

Support legislation that protects public safety, wildlife, and family pets



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Oregon has some of the most lax trap check requirements of any state. Current trap check times are inconsistent, ranging from 48 hours to 30 days to no trap check requirement at all, depending on the animal. These outdated trap check times are emblematic of Oregon's weak laws regulating trapping, which pose a serious threat to wildlife, family pets, and public safety. Proposed legislation would: 1) require mandatory trap checks at least once every 24 hours; 2) require mandatory reporting of all animals trapped; and 3) require mandatory display of signage for traps on public lands. These common-sense updates to Oregon's trapping laws are necessary to reduce animal suffering, to protect unintended victims, and to provide accountability to citizens who have a public interest in healthy wildlife populations and a personal concern for the safety of their companion animals.

Require 24-hour trap check times

What are the current trap check laws or regulations in Oregon?

It depends on the animal being trapped (see diagram at right). Current laws and regulations allow for a broad range of trap check times: 48 hours for furbearers; up to 30 days for predatory animals; no trap check requirement at all for black bears when they are allowed to be trapped. In FY2014, more than 164 Oregon black bears were trapped and killed by USDA Wildlife Services.

Why are frequent trap checks needed?

- 24-hour trap check times are common. Most states, including Washington, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and 32 others, require 24-hour trap checks in at least some trapping situations or for some trap types. Oregon is one of only 13 states that has greater than 24-hour trap checks times in every circumstance.
- Animals suffer because of lax trap check times. Wildlife and family pets frequently sustain severe injuries from being trapped, ranging from claw loss and deep flesh cuts to broken bones and tooth fractures, among many others. The type and severity of injury increases with the duration of time in the trap. Trapped animals also likely suffer from thirst, hunger, anxiety, fear, pain, and distress. Decreasing trap check times has the potential to reduce some of this animal suffering.



- *Lax trap check times put unintended victims at risk.* Traps are indiscriminate. We don't know how many non-target wildlife and family pets are captured by traps in Oregon, since trappers aren't required to report this information. We do know, however, that wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, and dogs and cats, are at risk of needless and unjustifiable suffering and death because of infrequent trap checks. These animals have a better chance of surviving with frequent trap checks.
- *Wildlife professionals support frequent trap check times.* The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) instructs new trappers in its trapper education manual that they must check traps daily. The American Society of Mammologists, in its guide for using wild animals in research, states that some trap types should be checked twice daily or even more frequently, and that most traps should be checked at least once a day.

Mandate comprehensive reporting of all animals trapped

What are the current reporting laws or regulations in Oregon?

Under Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations, trappers are required to submit an annual harvest report form. This report form tracks only animals classified as furbearers (e.g. raccoons, bobcats, beavers), and fails to track non-target animals such as family pets or non-target wildlife.

Why is mandatory reporting needed?

- *Traps are indiscriminate.* Traps are inherently non-selective. A variety of animals, and people recreating with their pets, use the public lands where traps are often set. There is no guarantee that a trap will capture only what the trapper intends to capture. This puts all animals and even people at risk.
- *We don't know how many animals suffer.* Since trappers are not required to report their non-target captures, it is impossible to know how many non-target wildlife and family pets are caught or killed in traps each year. In recent years, the media has reported on dozens of family pets that have been caught, injured, or killed in traps and snares, including right here in Oregon. Many of these incidents occurred near trails, campgrounds, and parks frequented by the public. At an Oregon State University facility, traps set by USDA Wildlife Services killed family pets, fawns, raccoons, and coyotes. Some of those animals had been dead so long that they were badly decayed, indicating they suffered terribly in the traps before finally succumbing. It's important to document all animals trapped, and not just those found dead in them, since traps can harm animals even when there are no visible external injuries.

Require signage of traps

What are the current trapping signage laws or regulations in Oregon?

There are no laws or regulations requiring traps to have signs indicating their location. Traps set on public lands must bear a brand or mark identifying the owner's trapping license number. There are some regulations restricting the placement of traps within proximity of public trails, trailheads, campgrounds, and wildlife crossing structures.

Why is mandatory signage needed?

Mandatory signage would protect humans and their family pets recreating on public lands by alerting them to the presence of traps in the vicinity. Despite some regulations restricting where traps may be located, public lands in Oregon are still open for trapping. Family pets and even humans can be injured by these traps—in 2013 a Coquille man suffered a broken leg after being caught by a beaver trap while he was trying to retrieve his dog. Simply stated, a small minority of trappers is putting the public at serious risk by hiding these indiscriminate devices in areas frequented by the recreating public.

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