



## Removing Your Dog from a Trap or Snare

If a dog is accidentally captured in a trap or snare while in the company of its owner/handler, it is possible to successfully remove it alive if you know what to do.

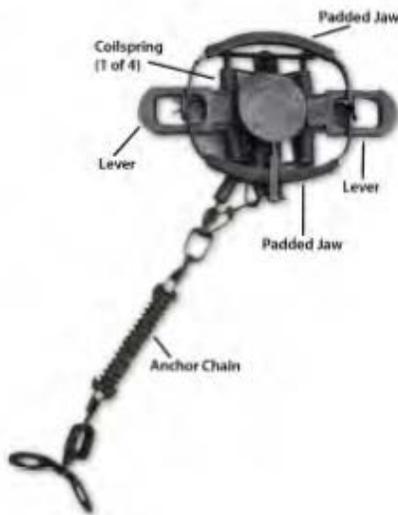
It is essential that you understand and can quickly and calmly follow the steps required to release your dog from a trap or snare.

This document contains instructions on how to remove your dog from the three types of traps legal in Wisconsin: The foot or leg hold trap, snares, and the body-gripping (Conibear-type) trap.

### **IMPORTANT!**

*You must remain calm! Remember the surprise and shock of being captured may cause the dog to become extremely agitated, even to the state of biting at anyone who comes close to it. You must be able to reassure and calm the dog to quickly secure its release.*

## Foot or Leg Hold Traps



These traps are designed to capture the target animal by the foot and hold it alive until the trapper arrives to remove it. The foothold trap most likely to be encountered in wildlife habitat is the coil spring foothold trap.

Accidental capture in such a trap with a quick release is not life-threatening. However, the longer the dog remains in the trap, the greater the chances of permanent damage and serious complications.

If, after attempting the steps below, you are unable to remove the dog from the trap, you may need to leave the dog and the trap site to seek help.

You may also be able to unfasten the trap from its anchor point (may be attached by wire or chain) and take the dog with the trap still on the dog's foot to someone who can help you remove the trap.

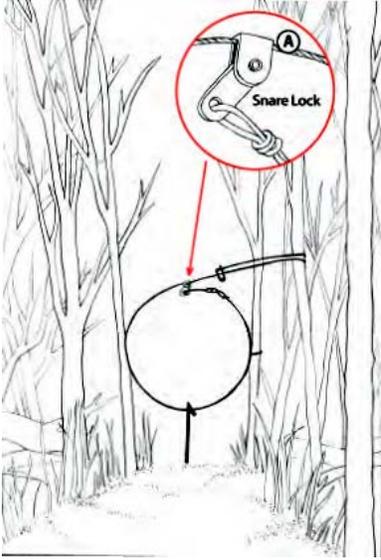
1. Secure your dog by pinning it to the ground or holding it in an upright position. Depending on the individual, the size of the trap, and the size of the dog, you may be able to grab both levers with your fingers and, using the palms of your hands, stabilize the bottom of the trap or base plate.
2. Pull the levers of the trap toward you with your fingers using one continuous motion. This will release the pressure on the jaws of the trap enough for the dog to pull its foot free or to allow the foot to fall out from between the jaws of the trap. The trap jaws do not have to be completely opened for the dog to free its foot.

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3. If the trap is too large to manipulate the levers of the trap with your hands, secure the trap on the ground with both springs pointing upward.
4. Place the inside of your feet simultaneously on both levers and pivot forward using your body weight to compress the levers of the trap. Your weight on the levers will relax the pressure on the trap jaws, loosening the jaws and enabling your dog to pull its foot free.



## Snares



Snares are generally made of steel cable and have a locking device, which prevents the snare from loosening after the animal is captured. As a result, the harder the animal fights the snare, the tighter the locking device closes. Due to their size, snares set for fox, coyote or bobcat may present a risk to dogs in wildlife habitat.

In general, hunting dogs or dogs which run “at large” are more susceptible to getting caught in a snare as they cover more ground than the average pet under close supervision and control.

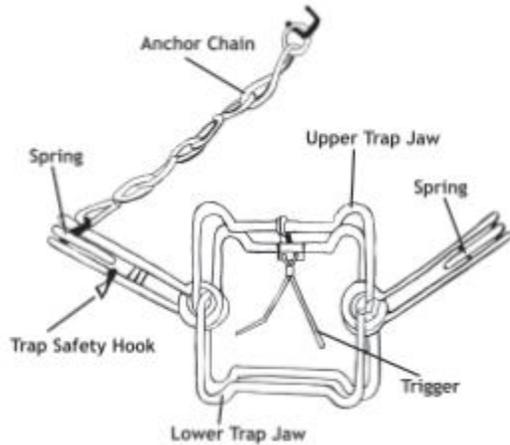
The closer your dog is traveling with you, the more likely you are to find it should it become entangled in a snare and the less time it will have to struggle and tighten the cable around its neck or body.

1. Try to calm the dog. This will help prevent the snare from tightening further and allow you more time to free the dog.
2. Loosen the locking device on the snare to slacken the cable around the neck or body and remove it from the dog.
3. If you are unable to loosen the locking device, try to cut the loop of the snare cable with a set of wire cutters wherever you can best access the cable around the neck of the dog. The best location is often just past the locking device on the loop. You may also be able to pass a finger under the cable around the neck to lift it away from the skin slightly and cut the snare cable at that point.
4. If you are unable to directly cut the cable loop around the dog’s neck, cutting the cable as close as possible to the lock (label A on preceding diagram) may allow you to work the lock a bit, causing this short cut-end of the cable to slip through the hole in the lock, loosening the cable and freeing your dog.



**NOTE:** Some dogs may not struggle if caught in a snare, but will sit down and wait for their owner to release them. This behavior is far more likely in dogs that are regularly restrained by a collar and a leash, rope or chain. Dogs not accustomed to a leash or to being tied up, tend to fight the snare cable. If your dog is accustomed to spending its time loose in a kennel, house or your backyard, consider getting it familiar to being restrained by a tether.

## Body Gripping Traps (Conibear-Type)

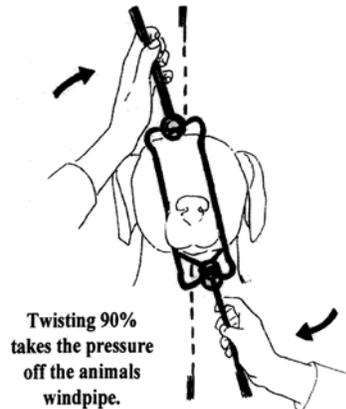


Body gripping traps (known as ‘Conibear type’ traps) have a square frame with two rotating jaws. Larger versions typically have two springs. These traps are designed to strike small to medium-sized animals in the neck or body and kill them by crushing their windpipe and suffocating them.

If a dog is accidentally captured while in the company of its owner/handler, it is possible to successfully remove the dog. To do this it is essential for you to understand and calmly follow the steps outlined below as quickly as possible.

The only way to open the jaws on these types of traps is to compress and secure the spring(s) on the trap. It is impossible to pull the jaws apart otherwise. Once the spring or springs are compressed, the jaws of the trap will open freely, allowing you to release the dog. Larger body gripping traps are equipped with springs which may be difficult, if not impossible, to compress with your hands.

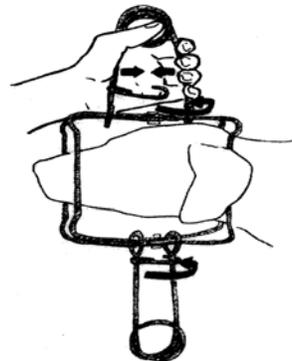
1. Immediately squeeze both springs and twist the trap so the jaws are no placing pressure on the animal’s windpipe.



2. Squeeze together one of the springs using both hands until you’re able to fasten the safety lock over the arms of the spring.

This relieves the pressure from one side of the trap.

3. Repeat the same process for the other spring.
4. Slide the animal’s head out from between the jaws of the trap.

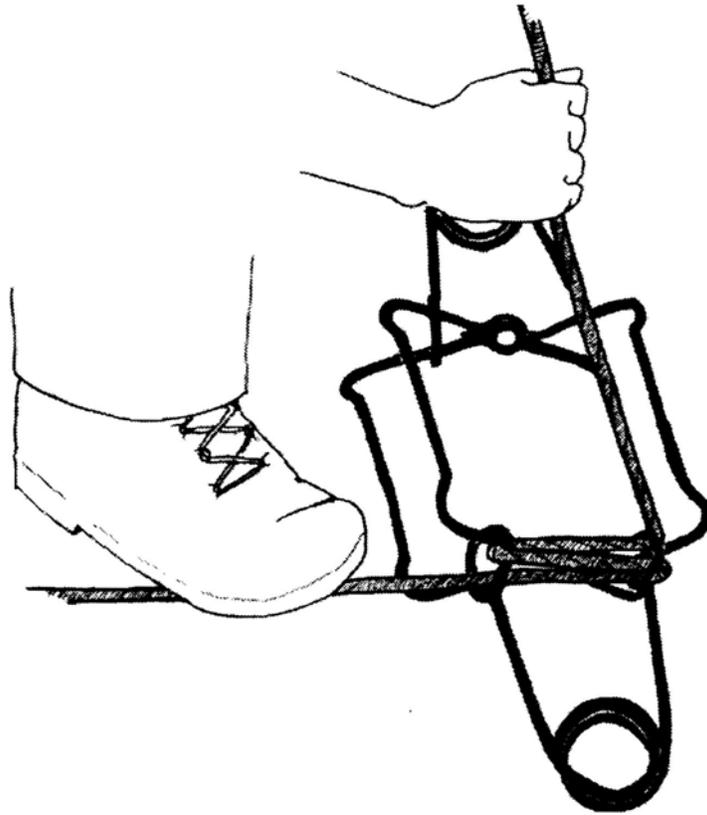


*Secure safety hooks, making the springs inactive. Again, use both hands on each spring, if necessary.*

***If the springs are too hard to squeeze with your hands:***

If you can't squeeze the springs of the trap easily, a 4-ft rope, leash or belt can help increase your leverage.

1. Thread the leash/rope through the large rings of one spring. The rings are located where the springs meet the rotating jaws.
2. Bring the leash/rope around and thread it back through the initial ring far enough to provide a good "handle."
3. Put your foot on one end and pull on the free end. This will compress the spring so a safety lock can be latched. Do the same to the other spring.



***Feed a leash or rope through and pull!***

**Sources:**

- **WI DNR Website**
- **Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division**