



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Bill: SB 275  
Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Position: Support  
Date: February 9, 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our Maryland members and supporters, supports Senate Bill 275. Proper labeling of traps and prompt reporting of trapping-related incidents is a step in the right direction towards protecting Maryland's animals from unnecessary suffering and death.

Because traps are indiscriminate, family pets, protected, threatened and endangered species, and other animals can be their unintended victims. In many states trappers are not required to report their non-target captures, but some research indicates that as many as 18 non-target animals may be captured for each target animal captured, depending on the trap type and methods used.<sup>1</sup> Here are some examples of cases in which Maryland non-target animals have suffered in traps:

- An escaped zebra was found dead in an illegal snare trap in Prince George's County.<sup>2</sup>
- A 7-year-old Emmitsburg beagle named Jackson was found captured in a muskrat trap after having been missing for 14 days. Officials estimated that he had suffered in the trap for at least 36 hours. Jackson's front left leg had to be amputated because of the injuries inflicted.
- A cat in Gaithersburg returned home dragging a leg-hold trap clamped to his front left paw. The trap was removed and the cat's front leg was amputated.
- A dog named Santini was killed after being lured to a bucket, baited with meat, that contained a body-crushing trap in Perryville. Santini's owner said the trap, "...was about 12 inches by 12 inches and it clamped down around his neck." The trap was set in an unauthorized location and was not tagged with the owner's information.
- An Ellicott City woman found her pet cat on county park property after he had been caught in an unmarked leghold trap for about 10 hours. The cat suffered from soft tissue damage and was in a cast for at least a month.<sup>3</sup>

Traps that capture non-target animals may not be properly labeled or identified, and citizens may be unsure of how to report such incidents to authorities. We therefore appreciate that SB 275 will require that traps must be stamped with the owner's identification number, or that a metal tag is affixed to them with that information, and authorizes those who find an unlabeled snare, trap or similar device to report it to the Maryland DNR or the Natural Resources Police Force.

We are grateful to our sponsors and the Maryland Fur Trappers Association for working collaboratively to identify a policy reform that will protect wildlife by focusing on enforcement and accountability of Maryland's trapping laws. We urge a favorable report on SB 275.

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<sup>1</sup> Iossa, G., Soulsbury, C. D., & Harris, S. (2007). Mammal trapping: a review of animal welfare standards of killing and restraining traps. *Animal Welfare*, 16(3), 335-352.

<sup>2</sup> Kuzminski, K. "Escaped Zebra in Prince George's County found dead in illegal snare trap." Fox Baltimore, October 14, 2021. <https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/escaped-zebra-in-prince-georges-county-found-dead-in-illegal-snare-trap>

<sup>3</sup> Incidents in Emmitsburg (2014), Gaithersburg (2011), Perryville (2007), and Ellicott City (1997) from the Born Free USA Trapping Incidents Database at <https://www.bornfreeusa.org/trapping-incidents-search/>