

By: BORN FREE USA
bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity



INTRODUCTION:

Each year, millions of animals are trapped in the United States. Body-gripping traps — leghold traps, snares and kill-type Conibear traps — are the inhumane tools of the trapping industry.

A trapped animal may struggle in the trap for days, and may succumb to severe physical injury, thirst, starvation or hypothermia before the trapper returns. If the animal is alive when the trapper arrives, the animal may be bludgeoned, drowned, strangled or suffocated by having its chest crushed under the weight of the trapper's foot or knee.

Because of their non-selectivity, both targeted and non-targeted animals — including family cats and dogs, threatened and endangered species — fall victim to traps.

Born Free USA has documented, through a comprehensive review of scientific literature, that traps are indiscriminate and cause suffering and injury to trapped animals.

But sometimes scientific evidence is not enough to convince the public and decision-makers — as well as retailers and consumers of fur products — that fur trapping is inhumane, dangerous and unnecessary.

Indeed, the cruelty is so unconscionable that it must be seen to be believed.

INVESTIGATOR NOTES:

"It takes six minutes to finally kill the raccoon. It is repeatedly hit round the head and forced under water by [the trapper's] combination stick and boot, but it keeps wriggling free only to get bashed over the head again when it emerges from below. It fights for its life, at one point grasping the stick by its paws, but finally [the trapper] manages to get his boot over the raccoon's neck and pins him to the river bottom where it slowly drowns."

THE INVESTIGATION:

In early 2011 Born Free USA and Respect for Animals completed a landmark investigation inside the world of fur trapping. We uncovered for the first time in more than a decade the shocking cruelty and brutality involved in the trapping of wild animals for the fur trade. Trapping apologists frequently claim that trapping is humane, tightly regulated, selective and necessary. But the facts show otherwise.

- **TRAPPING IS BARBARIC**

Our investigation proves that despite industry claims to the contrary, leghold traps and snares cause serious injuries and extreme suffering to trapped animals. We also reveal that archaic killing methods such as suffocation, drowning and chest crushing by the trapper's knee or foot (as shown below) are widely used today — methods that in fact would be considered cruelty to animals (a felony offense in some states) if inflicted intentionally upon domestic cats or dogs.



- **NON-TARGETED ANIMALS DIE**

The investigation also demonstrates that despite years of research, there have been no significant advances in reducing "collateral damage." In other words, non-targeted animals still are captured in traps set for other species. No animal is safe from these diabolical devices — dogs, cats, squirrels, bears, hawks and even threatened and endangered species can become victims of vanity.



Collateral damage: A non-targeted fox squirrel is caught by both front legs by a leghold trap set for bobcats. Both the squirrel's legs have been cut to the bone. The squirrel is released alive but likely will not survive due to the severity of the injuries.



A non-targeted black bear is caught in a leghold trap.



INVESTIGATOR NOTES:

"On another farm we find a domestic cat that is dead in one of his cable snares. It has been strangled by one of the cables [the trapper] has set. [The trapper] says he catches a few cats but usually in the foothold traps."

• LAWS OFTEN ARE IGNORED

Our investigator documented that what few trapping regulations do exist are regularly flouted by trappers: They leave traps out after the close of the trapping season, capture animals out of season and openly use illegal snares to capture animals such as, as shown below, a fox trying to chew through a cable snare. (The trapper admitted that the type of snare pictured is illegal but that he uses it anyway.)



• THERE'S LITTLE OVERSIGHT

The whole operation of trapping is built on a very weak foundation of trust, as there are no authorities present when traps are set or an animal is killed, and most states don't even require trappers to report the number of animals they kill.

INVESTIGATOR NOTES:

"[The trapper] is only allowed a license for one bobcat per season, I'm told, but he's still got traps set out for these even though he's already captured a bobcat this year."



A dead mink, captured out of season, in a leghold trap. A newspaper on the snow-covered shore shows the date.

INVESTIGATOR NOTES:

"[The trapper/fur dealer] thinks that muskrat numbers are down — possibly due to over-trapping. He's not fond of the guys who trap just for the 'numbers' and these are the guys who often steal others' catches as well as trap everything out, so it leaves nothing. However, he still buys [pelts] off these guys."

A CALL TO ACTION:

Born Free USA is using this groundbreaking investigation to shed light on a horrific, highly unregulated, inhumane and dangerous industry. Consumers, retailers and policymakers all are equally responsible for ending this barbaric and unnecessary



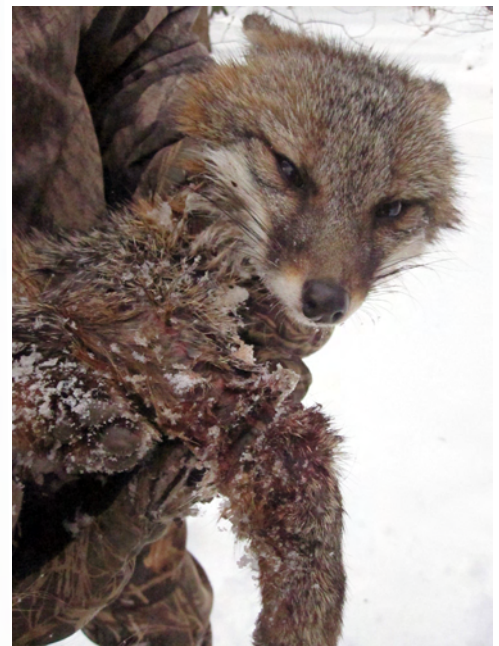
cruelty by refusing to buy or sell fur and by pushing for and passing stronger regulations and prohibitions on the trapping of animals for their fur.

• LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Legislation is needed to provide basic protection to wild animals and dogs and cats who can be injured or killed in traps. For a summary of state trapping regulations see our



A dead bobcat hangs by a leg after being captured in a leghold trap



A gray fox sustains a leg injury in a leghold trap. The fox later was crushed to death under a trapper's knee.



A gray fox caught in leghold trap awaits his grim fate — to be crushed to death by the trapper's knee.



Furs from trapped animals are arranged for an auction.



"State Trapping Report Card" at www.bornfreeusa.org/statetrappingreportcard.

Born Free USA has model legislation and offers assistance to lawmakers in passing this type of legislation. Born Free USA offers extensive experience in drafting legislation, mobilizing grass-roots efforts, lobbying and testifying at hearings.

For more information, e-mail legislation@bornfreeusa.org.

• CITIZEN ACTION

As a compassionate citizen, you can support federal, state, and local legislation and influence agency enforcement of regulations aimed at increasing trapping regulations or banning the use of cruel traps and snares.

For more information on creating your own campaign to protect wildlife from traps, visit www.bancrueltraps.com.

• CONSUMER ACTION

Don't buy fur and don't shop at stores that sell real fur. Better yet, make a special point to support retailers who have signed on to the International Fur Free Retailer Program. The program recognizes only those retailers who have committed, in writing, to a no-fur policy.

For more information, visit www.furfreeshopping.com.

• RETAILER ACTION

Retailers must understand that no fur garments are made compassionately. Refusing to sell fur and signing on to the International Fur Free Retailer Program are not only good for the environment and the welfare of animals, but also good for business at a time when compassion is in fashion.

For more information or to join the program, send an e-mail to info@furfreeshopping.com.

VIEW THE BACK OF THIS REPORT FOR A LIST OF RESOURCES

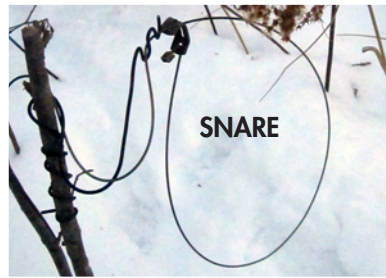
INVESTIGATOR NOTES:

"On close inspection I can see that the raccoon is missing a front paw — it looks very much like it's been in a trap before and [the trapper] says this is the case and it escaped without its paw. He says the paw goes numb below the trap and then they can chew them off."

THE TRAPS:

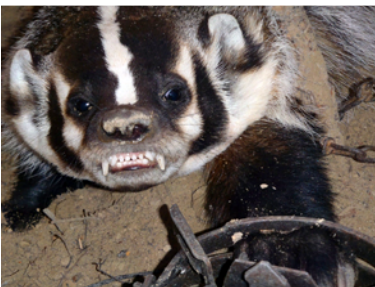
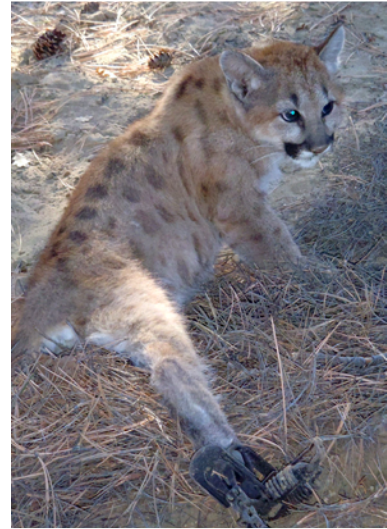


LEGHOLD



SNARE

THE VICTIMS OF VANITY:



A dead coyote who had been caught in a cable snare is discarded by the trapper, who deems the animal's fur condition unsatisfactory. A foot injury from the snare is visible.



Furs from trapped animals are set out on tables at a fur auction.



A muskrat sustains severe leg injuries (the bone on the back, right foot is showing) from a trap.

RESOURCES:

We have many resources available for learning more and taking action:

- Our comprehensive investigation website
>> www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity
- Our investigative DVD "Victims of Vanity," view/order online
>> www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity
- Summary of state laws governing commercial and recreational fur trapping
>> www.bornfreeusa.org/reportcard
- Our database listing non-targeted victims of traps
>> www.bornfreeusa.org/database
- Our Trapping Victims Fund to help cover veterinary care for companion animals or wildlife impacted by traps
>> www.bornfreeusa.org/trappingfund
- Resources for lawmakers and others interested in changing trapping laws at the state and local levels, including model legislation and ordinances
>> www.bornfreeusa.org/legislation
- Resources for retailers, designers and consumers for promoting and supporting compassionate fur free fashion
>> www.furfreeshopping.com
- Sign up for our online eAlerts and receive newsletters keeping you informed how to help protect animals from traps and other issues that threaten wildlife
>> www.bornfreeusa.org/newsletters

PHOTOS: BORN FREE USA / RESPECT FOR ANIMALS®

Born Free USA is a national animal advocacy non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity, rescue individual animals in need, protect wildlife in their natural habitats, and encourage compassionate conservation. We also operate the Born Free USA Primate Sanctuary.

For more information, visit www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity

KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD®

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