

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PS Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd](#)
Cc: [Butler, Daniel \(OFM - Special Adviser\)](#); [Faye, Sara \(OFM - Special Adviser\)](#); [Witchard, Ceri \(F&M - Landscapes, Nature & Forestry\)](#); [REDACTED]
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Subject: Email briefing - Meeting between officials and GWCT to discuss snare use
Date: 11 April 2022 08:20:00

Good Morning

Please can you bring the following to the Ministers attention?

Issue: The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) asked for a meeting with you and were offered a meeting with officials to discuss their use of snares in conservation work. In the meeting they asked that we highlight to you that GWCT regularly use snares to carry out predator control and it is their view that a complete ban will lead to a decline in ground nesting bird numbers. We as officials explained that the snare ban is not a ban on predator control and that the proposed ban is only to legislate to prevent snare use. Other methods of fox control are available.

Background: The snares GWCT use are Code-compliant snares and their operators always follow advice given in the Code of best practice on the use of snares in fox control published by the Welsh Government in 2015. GWCT want to re-brand Code-compliant snares as Humane cable restraints and ask that we consider the following

- That Code compliant snares/ humane cable restraints for fox control are licenced as part of a regulatory system which includes compulsory training and tagging
- That the use and sale of all other fox snares is made illegal
- That to obtain a licence the authorised person must demonstrate competence (by attending and passing a certificated course)
- That individual licences are revoked if poor practice occurs

Officials have been advised that the most efficient and humane method of fox control is to use a thermal spotter and night scope in conjunction with a rifle. GWCT argue that when vegetation is dense/ high this method is not always possible. We have sought advice from NRW on this issue and it is their view that the claim that a lack of ability to snare will cause a decline in ground nesting bird numbers appears to assume that people will not to some degree 'compensate' for the loss of their ability to use snares by investing more effort in shooting. NRW also highlight the importance of the timing of predator control which would have most effect during nesting season at which time vegetation is not at its densest. This is also apparent in the recent changes to General Licences by NRW which limit carrion crow control to the nesting season to protect wild birds. Banning snares is about the method used and does not prevent fox control using other methods.

Snare use training and labelling of snares is a statutory requirement in Scotland. Officials have assessed the review carried out in Scotland following the requirements and concluded the increase in bureaucracy far outweighed any resultant prosecutions and also no improvements in animal welfare have been demonstrated. In addition, any regulation to allow limited, licensed snaring would not meet the policy objective as set out in the Programme for Government to 'ban snare use'.

Officials have worked with legal services and OLC and snare provisions for inclusion in the Agriculture Bill are complete and ready for translation. As a result of the re-branding attempt, officials have included 'snares' and 'cable restraints' in the draft legislation.

Officials have also met with representatives from the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) who described similar views to GWCT. BASC intend to write to you directly to express their concerns.

-hanks

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