



May 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the use of snares and stink pits, also known as middens.

I understand your concerns on this issue and I am aware of the concerns around the use of snares, which can cause immense suffering to both target and non-target animals. It is an issue my Ministerial colleagues are looking at closely as part of the continued drive to maintain the highest animal welfare standards in the world. I know that these pits are generally created to lure foxes who are then caught in snare traps. I am not aware of any current plans to ban the use of the snare trap or middens.

When practised to a high standard, and in accordance with the law, snaring can offer an effective means to reduce the harmful impacts of foxes on livestock, game and wildlife. I know that snares are commonly used in the UK to catch certain animals prior to their killing and current legislation provides strong protection for threatened species and the welfare of trapped animals. Those committing an offence can face prosecution, an unlimited fine or even a custodial sentence.

Snares are controlled in England and Wales under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This prohibits the use of self-locking snares and the setting of any type of snare in places where they are likely to catch certain non-target animals such as badgers. It also requires snares to be inspected on a daily basis. I also know that snares must not be set where there is evidence of regular use by non-target species.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 prohibits causing unnecessary suffering to animals under the control of man, including those animals caught in traps. Trapped animals should be released from a snare trap as soon as reasonably practicable after discovery to ensure they do not unnecessarily suffer. I know that not doing so could be a breach of the 2006 Act and could lead to prosecution.

The onus is on trap operators to act within the law and consider their responsibilities in ensuring that their activities do not harm protected species or cause any unnecessary suffering. If you believe an individual is inflicting unnecessary suffering on animals, the matter should be reported to the police.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY