



CONNECTICUT
FOR
ANIMALS
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BODY-CRUSHING & LEGHOLD TRAPS

THE PROBLEM

Leghold & body-crushing traps are barbaric and inhumane; however, they are legally permitted in the state of Connecticut.

Furbearing animals for which there is an open trapping season in Connecticut may be taken by Box Traps, Live Traps, Deadfalls, Padded and Unpadded Metal Traps, Smooth Wire Traps, and Species-Specific Traps subject to restrictions. Included in these are leghold and body-crushing traps, which are metal traps that are designed to slam shut on an animal's foot or body. The victims endure prolonged pain and, in a panic, often chew off their limbs to escape, if they aren't killed outright.

Leghold and body-crushing traps are indiscriminate, much like land mines

Leghold and body-crushing traps frequently capture animals other than the species targeted. Dogs, cats, eagles, owls, ducks, songbirds, hawks (including birds protected by state and federal law), deer, and many other "nontarget" animals have been killed or maimed.

There is nothing soft about "padded" leghold traps

The "padded" leghold traps have extremely hard, thin rubber strips, required by CT DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) regulations to be "not less than 3/32 inch thick" – about the thickness of a credit card! These traps still cause grievous injuries such as leg fractures, dental injuries, joint dislocations, and limb amputations in a captured animal.



Numbers are elusive

CT DEEP does not require trappers to report accidental captures of non-target species, so it is impossible to know how many animals are truly impacted by trapping. However, the Harvard Law School's Animal Law and Policy Clinic's review of public records revealed that between 2017 and 2022, CT DEEP's Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police received many complaints about animals grievously injured or killed by these traps. Refer to the Harvard study under "Resources" for more detailed information.

FAST FACTS

- Traps often cause agonizing deaths.
- Unintended animals are often victims of trapping and are not required to be reported.
- Killing predators such as coyotes and foxes interferes with the natural population control of other species such as deer and rodents.

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WHERE IT'S HAPPENING

There is a furbearer trapping season in Connecticut that varies in the late fall into the winter depending on the species. Trapping of river otters, beavers, mink, muskrats, weasels, coyote, gray fox, red fox, raccoon, opossum and skunk are legally permitted in the state.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ban body-crushing and leghold traps in the state of Connecticut through regulation and legislation.

A regulatory solution has been proposed by the Harvard Law School Animal Law and Policy Clinic in a letter to the Commissioner of DEEP regarding its responsibility as “trustee of the environment for the present and future generations.” This letter requests a review of DEEP’s existing trapping regime that fully accounts for the environmental policy considerations set forth in the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA).

Nine US states, including Connecticut’s neighbors Massachusetts and Rhode Island, have banned or significantly restricted the use of leghold traps.

Legislatively, there is a campaign in Connecticut working to only permit box and cage-type traps which offer the benefits of “catch and release.”

RESOURCES

- [Request by the Harvard Law School Animal Law & Policy Clinic for Review of Connecticut’s Policies Related to the Use of Leghold and Body-Gripping Traps](#)
- [Public Records regarding leghold traps in Connecticut. Prepared by Harvard Law School Animal Law & Policy Clinic.](#)
- [Declarations Prepared by Harvard Law School Animal Law & Policy Clinic.](#)
- ["A Legislator's Guide to the Trapping Debate" by Dr. Nan Zyla, President, HARP, Inc. \(Humane Alternatives for Resolving Problems\).](#)
- ["Ban Leghold Traps: Scientists, Advocates and Celebrities Speak Out" by George D. Whitney, D.V. M, 1988.](#)
- [One fox loses leg, another removes own foot after being caught in illegal traps in Lexington \(boston.com\)](#)
- Furbearer Trapping Seasons (ct.gov)
<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/hunting/2024-connecticut-hunting-and-trapping-guide/furbearer-trapping-seasons>

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