

Trap Safety for Pet Owners



How to release your pet from a trap or snare

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 traps can be set nearly anywhere, including directly on public trails. Pets can be injured or killed in traps; there is currently no legal recourse for pet owners. Follow these trap release instructions—they may save your pet's life.

If your pet is trapped, seek veterinary care immediately after releasing your pet from the trap. To help document all trap incidents and injuries to increase public awareness, we ask pet owners and veterinarians to:

- Report incidents to Wyoming Untrapped, info@wyominguntrapped.org.
- Report to appropriate government agency - wgfd.wyo.gov.
- Tell your story at our trapped incident database, wyominguntrapped.org/database.

We need your help!

Be Prepared: Learn about Trapping and Know What to Do

Keeping your pet safe is your responsibility. If a pet is caught 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 become 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 wgfd.wyo.gov.
2. Keep control of your pet at all times. If you cannot keep your pet within eyesight, voice command, or on the trail, leashing your pet is recommended. Also know your local leash laws.
3. If you encounter traps or snares, immediately leash your pet and leave the area.
4. **It is against Wyoming state law to move or tamper with any legally set traps or snares you encounter. However, it is legal to remove a pet or livestock from traps or snares. 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.**

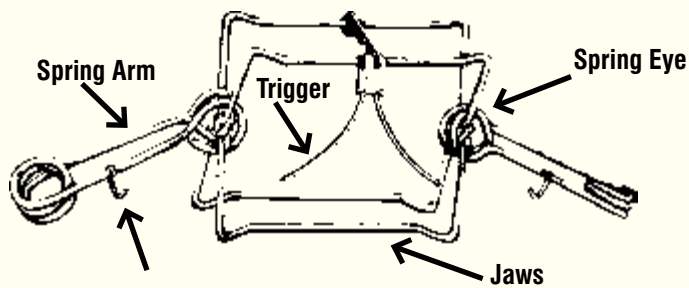
Wyoming UnTrapped would like to thank the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and drawings by Sarah DeGennaro, copyright ADF&G. Cover dog photo: Sue Cedarholm

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 pet from biting you. If you don't have a muzzle, use a belt or leash, even a coat, shirt or electrical tape to wrap around the animal's muzzle.
4. Short-nosed cable cutters such as Felco or similar brands 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.
6. **For various tools to release pets caught in traps, snares, or Conibears see our UNtrap Pack on wyominguntrapped.org.**

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 pet, the springs must be compressed and secured. Compressing the springs allows the jaws to move freely, so you can release the pet.

Remain calm and work quickly. These kinds of traps are often deadly to animals if not released quickly. Muzzle your pet 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. 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. 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.*



Watch a Demonstration Video

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

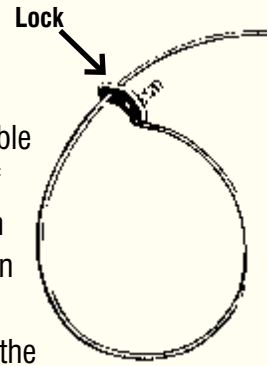


View wyominguntrapped.org/UntrapYourPet.pdf for our downloadable brochure for your Smartphone.

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 pet 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 pets are those set for fox, coyotes and bobcats due to their size similarities to many domestic animals. The maximum width of a snare loop in Wyoming is 12", big enough for most domestic pets. **Always carry a short-nosed cable cutter such as Felco or a similar brand to cut snares!**



How to Remove a Snare

Step 1. Restrain and calm the pet so the snare does not tighten further around the neck.

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 head.



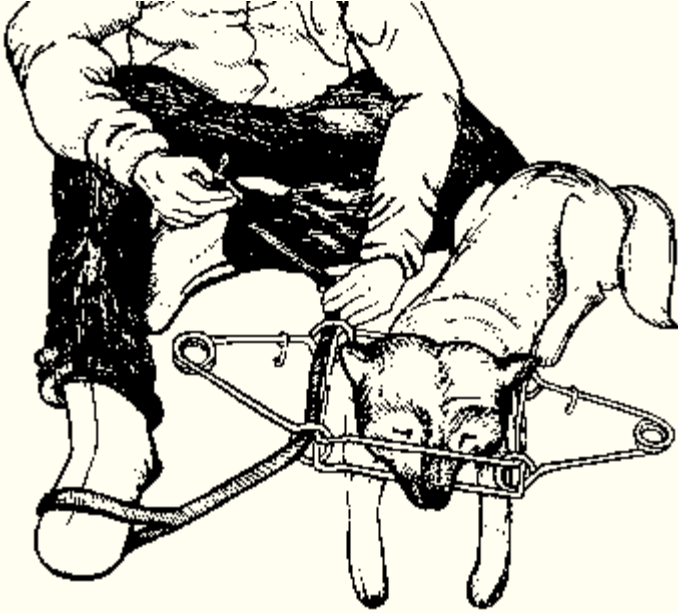
Other Considerations:

- 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 releasing your pet. 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.

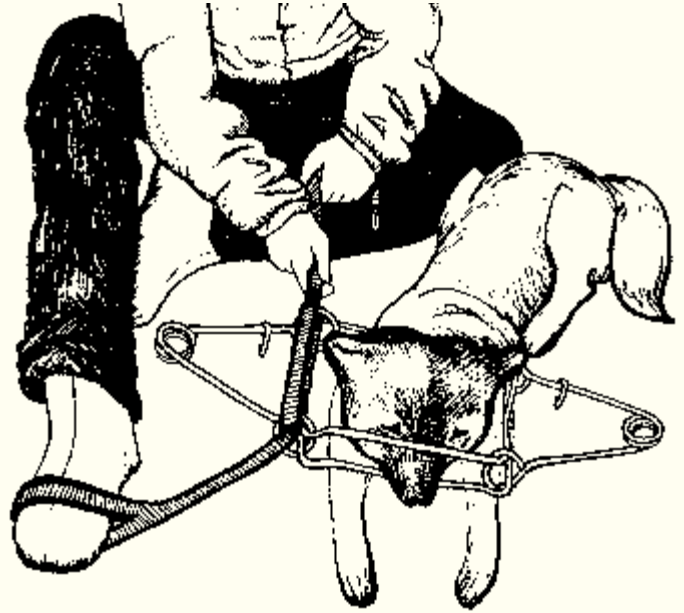
**Note: Trappers in Wyoming are required to check their snares not less than once a week. The check period could be as long as 13 days depending on what day it is set.*

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

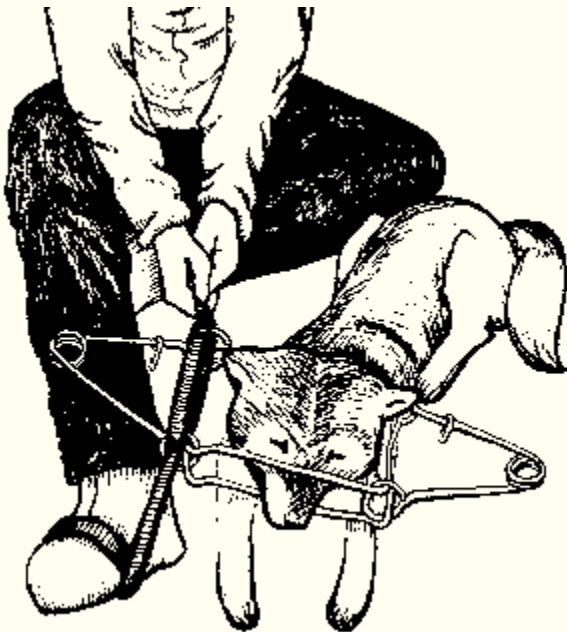
Step 1. Place your foot through the loop end of the leash and run the free end through both spring eyes on one side of the trap. A piece of rope or belt can be substituted for a leash, but first create a loop for your foot to go in.



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 pet's neck). **Stabilize the trap and pull hard!!!**



Step 4. Latch the safety lock across the spring. If the safety lock 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!

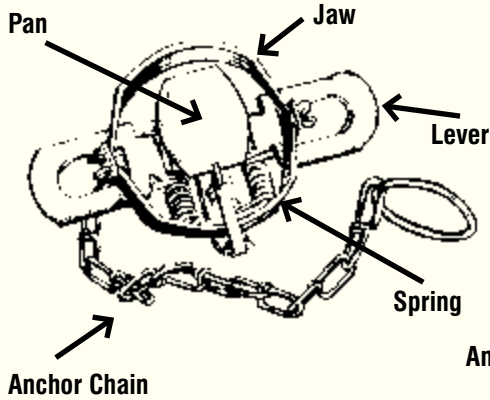
Repeat these steps on the other side of the trap to release your pet.

***NOTE:** It is legal to remove a pet or livestock from traps or snares.

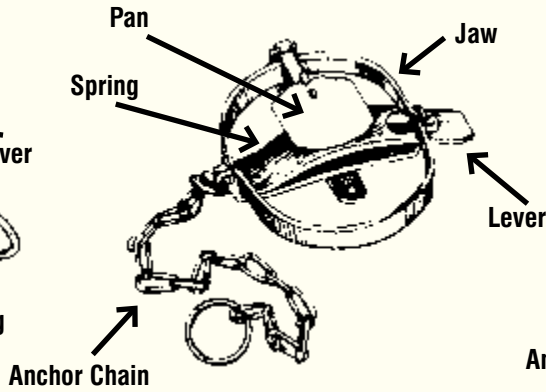
Leg-Hold Traps

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.

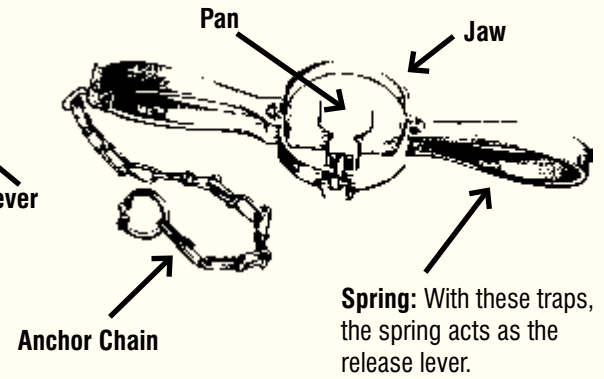
Coil Spring Trap



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 pet's face with a coat or shirt. It may be best to put the pet's face in the sleeve. Either pin your pet to the ground so it cannot move or standover it so you can use your legs to hold the animal still. Use your feet, knees, or the palms of your hands to compress the spring levers. Depending on the size of the pet and the trap, another option may be to kneel over the animal 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 pet's paw out of the trap jaws. This method works well on hard surfaces. Step down on both levers at the same time.



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 pet while the other depresses the spring levers.
- The jaws do not need to be completely opened in order to free the foot.
- **BE CAUTIOUS** after releasing your pet'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.

