

MN Recreational Wolf Hunting: Snaring, Trapping, Baiting, and Predator Calls

The inaugural 2012-13 Wolf Hunting and Trapping Season in Minnesota allowed the use of traps, snares (steel cable wire), bait, and predator calls as methods to hunt wolves. A recent Lake Research Partners Surveyⁱ found that 66% of Minnesota voters oppose the use of traps and snares to hunt gray wolves (29% support)ⁱⁱ

Foot and leghold traps

- Steel jawed leghold traps cause physical trauma to the foot or leg trapped, restricting the flow of blood and causing the animal to lose feeling in their foot and lower leg.
- Animals that lose feeling will often chew their own leg off to escape the trap. Trappers refer to this as “ring off”, where only the severed foot remains in the trap.

Methods for killing trapped and living wolves: Gunshot, Catch poles used for strangulation, Blunt force trauma to crush larynx, Stomping or compressing chest to crush heart and lungs

Snares

- Neck snares are intended to choke the animal to death, though many wolves are not killed quickly and suffer unnecessarily. Foot or leg snares are intended to restrain the animal until the trapper arrives. Neck snares killed 75% of the 197 wolves taken during the trapping season.
- Wolves have developed thick muscles in their necks to protect their trachea and common carotid arteries. Wolves often do not die of suffocation from neck snares and they do not die quickly.
- The cause of death in most neck snares is “exploded brain”, a cruel and agonizing death. Trappers refer to this as “jelly heads”.
 - 1 The choke snare constricts the jugular vein on the outside of the neck, cutting off blood returning to the heart.
 - 2 The carotid artery continues to pump blood into the brain, causing brain swelling and eventually rupture.

Baiting

“Bait” is any animal or animal parts, including live or dead fish. The only significant bait restriction is that bait does not contain food that can attract deer. In Minnesota, hunting deer with bait is illegal.

Predator Calls: electronic (attended) and manual

Electronic calls include sounds of wolf pups in distress (yips and whines) and other wolf noises. Manual predator calls for wolves make wolf noises including barks, yips, and whines.

Wolves are not the only species that suffers because of snares and leg hold traps. It’s known that many other non-targeted species are also caught, suffer, and die in these traps because of their non-selective nature. “Bycatch” are mountain lions, lynx, moose, bald eagles, Fishers, domestic dogs, and many other species. Because reporting these accidental takes is the responsibility of the trapper, many animals die this way but are never reported.

“I’ve never used snares at all because they are very nonselective. They catch everything that will go through them. Snares are very dangerous.” - Carter Niemeyer is an experienced trapper, wolf biologist, and former Wolf Management Specialist of the USDA Animal Damage Control Department.ⁱⁱⁱ

“All snares share the same failing—they restrict the flow of blood back to the heart through surface veins while the deeper arteries continue to pump blood into the foot or head. The result is painful swelling. I quit using snares 30 some years ago.” - Lynn Rogers, Ph.D., is a wildlife biologist with 35 years experience working in government, academia, and private nonprofit organizations. He is currently the principal biologist for the Wildlife Research Institute in Ely, Minnesota.^{iv}

“Killing an animal by strangling it with a wire loop often results in a slow, painful death...” - Chuck Hulsey is a Regional Wildlife Biologist for the State of Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.^v

ⁱ Methodology: Lake Research Partners designed and administered this telephone survey using professional interviewers February 28 – March 4, 2013. The survey was conducted with 600 registered voters in Minnesota and has a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points. Random Digit Dial (RDD) method was used for the survey and respondents were asked if they were registered to vote in Minnesota. Twenty-five percent of interviews were conducted with cell phones and 48% of respondents said a cell phone is their primary or exclusive telephone. Thirty-eight percent of respondents identified living in a hunting household. To conform to the registered voter profile in the state, the data were weighted slightly by gender, region, and age.

ⁱⁱ Question wording: Do you support or oppose allowing the use of traps and snares to hunt wolves?

ⁱⁱⁱ Nichols, Jake. "TRAPPED! In the Shadows of Wildlife Management." *Planet Jackson Hole*. N.p., 12 Mar. 2013. Web. 12 Apr. 2013. <<http://planetjh.com/2013/03/12/trapped/>>.

^{iv} Miele, Joe. "Oppose Snaring." *The C.A.S.H. Courier Newsletter Spring 2012*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.all-creatures.org/cash/cc2012-sp2-snaring.html>>.

^v Miele, Joe. "Oppose Snaring." *The C.A.S.H. Courier Newsletter Spring 2012*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.all-creatures.org/cash/cc2012-sp2-snaring.html>>.