

WARNING: Contains images of injured and dead animals



Ceredigion Badger Group

Submissions to The Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee
Agriculture (Wales) Bill.
7 November 2022

Introduction

1. The Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee is asking for views on the general principles of the Agriculture (Wales) Bill and the need for legislation to deliver the stated policy intention.
2. The Ceredigion Badger Group are a new voluntary group who formed in 2021. The aim of the group is to enhance the welfare, conservation and protection of badgers within the county. The group is affiliated to the national Badger Trust. Our submissions to the

Agriculture (Wales) Bill are limited to Part 5 (Wildlife) and the proposed prohibition on snares.

3. Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The existing legislation makes it an offence to injure or kill a badger except under licence. Notwithstanding the protection afforded by existing legislation, badgers continue to be snared either intentionally or in a snare intended for a different animal.

Submissions

4. Due to their protected status and resulting risk of prosecution it is likely that many more badgers are snared than those which come to public attention. In 2005 DEFRA worked with the pro-shooting lobby group The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWT) and set up a working group looking into the use of snares. During the study a high proportion of animals caught in snares were non-target species. The non-target species most caught in fox snares during the study were badgers who comprised 25% (1). Professor Stephen Harris in his 2022 report 'A review of the use of snares in the UK' suggests that the average non-target capture rate across a range of snare studies is around 70%(2).
5. The report submitted to DEFRA with the 2005 working group's findings suggests that, at any one time and depending on the season, between 17,200 and 51,600 fox snares are in use in Wales(1). The harm and risk to badgers from snares is therefore significant and on

a considerable scale. The GWT and other advocates of snares would have us believe that codes of conduct and design updates now ensure a better outcome for non-target species such as badgers. The following 2 recent cases of snaring in Ceredigion would suggest otherwise.

6. We photographed this young snared badger at a pond in Ceredigion in April 2021. The snare was wrapped around its abdomen. It had fled from where it was snared and died of its injuries.



7. Also in Ceredigion and in 2021 another badger was found snared by a member of the public. Fortunately, and thanks to RSPCA intervention there was a better outcome for this

particular badger. <https://news.rspca.org.uk/2021/04/27/badger-released-back-to-the-wild-after-getting-trapped-in-ceredigion-snare/>

8. We note that the (GWT) seeks to rebrand snares as ‘Humane Cable Restraints’ (HCR). The following images are just some of the snared badgers taken in by the Vale Wildlife Rescue Centre over the last few years. It is difficult to see anything ‘humane’ about these cable restraints.



9. As a significant portion of the non-target species caught in snares are badgers, the Ceredigion Badger Group welcome a complete ban on snares. In its current wording the bill does not prohibit the possession, sale or manufacture of snares. We would like to see the wording extended to cover a ban on use, possession, sale and manufacture in order to send a clear message on their prohibition and make enforcement easier.

References

1. Report submitted to DEFRA ‘Determining the Extent of Use and Humaneness of Snares in England and Wales’ (2012)
<https://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/ProjectDetails?ProjectId=14689>
2. Harris, Stephen. ‘A Review of the Use of Snares in the UK’ (2022)
<https://www.animalaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Snaring-report-final-version.pdf>