

CABLE RESTRAINTS

Just what is a cable restraint device? After studying reports about the safe and efficient use of cable restraints to capture foxes and coyotes, the Game Commission has determined that they are a safe and efficient tool to harvest these furbearers during late winter periods. Because cable restraints hold animals without causing significant injuries, they are much different than traditional land snares. Cable restraints employ modern modifications, such as flexible cable, relaxing locks and breakaway stops and hooks to restrain animals without injury. These modifications allow trappers to use cable restraints in areas frequented by domestic pets or other animals.

Trappers use cable restraints to capture foxes and coyotes by suspending the loop within a corridor used by the species of interest. The loop is usually held in place by a piece of light wire. As the animal enters the device, its own forward progress draws the loop tight around the body. The animal is then held alive for when the trapper arrives to check the set.

The legalization of cable restraints in Pennsylvania is based on data collected during one of the most ambitious research projects in the history of wildlife management—the development of Best Management Practices for Trapping (BMPs) in the U.S. Trapping BMPs identify techniques, traps and cable restraints that maximize the welfare of trapped animals and allow for the efficient, selective, safe and practical capture of furbearers. Several years ago cable restraints were field tested by experienced trappers during legal land trapping seasons in Wisconsin and Missouri. Animals harvested during these studies were sent to wildlife veterinarians at the University of Wyoming, who used international guidelines to examine and evaluate them for capture-related injuries. The animal welfare performance of cable restraints was outstanding.

CABLE RESTRAINT REGULATIONS:

The use of cable restraints by certified trappers in Pennsylvania will be highly regulated. They are permitted only during late winter periods, **December 26 through Feb. 17, 2013, for foxes and coyotes**, when freezing conditions render traditional methods ineffective.

Everyone who traps in Pennsylvania must follow strict guidelines established and enforced by the Game Commission. Regulations dictating the species that may be harvested, seasons, trap types and where traps can be placed are reviewed annually by PGC biologists and law enforcement personnel. In addition to general trapping regulations, these specific regulations have been instituted for using cable restraints in Pennsylvania:

To use cable restraints trappers must first complete a certified cable restraint training course (check the agency website at www.pgc.state.pa.us for course schedule, or contact the HTE Division at the PGC Headquarters in Harrisburg (717-787-4250), and possess a valid furtakers license, qualify for license and fee exemptions under section 2706 of the act (relating to resident license and fee exemptions) or qualify for trapping exceptions under section 2363 of the act (relating to trapping exception for certain persons). The trapper shall have a certificate from this course in possession while setting or checking sets using cable restraints and present the certificate upon the request of any person whose duty it is to enforce this title.

Cable restraints must be made of a galvanized stranded steel cable with a diameter of not less than 3/32 of an inch. The cable must be constructed of 7 bundles of 7 wires per bundle (7x7), 7 bundles of 19 wires per bundle (7x19), or 1 bundle comprised of 19 wires. The cable may not exceed 7 feet in length from the anchor point to the relaxing lock contacting the fully closed loop stop, must be equipped with at least one swivel device (which allows for 360 degree rotation) between the loop and the anchor and must have stops affixed to the cable to ensure that the circumference of the cable that makes up the loop may not be greater than 38 inches when fully open, or less than 8 inches when fully closed. Cable restraint loops must be set so that the bottom of the loop is no less than 6 and no greater than 12 inches above the first surface beneath the cable restraint. Cable restraints must be equipped with a relaxing-type lock, and the lock may not be constructed with moving parts. A cable restraint must include a breakaway device affixed between the relaxing-type lock and cable or at the end of the cable that is rated at 375 pounds or less. The cable must be maintained in good condition so that all components operate properly. Trappers eligible to use cable restraints for foxes and coyotes can now keep non-target furbearers that are incidentally captured in a cable restraint during seasons in which those furbearers are legal for harvest.

Other wildlife, including deer, mistakenly killed with cable restraints must be reported to any Game Commission officer in the county where the kill occurred. Call the appropriate region office to have an officer respond.