

# Trap Safety for Pet Owners



## TRAP SAFETY FOR PET OWNERS:

Wyoming Untrapped seeks to raise awareness of the need for a safer environment for people, pets, and wildlife. Most people are unaware that traps can be set nearly anywhere, including directly on public trails. Dogs can be killed in traps without any legal recourse for the owner. Follow these trap release instructions – it may save your dog's life.

If your dog is trapped, please seek veterinary care. To help document all trap incidents and injuries to increase public awareness, we ask dog owners and veterinarians to:

- Report these incidents to Wyoming Untrapped, [info@wyominguntrapped.org](mailto:info@wyominguntrapped.org).
- Report to appropriate government agency - [wgfd.wyo.gov](http://wgfd.wyo.gov).
- Tell your story; go to our trapped incident database; [www.wyominguntrapped.org/database/](http://www.wyominguntrapped.org/database/).

**We need your help!**

## How to release your pet from a trap or snare

## Be Prepared: Learn about Trapping and Know What to Do

**Keeping your dog safe is your responsibility.** If a pet is caught accidentally in a trap or snare, it may be possible to remove it without injury. The key is to follow the steps outlined in this brochure quickly and calmly. You should understand how to remove a trap or snare before you head outside, but take this brochure with you for field reference. A dog or other animal caught in a trap or snare may be extremely agitated, and may try to bite those who come near. Your ability to reassure and calm your pet is critical to a successful release.

### Important Steps:

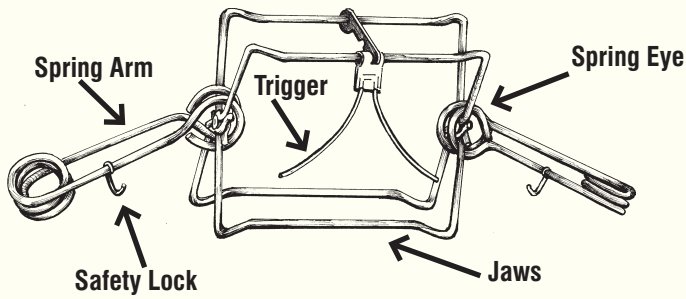
1. Wyoming furbearer trapping season starts October 1 and ends APRIL 30, but trapping is allowed year-round for many species. Government-sponsored trapping for "nuisance animals" can occur anytime. Visit [www.wgfd.wyo.gov](http://www.wgfd.wyo.gov).
2. Keep control of your dog at all times. If you cannot keep your dog within eyesight, voice command, or on the trail, leashing your dog is recommended. Also know your local leash laws.
3. If you do encounter traps or snares, immediately leash your dog.
4. **It is against Wyoming state law to move or tamper with any legally set traps or snares you might encounter. If you believe the traps are illegally set, immediately notify the nearest Wyoming Game and Fish Department office, or Wyoming Game Wardens at the STOP POACHING HOTLINE, 877-WGFD-TIP or 307-777-4330 for out-of-state calls.**

### Consider a trap removal tool kit before you go...

**Add to your backpack when hiking on our public lands**

1. Stout rope (3/8" -1/2" by 8') or strong leash.
2. Baling twine or large zip-ties to hold open trap springs.
3. A muzzling device to keep a trapped dog from biting you. If you don't have a muzzle, use a belt, leash, duct tape, electrical tape or vet wrap.
4. Short nosed cable cutters such as Felco or similar brand to cut snares.
5. If hiking/skiing/snowshoeing in the winter months, a short piece of wood to set under the trap. Skis or snowshoes will also work.

# Body-Grip Traps (Conibear):



**Body grip type traps are designed to kill small to medium size animals by closing quickly around the neck and body of an animal. Some instruction for releasing a Conibear is offered here but a pet's survival is unlikely if caught. Remain calm, and work as fast as you can.**

In order to remove a body grip trap from a dog, the springs must be compressed and secured. Compressing the springs allows the jaws to move freely, so you can release the dog. There are specific tools designed to be used to set this type of trap and can be purchased at any trapping shop.

Remain calm and work quickly. These kinds of traps are often deadly to dogs if not released quickly. Muzzle your dog and work as fast as you can.

*\*Note: Body-grip traps (conibear) with a jaw measurement over 10 inches are illegal on dry ground on public land in Wyoming, effective July 2015. Please report any violations to the local Wyoming Game and Fish Department office. Remember that traps are dangerous and your safety is important. If you lack the ability to release a trapped pet, the best action is to leave the scene and go for help. Trappers in Wyoming are required to check their body-grip quick-kill traps not less than once a week. The check period could be as long as 13 days depending on what day it is set.*



## Watch a Demonstration Video

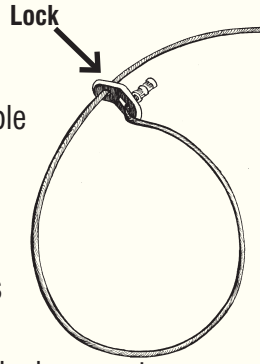
For more information about **How to Release Your Pet** from a Trap or Snare, visit our website at [www.wyominguntrapped.org/visual-media/](http://www.wyominguntrapped.org/visual-media/) for instructional videos.



View [www.wyominguntrapped.org/UntrapYourPet.pdf](http://www.wyominguntrapped.org/UntrapYourPet.pdf) for our downloadable brochure for your Smartphone.

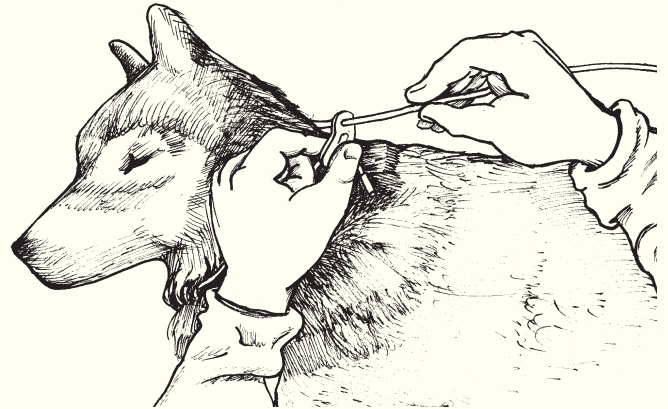
# Snares

**Wire snares can kill!** Snares are generally constructed of a thin wire cable and are equipped with various types of snare locks that prevent the cable from relaxing when the snare closes. Remain calm so your dog also remains calm. The harder the captured animal fights, the tighter the snare gets as the lock prevents the snare from loosening. The snares most likely encountered by dogs are those set for fox, coyotes and bobcats due to their size similarities to many domestic dog breeds. The maximum width of a snare loop in Wyoming is 12", big enough for most dogs.



## How to Remove a Snare

- Step 1.** Restrain and calm the dog so the snare does not tighten around the dog's neck. If you have an object that you can place between the dog's neck and snare while calming and restrain your dog - DO. (gloves or hat )
- Step 2.** Find the lock and grab it. Now push the cable away from you through the lock opening to open the snare.
- Step 3.** Slip the snare back over the dog's head.



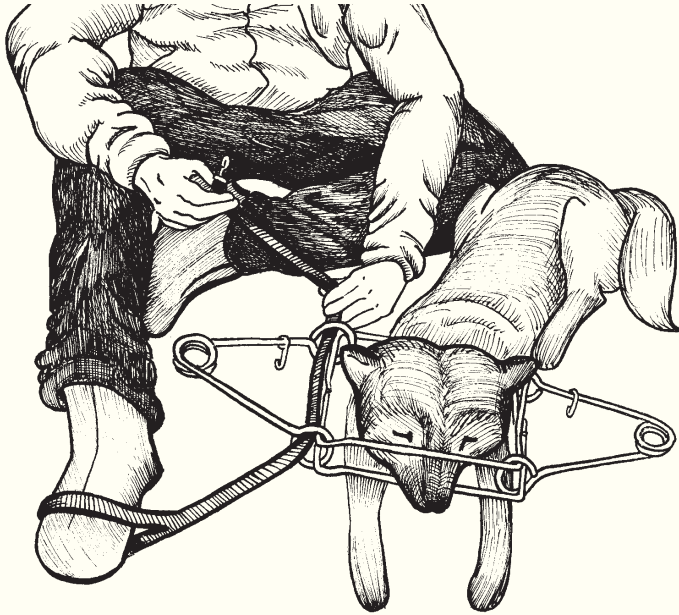
### Other Considerations:

- You may need to release the "anchor" of the snare (where it is attached to a fixed object) in order to allow for better maneuvering.
- Leave the snare in place after you remove your dog. Remember you must report incidents of trap removal or tampering to the regional Wyoming Game and Fish Department office so trappers will be informed of the situation.

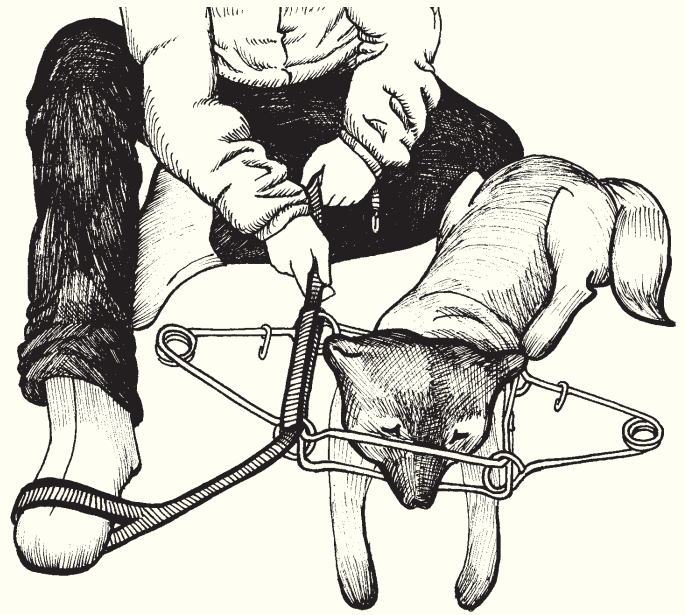
*\*Note: Trappers in Wyoming are required to check their snares not less than once a week. The check period could be as long as 13 days depending on what day it is set.*

# How to Remove a Body-Grip Trap: Leash Pulley Method

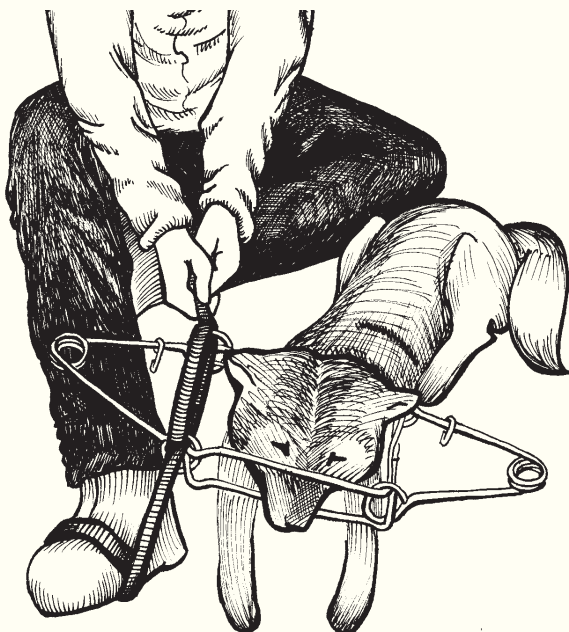
**Step 1.** Place your foot through the loop end of the leash and run the free end through both spring eyes on one side of the trap. A piece of rope or belt can be substituted for a leash, but first create a loop for your foot to go in.



**Step 2.** Loop the leash again through the eye of the spring farthest away and pass it back through the eye closest to you. The leash now should be looped through both eyes twice. This approach creates a make-shift pulley.



**Step 3.** Sit down and extend your leg with the leash attached under the trap to keep it in a horizontal position (this will prevent injury to your dog's neck). **Stabilize the trap and pull hard!!!**



**Step 4.** Latch the safety lock across the spring. If the safety is missing, wrap a piece of wire, large zip-ties or rope around the spring arm to hold trap open.



**You are not yet done!**

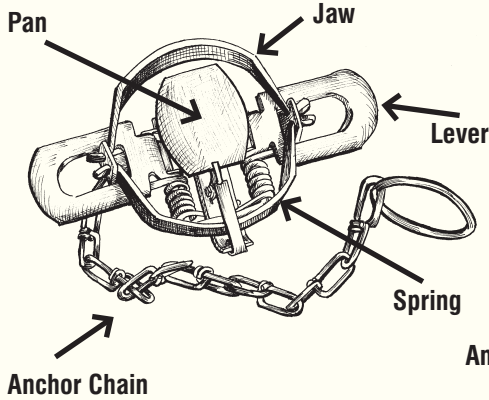
Repeat these steps on the other side of the trap to release your dog.



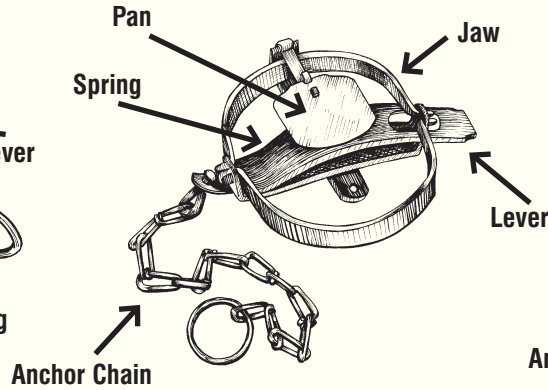
# Leg-Hold Traps

Leg-hold traps come in various shapes, sizes and styles but the basic principle of how they function is the same. These traps are designed to catch and hold an animal by closing across the paw. The trap's jaws close when an animal steps on the pan, releasing the springs and levers. Refer to trap pictures which are in the open position.

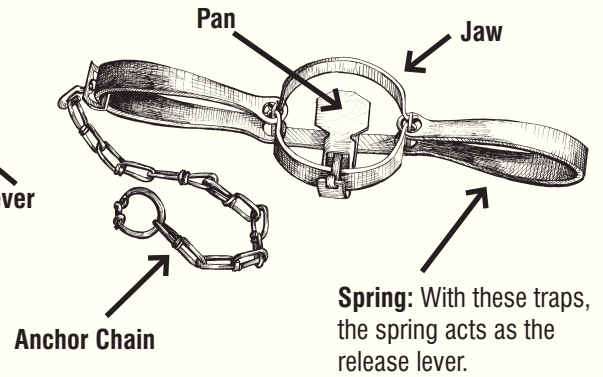
## Coil Spring Trap



## Jump Trap



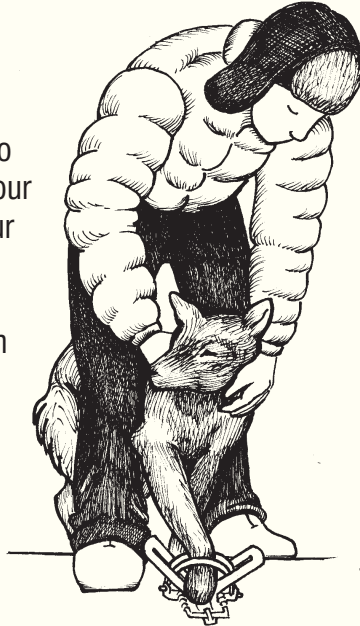
## Long Spring Trap



**Spring:** With these traps, the spring acts as the release lever.

## How to Remove a Leg-Hold Trap

**Step 1.** First, cover your dog's face with a coat or shirt. It may be best to put the dog's face in the sleeve. Either pin your dog to the ground or hold it between your legs so it cannot move. Use your feet, knees or the palms of your hands to compress the spring levers on the trap. Depending on the size of your dog, it may be easier to kneel over the dog and then use your hands to open the trap.



**Step 2.** With the spring levers parallel to your feet or hands, step on or press both levers to relax the pressure on the trap jaws and free the foot. Quickly pull your dog's paw out of the trap jaws. This method works well on hard surfaces.



## Increased trapping takes place in winter with a snow surface

In deep snow, you may need to stabilize the trap on a solid surface (a log, some wood, snowshoes, or anything you can find) before depressing the springs. Another method (shown here) is to use your thigh to stabilize the trap and depress the trap levers with both hands.

## Other considerations:

- If you have someone with you, one person can hold the dog while the other depresses the spring levers.
- The jaws do not have to be completely open to free the dog.
- **BE CAUTIOUS** after releasing your dog's foot. It is possible your pet may have been injured while trying to pull away from the trap.

\*Note: Trappers in Wyoming are required to check their leg-hold traps at least once during each 72 hour period.

