



Animal Pest Management Services, Inc.

Urban Wildlife Professionals 

Phone 800.344.6567

Fax 909.590.1435

March 28, 2014

Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street
Room 360, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Proposed Ban on Certain Types of Animal Traps

Dear Council Members,

This letter is in regard to the report provided to the council by Brenda Barnette that was submitted on February 12, 2014 on "Making Trapping of Wildlife More Humane". I would like to address some of the issues that I have with the report and provide an alternate point of view.

In an ideal world, wildlife and humans can live harmoniously together without conflict. And for the most part, this can be achieved. However, as the urban sprawl continues to grow, it is inevitable that there will be problems with wildlife that can result in damage to person and/or property (see attached photos of dog attack). This is the reality and why trapping needs to be implemented in certain situations.

The report recommends a ban on several types of traps, allowing only for the use of box or cage traps. These types of traps are effective in specific situations with small, nuisance wildlife trapping (skunk, opossum, raccoon). However, they do not work for coyotes. Using cage traps for these animals is rarely successful. Snares are extremely effective for this purpose, and when used correctly, can provide a humane option for trapping.

Many of the claims in the report are simply untrue. I appreciate that the animal services personnel have compiled this information from personal experiences, but I think that the information is biased due to the fact that they only receive/respond to calls where there are animals in jeopardy. Most trapping is performed without incident and without affecting non-target animals. I address some of the claims individually below:

- The use of snares can be done without impacting non-target animals, if used correctly. An experienced trapper takes many factors into account prior to trapping, including the presence of non-target animals in the area, placement of traps, and whether the use of stop locks is necessary, which determine the success of the trapping.
- The example that trapping alone (in the case of an animal living in an attic) does not address the cause of the problem is true, however, any reputable pest control company will always recommend that exclusion be performed, as well as any other improvements/practices that can be done for preventing future issues. However, removal of the animal is an imperative part of the overall solution.

Corporate Office 13655 Redwood Court, Chino, CA 91710-5516
Orange County 23170 Del Lago Drive, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 1306
Riverside County PMB 446 • 31855 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City, CA 92234 • 3100



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- The two first-hand accounts of coyotes trapped with snares and the inhumane circumstances of each situation are not the norm. These situations resulted from a clear lack of experience and irresponsible actions. Unfortunately, all trappers are not equal in their skill level, and the existing licensing program does not account for this.
- The third account of a raccoon being trapped with an illegal body-gripping trap is unfortunate, but should not be related to a ban when the trap referenced is already illegal.

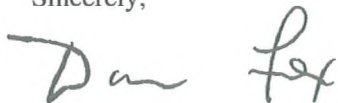
The recommendation to increase the frequency in which the traps are inspected is impractical and will result in increased costs for all, making trapping cost prohibitive for many. The Department of Fish and Wildlife have designed the current trapping regulations with humane treatment in mind. Checking traps once per day is sufficient to not cause undue suffering to an animal. Weather and other specific conditions of the trap location is something that an experienced trapper will consider already. Many of the instances of inhumane treatment have occurred as a result of incompetent trapping and/or illegal actions. Adding further restrictions will not change this behavior, it will only impede responsible trappers from providing a necessary service to those who really need it.

Eradication is not the intent of trapping, nor is it an achievable goal. The intent is to target problem animals and remove them. The City already has an ordinance in place to deter indiscriminate trapping with the trapping permit requirement.

In summary, cage/box traps are not an effective way to handle problems with coyotes. Unfortunately, some animals need to be trapped and removed when they are causing damage. Instead of removing all of the tools that allow a successful trapping to be performed, stricter enforcement of the current regulations should be implemented in order to deter unlicensed, inexperienced, and irresponsible trapping. This proposed ordinance will remove any efficient methods of trapping predator animals, and increase costs for residents without addressing the true issue which is individuals who are already ignoring existing regulation.

I appreciate the efforts of the Animal Services Department in trying to increase the humane treatment of animals. However, I disagree with their assumptions that the inhumane conditions that are described in the report are a result of current regulation deficiencies. These incidents are the result of irresponsible individuals. I encourage the City Council to seek input from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as individuals in the industry, before making a decision on these recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Fox". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Fox
President
Urban Wildlife Biologist
Animal Pest Management Services, Inc.





