



Trapping's unintended victims

Trapping is a cruel practice that results in the death of millions of animals every year in the United States. The vast majority of trapped animals are not killed for food, but rather to fuel the global fur trade. Non-target wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and family pets such as dogs and cats are at risk of needless and unjustifiable suffering and death because of trapping.

Traps are indiscriminate

Traps often capture non-target animals, such as family pets, raptors, threatened and endangered species, or mother animals with their young. Generally, trappers are not required to report their non-target captures, making it impossible to know how many non-target animals are caught or killed in traps each year.

Unknown suffering

Generally, trappers are not required to report their non-target captures, making it impossible to know how many non-target animals are caught or killed in traps each year. Estimates are hard to come by, but some research indicates that as many as 18 non-target animals may be captured for each target animal captured, depending on the trap type and methods used.¹ The state of Nevada collects minimal data about non-target captures – less than one-fifth of the state's trappers report this information. However, in eight of the years between 2002 and 2013, these trappers reported capturing more than 5000 non-target animals, including nearly 200 dogs—16 of which were found dead in the traps.

Patchwork regulations leave all animals at risk

Trapping is usually regulated at the state level, but these laws and regulations vary widely with regard to target species and when they may be trapped, methods and types of traps allowed, and data collection.

Many states fail to require any form of trapper education or training. Others have lax trap-check requirements, causing unimaginable suffering for animals left in traps for days or even weeks on end. Very few regulations exist for the marking of traps or trap-free buffer zones around public lands, hiking trails, or other popular recreation spots.

States should require comprehensive, non-target reporting for all trapping activities. This is necessary to provide accountability to citizens who have an interest in healthy wildlife populations and a personal concern for the safety of their companion animals.

The fisher: an unfinished recovery



The fisher (*Martes pennanti*) is a North American mammal and member of the same family as otters, badgers, weasels, wolverines, and others. Fishers were extirpated from some parts of their historical range because of fur trapping, and thousands of fishers are still trapped every year across the U.S.² It is illegal to trap fishers in many states, because their populations have not yet recovered across their entire range.

In New Jersey, fishers are extraordinarily rare and may only be beginning to make a comeback.³ But that recovery could now be at risk with the state's recent approval of the use of live-capture, encapsulating foothold traps. The use of leghold traps had been banned in the Garden State since 1985.

In Oregon, fishers are listed as a "sensitive species" because they face one or more threats to their populations or habitats, and require special attention so that they don't become threatened or endangered.⁴ However, fishers could fall victim to the body-crushing and leghold traps that are legal for use to capture any number of other species in Oregon.

Non-target reporting isn't required in states like New Jersey and Oregon, which puts fishers and other wildlife populations at risk.

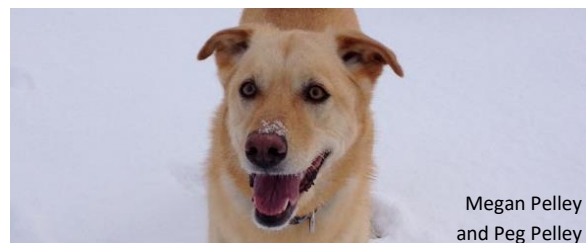
A dog owner's worst nightmare



"Seeing Bella stuck in that trap, in excruciating pain, was one of the worst, most helpless feelings of my life. She's going to be okay now, but this isn't the end of the story. So many other animals, including our two dogs, are still in danger of being caught in traps" – Peg Pelley

Bella was caught in a leghold trap while on a walk with her owner, Peg, in a wooded area in Labrador, Canada. While Peg and others tried to free her from the trap, Bella broke 17 of her teeth in her own frantic attempts to escape. The veterinary and travel bills to treat Bella for her injuries exceeded \$5,000.⁵

Bella has healed and is back to her usual, playful self, but countless other dogs and cats are caught in traps every year, many of whom may not be fortunate enough to have help arrive quickly.



For more information, contact wildlife@humansociety.org.

¹Iossa, G., Soulsbury, C. D., & Harris, S. (2007). Mammal trapping: a review of animal welfare standards of killing and restraining traps. *Animal Welfare*, 16(3), 335-352.

²The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies: "US Furbearer Harvest Statistics Database 1970-2017" at <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/furbearer-management>

³Tredinnick, Andrew (2016, February 19). "Another super-rare fisher found in Warren County." *New Jersey Herald*. <https://www.njherald.com/sports/20160219/another-super-rare-fisher-found-in-warren-county>

⁴Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (2008). Sensitive Species: Frequently Asked Questions and Sensitive Species List. Available at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/diversity/species/docs/SSL_by_category.pdf

⁵Wildgen, Gabriel (2015, February 25). "The fur industry is terrible, even for our dogs." *The Dodo*. Available at https://www.thedodo.com/community/Gabriel_Wildgen/bella-a-fur-trap-survivors-sto-1010491779.html