



What dog-owners should know about legal trapping in Oregon

Exploring the outdoors is an activity that both pet owners and their dogs enjoy. Owners of both domestic and hunting dogs should be aware of other lawful users enjoying the same area, including regulated trappers during legal trapping seasons.

Trapping is a highly regulated activity in Oregon. Only *furbearers* (animals valued for their fur) that are abundant and can withstand harvest are trapped. Oregon regulations designed to ensure humane treatment of furbearers and other animals make it illegal to use certain traps or certain types of bait associated with traps. By law, all trappers born after June 30, 1968 and all first-time trappers are required to complete an approved trapper education course before obtaining a license.

Traps set for some animals such as coyotes, bobcats and raccoons, can also catch dogs. Following are some tips and information about trapping that will help prevent your dog from inadvertently being caught in a trap.

Please remember that it is unlawful to disturb or remove the traps or snares of any licensed trapper while that person is trapping on public lands or on other land by landowner permission. If you believe a trap or snare has been illegally set, contact Oregon State Police.

For hunting dogs

Hunters should remain in close contact with their birding dogs and carry the tools (wire cutting pliers) and knowledge necessary to free their dog from a trap in the unlikely event that their dog is caught. See below for more information.

For non-hunting dogs

Keep your dog on a leash.

When in areas of trapping activity, the best way to protect your dog is to keep it on a leash. This is especially important for dogs that are not well-trained, but even the most obedient dogs can forget their training in unfamiliar surroundings.

Control your dog.

If you cannot leash your dog, at the very least control it. Do not allow it to wander off in areas of wildlife activity. Remember that most traps are baited with meat and scents that could attract dogs. If your dog is sniffing hard and intent on one spot, it may have located a trap. Call your dog back immediately.

Be aware of where and when trapping activity can occur.

Most trapping activity occurs in the winter because pelts are more valuable at that time. Limited trapping occurs during spring and summer, usually in response to nuisance or damage complaints caused by animals such as raccoons that scavenge from trash cans or nest in attics.

Be aware of where and when trapping activity can occur continued.

Trapping is allowed on most public lands, though sometimes only by permit, and on private lands by permission. However, there are very few traps in relation to the expanse of land so dog-owners are unlikely to encounter traps routinely.

Under seasons set by ODFW, some *invasive* animals (not native to Oregon) and/or predators that cause damage to agricultural crops are legal to trap for the entire year. Examples of animals legal to trap all year are badger, coyote, nutria, opossum, and skunks. More limited seasons that begin as early as mid-October and end as late as March 31 apply for bobcat, gray and red fox, muskrat/mink and raccoon.

Regulated trappers are not required to post signs stating traps are in the area as doing so would attract unwanted attention and lead to many stolen traps or traps sprung by those who do not approve of trapping. Entire trap lines have been stolen by thieves moving from flagged trap to flagged trap. However, it is required that all traps be permanently marked with the owner's unique identification number. Oregon State Police rely on those permanent marks to hold trappers accountable for where and how their traps are set.

Carry tools and knowledge to release your dog from a trap.

Traps and snares can injure domestic dogs so knowing how the traps work and how to release your dog from a trap is important. Carrying a pair of wire cutter pliers and a length of rope (for conibear traps) to free your dog in the unlikely event that it is snared or trapped when walking or hunting is a good idea. See below for web sites with photos on how to release your dog from the different types of traps used in Oregon.

If you encounter a trap, immediately leash your dog and carefully leave the area.

Types of traps used in Oregon

Traps can be either *restraining* traps (designed to hold the animal captive) or *killing* traps (designed to quickly kill the animal).

Foot-hold traps are restraining traps designed to capture the animal by the foot and restrain it until the trapper comes to remove it.

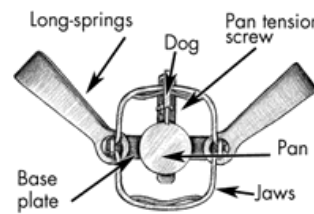


Figure 1a. Longspring Trap

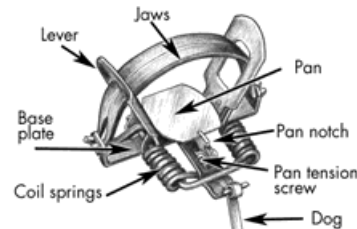
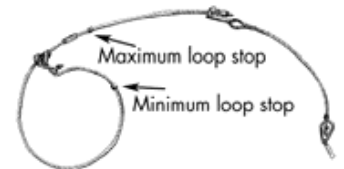


Figure 1b. Coil-spring trap

Snares, another commonly used trap, can be either restraining or killing. An animal's movements cause a snare to tighten. Release your dog from a snare by using a wire cutter to cut it free or by pulling the snare in a way to reduce pressure.



Instant-kill traps, or conibears, are designed (as the name suggests) to quickly and humanely kill the trapped animal. If your animal gets caught in a conibear, it is important to remain calm and act quickly.

Guides on how to release your dog from:

- [Foot-hold traps and snares](#)
- [Instant-kill traps](#)

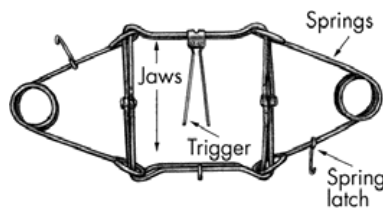


Figure 5. Standard body-gripping trap

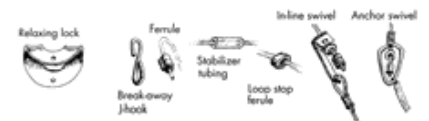


Figure 4b. Non-powered cable device components