

----- Original message -----

Date:02/01/2019 14:10 (GMT+00:00)

Subject: Request for information - Ref: TO2018/27472

Dear Ms Ballard,

Thank you for your letter of 21 December about a petition to ban stink pits (also known as middens) and snares. I have been asked to reply.

Middens attract animals using bait in order that they may be controlled by other means. Any bait used and any methods of taking/killing employed in conjunction with the midden (usually snares) are subject to the laws which govern their use.

The petition refers to the use of snares in conjunction with middens and the assumed capture of mountain hares. Snares must only be used as restraining devices. The purpose of the snare is to hold the target animal without harming it until it is humanely dispatched or released.

It is illegal to use snares to take or kill some wild animal species and all wild birds. This includes species listed on Schedule 6 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (e.g. badger, polecat, otter, red squirrel, hedgehog and pine marten) and any deer, which are protected under the Deer Act 1991. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 mountain hares are protected from the use of traps which are non-selective according to their principle or their conditions of use. Snares must be inspected at least once a day. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, it is illegal to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal under the control of man, including those held in traps.

If a person witnesses a suspected wildlife crime in action, they should call 999 and ask for the police. In all other instances, they should call 101 and they will be put in touch with the local police. Many police forces have wildlife crime officers who can be contacted about such crimes in their area. Crimes can also be reported anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Yours sincerely,

Bradley Burns

Ministerial Contact Unit