had concluded that snaring mountain hares causes the animals “unnecessary suffering”. In the last few days SNH have issued a further statement calling for a new Code of Practice on Snaring.

In their report SNH include instructions on how to release “non-target” species, including domestic cats, when caught in legally set snares. Instructions are also given on the destruction of non-target species severely injured through being caught in legally set snares.

I hope I am correct in assuming that the Scottish Government, which has supported the use of snares despite very strong opposition from the public and most if not all animal welfare groups, is suitably embarrassed by these proclamations from their own Department with responsibility for these matters.

SNH admits that legally set snares are indiscriminate and can catch and injure non-target animals. Even with the adjustments and “improvements” in snare design which SNH has called for animals will still suffer when caught in snares and held, struggling to escape, for as long as 23 hours before being killed. As most snares are set to catch native animals which eat the eggs and young of birds, including non-native pheasants, which shooters intend to kill anyway there can be no moral, environmental or conservation justification for allowing the continued use of snares.

I urge you to introduce a total ban on the use of snares in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,  
Animal Concern Advice Line