

PE1671/B

Petitioner submission of 20 October 2017

We write to you on behalf of the above named animal protection organisations and wildlife research organisation, who collectively represent many thousands of animal lovers across Scotland, to request your action to prohibit the use and sale of rodent glue traps.

For many years, animal welfare groups have raised serious concerns regarding these devices. As you may already be aware, a recent petition urging the Scottish Parliament to pursue a ban on glue traps received over 5,000 signatures, a strong signal that this issue matters to Scottish people.

While the UK government has been slow to respond to calls to prohibit rodent glue traps, despite considerable public support, we believe that the Scottish government is ideally positioned to take decisive action. We respectfully request a meeting to present further evidence and discuss options for legislative measures.

Every year across the UK, glue traps, widely available for as little as 99p, cause untold numbers of trapped rodents to suffer horrific injuries and an agonising and protracted death from starvation, dehydration, suffocation or stress. Animals caught on these devices are known to break and dislocate limbs, tear of fur and skin and even attempt to gnaw off limbs in order to free themselves. Glue traps are also indiscriminate. While it is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to install glue boards in a place where wild birds could be captured, many instances have been recorded of birds being trapped, as well as small mammals and reptiles, and even pets.

The Guidance on the Animal Welfare Provisions (Part 2) of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 makes clear that animals caught on or in traps are protected under the Act, and therefore failing to deal with trapped animals humanely is an offence. In practice, members of the public are very often unaware of their responsibility to deal with a captured animal and/or unwilling or unable to dispatch trapped animals in a humane manner. The vast majority of high street manufacturers do not include any specific information on their packaging or fail to provide any instructions at all for the user.

A UK YouGov opinion poll commissioned by Humane Society International UK (HSI) in 2015 found that over half of respondents said they either would not know what to do with a trapped animal or would recommend an action that risked committing an offence under Section 19 of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act. This included 9% who suggested drowning and 6% who stated that they would leave the animal to die on the trap or would throw the trap away with the live animal still attached. Such actions would clearly cause 'unnecessary suffering' and therefore put the person at risk of prosecution.

In recent years there has been increasing support for bans or restrictions on the use of rodent glue traps, including from the pest control industry and veterinary experts. Both the Pest Management Alliance and the British Pest Control Association (BPCA) have voiced their serious concern over the use of glue traps by non-trained members

of the public, with Simon Forrester, Chief Executive of the BPCA, stating that his association 'would recommend their immediate removal of sale' to any persons without full professional qualifications. The British Veterinary Association 'consider them to be inhumane' and 'would ultimately like to see the use of traps by professionals banned and their sale to the public banned'.¹

In addition, several high street retailers, including Poundland, The Range and B&Q, and major wholesale companies, including Booker Group and MX Wholesale, have chosen not to stock glue traps after examining evidence of the animals' suffering and the legal risks for users.

The 2015 YouGov poll also showed that 71% of Scottish respondents were in favour of a ban on the use of glue traps, with only 5% actively opposed to the introduction of such legislation. Internationally, they have already been outlawed in New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland and the Australian state of Victoria on animal welfare grounds.

Following this extremely well-supported petition, the Scottish Government now has a unique opportunity to set an example for the rest of the UK as a champion for the welfare protection of *all* wildlife, demonstrating that no sentient animal should be knowingly subjected to fear, suffering and a prolonged and agonising death. We urge you as Cabinet Secretary to initiate legislative action to prohibit the use of glue traps as a method to catch wild animals, potentially via amendment of Section 11 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Mindful that professional pest controllers may advance a case for the use of glue traps as a last resort in limited circumstances, we refer you to the New Zealand Animal Welfare (Glueboard Traps) Order 2009, which allows exemptions for the use of glue traps upon application, subject to governmental approval and in compliance with a number of restrictions and requirements. We believe this legislation could be adapted for use in Scotland.

We would be pleased to discuss this and other legislative options with you and your team at your earliest convenience.

¹https://www.bva.co.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/News_campaigns_and_policies/Policies/Ethics_and_welfare/rodent-glue-traps-policy.pdf