

# The use of snares in the UK: ‘Humane’ or ‘Inhumane’?

“We cannot have peace among men Whose hearts delight in killing any living creature. By every act that glorifies or even tolerates such moronic delight In killing we set back the progress of humanity”. (Carson, 2002).



*Fig. 1 Rescued red fox: The Fox Project. (Amy Schutt, 'The canid project', 2021).*

In this essay I will investigate the use of snares in the UK by commercial game shoots and the vilification of the non-human animals targeted for killing who have come to be termed as ‘vermin’. Through studying historical and current legislation and the terminology used to justify cruel devices, such as ‘humane’ snares. I argue that the language used is not appropriate to the suffering inflicted on sentient beings that find themselves trapped and awaiting what is termed as a ‘humane’ death.

“Humaneness is, I believe, a reverence and respect for all life. It is not, finally, survival that we seek, but a quality of life that gives meaning and purpose to our existence. Yet not for the sake of our life alone, but for the sake of all that lives”.

*John Hoyt, President of The Humane Society of the United States (Whitlock, 1975:5).*

I hope to draw attention to institutional abuses, and how anthrozoology and criminology can positively contribute to changing attitudes, to open debate and promote changes to current legislation.

Non-human animals gain little attention from mainstream criminology however, there is an ongoing concern for environmental issues within this field (Beirne, 2018., Nurse, 2011., Wellsmith, 2011). By including the expanding discipline of Anthrozoology (Hurn, 2012) with its emphasis on non-human animals and the ethics of our co-relationships, effective contributions can be made towards crime reduction involving harms inflicted on wildlife.

By investigating the historical and legal use of the snare and the cruel and inhumane suffering these devices inflict, I have argued that the word 'humane' is outdated language that is neutralizing the physical and psychological effects of abuse. The alternative is to cultivate empathy by emphasising the importance of the environment's that wildlife inhabits.

## References

Figure 1.

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