



TRAPPING

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the problem with trapping?

Trapping inflicts severe stress, pain, and suffering on any animals unfortunate enough to step into them. Animals caught in traps are prone to environmental elements, starvation, dehydration, and predation. If an animal somehow breaks free – usually by chewing off the trapped limb – they often die due to blood loss and infection.

How many animals are trapped in the United States?

An estimated three to five million animals are trapped in the U.S. each year.

How do traps work?

Traps are unarguably cruel. The different types of traps include: leghold traps, which capture animals by snapping closed and gripping their legs so that they cannot escape; Conibear (or body gripping) traps, which snap closed on the body and either kill or seriously injure the victim; and snares, which are wires that tighten and lock around a limb, neck, or body of an animal. Leghold and snare traps are designed to hold the animals until the trapper comes to kill them. Killing might be

carried out by beating the animal to death with a baseball bat or other blunt object, or by shooting them at close range.

Which animals are trapped?

The range of species targeted is extensive. Beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, fox, marten, mink, muskrat, opossum, otter, raccoon, skunk, and weasel are commonly targeted animals. Gray wolf populations not under federal Endangered Species Act protection are targeted in hunting and trapping. Only two states control the number of traps each trapper is permitted to set.

Trappers cannot guarantee that the animal that gets caught in their traps will be the targeted species. Even posted signs around trapping areas do not stop household pets and even children from falling victim to these deadly devices. According to reports submitted to Born Free USA, hundreds of household pets and even a small number of humans have been injured by traps.

How many trappers are there in the United States?

Twenty-three (48%) of the 48 states that issue licenses for trapping provide figures pertaining to the number of trapping licenses issued during 2020. This figure totaled 96,113 licenses.

Where is trapping carried out?

Put simply, people trap everywhere. Whether that is on their own land as a hobby or as “pest control,” or on public lands.

Shockingly, trapping is permitted and actively practiced within the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). The system of wildlife refuges was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 and now encompasses 567 refuges, as well as 38 wetlands management districts which, together, comprise 95 million acres of land. Within the system, more than 296 threatened and endangered species are conserved across 356 of the individual refuges.

Animal trapping is permitted on 216 (38%) of the refuges, a total of 11.1 million acres of public land. This means that, not only is this cruel practice allowed in areas

of public land, funded by taxpayers, but that people and their companion animals are at risk when walking the trails.

What is being done to stop trapping?

Globally, more than 100 countries have already banned or severely restricted the use of body gripping traps. In the U.S., some states have banned or restricted traps but they are largely legal to use. Born Free USA is working to pass the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act, which would ban the use of body gripping traps on the National Wildlife Refuges. This would be the first step towards seeing wider, federally implemented, bans across the nation.

Read more about trapping in these reports by Born Free USA:

- [Trapped: Exposing the Cruelty of Animal Trapping in the U.S.](#) (2022)
- [Crushing Cruelty](#) (2021)
- [Victims of Vanity II](#) (2016)
- [Victims of Vanity I](#) (2011)

