

From: [REDACTED]
 To: [PS Minister for Climate Change](#)
 Cc: [PS Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd](#); [PS Deputy Minister for Climate Change](#); [Butler Daniel \(OFM - Special Advisers\)](#); [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] [Witchard, Ceri \(CCRA - FRA - Landscapes, Nature and Forestry\)](#); [REDACTED] [Currado, Gian Marco \(CCRA - FRA - Director\)](#)
 Subject: [RE: Email briefing - Snares & Humane cable restraints - a follow-up from your visit to Ysbyty Ifan curlew restoration](#)
 Date: 15 July 2022 14:35:40
 Attachments: [Snares sections from Options and C.S.A in Agri Bill EM.docx](#)

Hi [REDACTED]

I've attached a copy of the options and cost benefit analysis that now forms part of the Explanatory Memo for the Agriculture (Wales) Bill, as this provides more comprehensive detail in relation to the main issues surrounding snares. I've added some key points below and in addition, if the Minister wishes, Gian Marco and [REDACTED] will be able to discuss in more detail as they are accompanying her at various points during the Royal Welsh - or we can arrange to meet at an alternative time. Ideally this would need to be expedited given the advanced stage of the Bill - if the Minister has any concerns.

Many thanks,
 [REDACTED]

Humane Cable Restraints (HCRs)

Humane Cable Restraint is merely another name for a snare. Snares - those that are currently legal - can come in slightly different forms and the Welsh Government Code of Practice was, in part, designed to encourage the use of modified snares. These 'code compliant' modified snares are identical to HCRs in every way - indeed the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust supplied the picture of a HCR for the publication of the Code.

It was hoped that modifications to a basic snare, such as the inclusion of a stop (to try to prevent the snare closing too tightly around the neck, body or limb of the animal) would provide animal welfare improvements. No evidence of this has been put forward by snare user groups, despite repeated appeals, however the evidence of how animals suffer - including both target and non-target animals - has continued to mount.

The protection of ground nesting birds, specifically curlews, is often quoted by snare users as a reason to oppose a ban on snares, or more lately as a reason to exempt HCRs/Code-compliant snares. Whilst curlew protection and restoration remains a key concern, it is important to note that predator control is a complex issue that must also take into account the welfare of the predator (see section below). There is now growing evidence that sheep disturbance is the primary factor in nest failure, with badgers - a protected species - coming second (Curlew Action Newsletter July 2022).

The position put forward by GWCT is also not shared or supported by the partnership body Gylfinir Cymru/Curlew Wales (which WG officials attend) and indeed our assessment is that with the probable exception of BASC, GWCT do not represent any other group's view in relation to the efficacy or justification of the use of snares in the protection of ground nesting birds.

Pest control

There are huge areas of land in Wales where there are no snares, not least of all because some landowners refuse to use them and/or they use alternative forms of pest control. However, it is recognised that predator control is necessary in certain circumstances in the protection of threatened species.

As is emphasised within the attached CBA, pest control is not being prohibited, only snares, as one specific method of control, will be illegal, and this is due to the suffering they inflict upon the animals they capture who are also sentient. The preferred method of pest control is shooting at night with the

aid of thermal-imaging and indeed this is already in widespread and effective use in Wales. There are also various non-lethal methods in use or being explored to protect ground nesting birds such as scaring and/or using electric fences.

It is known that badgers can be a major factor predated ground nesting birds' eggs however it is already illegal to set a snare for badgers and indeed, by their very nature, it is impossible for a snare to differentiate between a badger and a fox - as such snares to protect ground nesting birds are already not a (legal) option near badger populations.

From: PS Minister for Climate Change [redacted]
Sent: 14 July 2022 17:27
To: [redacted]
[redacted] PS Minister for Climate Change [redacted]
Cc: PS Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd [redacted] PS Deputy Minister for Climate Change [redacted] Butler, Daniel (OFM - Special Advisers) [redacted]
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[redacted]

Subject: RE: Email briefing - Snares & Humane cable restraints - a follow-up from your visit to Ysbyty Ifan curlew restoration

H [redacted]

MCC has noted the update and would like to see the assessment please. MCC is in favour of banning snares but is also very concerned that we do not have any unintended consequences.

Grateful if you could forward a copy of the assessment to PO please?

Regards
[redacted]

[redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
[Redacted]

Sent: 11 July 2022 12:14

To: PS Minister for Climate Change [Redacted]

Cc: PS Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd [Redacted] PS Deputy Minister for Climate Change [Redacted] Butler, Daniel (OFM - Special Advisers) [Redacted]

[Redacted] Witchard, Ceri (CCRA - ERA - Landscapes, Nature and Forestry)
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Subject: Email briefing - Snares & Humane cable restraints - a follow-up from your visit to Ysbyty Ifan curlew restoration

Good Afternoon

Please can you bring the following to the Ministers attention?

Issue: Follow-up information regarding ban on snare use in Wales.

During a visit to see a curlew restoration project last week, we understand you were shown a Humane Cable Restraint and told that they were an essential tool in fox control.

GWCT (and others) have been attempting to re-brand Code-compliant snares as Humane Cable Restraints (HCRs). **A HCR and a Code Compliant snare are identical in every way.** Banning the use of snares was a pledge in the Labour manifesto and a commitment in the current PfG. This will include snares and cable restraints which comply with the Welsh Government Code of Practice which are sometimes called code-compliant snares.

Officials have met with both GWCT and BASC to discuss this issue and have considered evidence from a wide variety of sources in our work on the snare Code dating back to 2015 and onwards and more recently in providing policy instructions for lawyers drafting the Agriculture (Wales) Bill. The Bill will ban the

use of all snares and cable restraints.

The re-branding is aimed at persuading Ministers to allow certain named groups to continue to use snares following the proposed ban. The Code of Best Practice on the use of snares in fox control was launched by Welsh Government in 2015. Since that time, officials have requested evidence annually from snare user groups to demonstrate the success of the Code in improving animal welfare and decreased capture of non-targets. Very little evidence has been provided and no assurances given that the Code has improved practice. An assurance was also provided by the then Minister for Rural Affairs to the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee last Senedd term that if improvements in operator practice were not demonstrated then Ministers would seek to legislate.

Officials have worked with legal services and OLC and snare provisions for inclusion in the Agriculture Bill are complete. As a result of the re-branding attempt, officials have included 'snares' and 'cable restraints' in the draft legislation. Our work on snares has included an assessment of whether a licensing system (as seen in Scotland) would meet the PfG policy objective of improving animal welfare. Officials have concluded that it would not. The draft Cost Benefit Analysis options paper is available if the Minister would like more detail.

Both GWCT and BASC have told us that snares are important tools for fox control to protect curlews. Officials have discussed this issue with NRW specialists and also those who carry out fox control. The most efficient method of fox control is the use of rifles with thermal-image scopes at night. GWCT and BASCs argument appears to assume that people will not use these alternatives. **Banning snares/HCRs is about preventing inhumane methods being used and does not prevent fox control using other methods.**

Thank you

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