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**3** January 2014

**From Lord de Mauley**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Natural Environment and Science

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 20 December to the Secretary of State on behalf of a number of your constituents about the use of snares. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

Policy on wildlife management issues, including policy for snares, is a devolved matter, so I can only speak for England. In England, self-locking snares have been banned for over 20 years and continue to be so. Other snares are currently legal to use for animals other than those that are specially protected. Most snares are set to catch foxes.

The Defra Code of Good Practice on the use of snares in fox and rabbit control in England, published in 2005, explains the legal obligations for people using snares in England and provides guidance on responsible use. Those using snares should be aware not only of their responsibilities under the law, but also of these guidelines for good practice. In addition, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 contains protection for animals under the control of man to help prevent unnecessary suffering, and would cover any animal held in a snare.

Cases concerning the illegal use of snares, or other wildlife control methods, are a matter for the police and should be reported to them. Defra supports wildlife crime enforcement, including combating the illegal use of snares, by co-chairing and providing a secretariat for the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime, a multi-agency body comprising representatives of the organisations with an interest in wildlife law enforcement in the UK.

In 2008 Defra commissioned a research project to determine the extent of use and humaneness of snares in England and Wales. The project report was published on 15 March 2012. Further information can be found on the research section of Defra's website (<http://randd.defra.gov.uk>) by using the "search" link and entering 'WM0315' into the search box.



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We are currently considering the findings of the report and expect to meet interested parties shortly to discuss their views.

Rupert de Manby



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