



### **Additional response to Petition PE1124**

The Scottish SPCA welcomes the opportunity to provide a further response to Petition PE1124 in relation to the use of snares in Scotland, following the publication of the DEFRA report – Determining the Extent of Use and Humaneness of Snares in England and Wales.

The Scottish SPCA is the oldest and largest animal welfare charity in Scotland and it aims to prevent cruelty to animals and promote kindness and humanity in their treatment.

All Scottish SPCA Inspectors are authorised by the Minister to enforce the welfare provisions of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, and can report potential offences under separate legislation directly to the Procurator Fiscal service as a specialist reporting agency.

The published Scottish SPCA policy on wild animals and the killing and trapping of wild animals is:

Extract

#### **27. Killing, culling and trapping**

27.1. No indiscriminate methods of killing wild animals should be used as this leads to non-target species suffering.

27.2. The Scottish SPCA is opposed to the manufacture and use of all snares and any trap which causes suffering.

The question posed to the Scottish SPCA by the Public Petitions Committee is:

What is the Scottish SPCAs view of the report's findings and the extent to which problems and issues identified in that report may exist in Scotland.

The Scottish SPCA welcomes the DEFRA report, more so, in that it will be viewed as un-biased as the research was carried out by the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust.

There is clear evidence in the report that is similar to the current situation in Scotland, further the report clearly highlights two main issues of concern that the Scottish SPCA has highlighted to the Scottish Parliament on several occasions.

- 1 The report recognises that snares are indiscriminate in as much that they catch non-target species and that such by-catch is relatively high, with 60% of operators questioned stating that they had caught non-target species.

Section 1 of the Executive Summary states – neck snares are recognised as capable of causing injury and death to target and non-target animals, and for this reason are controversial.

Section 17 of the Executive Summary quotes “ In the fox snare field trials, non-target species were captured despite careful adherence to the CoP by a competent and conscientious operator”.

- 2 The use of snares carries a high burden of welfare issues causing both injury and death and that they are not conducive to good animal welfare.

Objective 4.2 of the report states “snares can cause severe injury and death in target and non-target animals”.

Between 31st March 2011 and 25 April 2012 the Scottish SPCA has collated incident reports in relation to snares set out below (all of these incidents were reported to the Scottish SPCA by the general public).

- 1 The total number of incidents reported was 65.
- 2 Of the incidents reported, the percentage of non-target species for the relevant snare was 70%.
- 3 The breakdown of non-target species involved is

Badger	13
Cat	15
Deer	5
Dog	4
Bird	2
Hare	2
Otter	2
Pine Marten	1
Rabbit	2
Total	46

The experience of the Scottish SPCA in relation to animals caught in snares in Scotland bears a significant resemblance to the circumstances of the animals caught during the DEFRA commissioned trials on snares.

There is clear evidence in Scotland that there are high numbers of non-target species caught and that welfare is a serious concern given that most animals as at least injured and frequently succumb to death within snares, often with severe injuries being inflicted.

Whilst the Scottish SPCA accepts that the Scottish Government has made considerable efforts to reduce the welfare impact of snares in the last 12 to 18 months, we still believe that both target and non-target species will suffer given the indiscriminate nature of snares.

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Scottish SPCA