

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 994

Banning leghold traps

My name is Kathy Grasso and I am the wildlife Rehabilitator who first cared for the Great Horned Owl who was caught in the leghold trap in January.

Just briefly- she had probably dragged that trap attached to her mangled leg helplessly for more than a day- considering the condition she was in when she first came into my care. There were just shreds of flesh holding her leg together at that point and it would have only been a matter of time before her leg would have been completely severed on its own had she not been found when she was. The trap was covered in grass, leaves and debris from being dragged and that was all frozen into a grapefruit-sized ice-ball that had to be thawed off before we could give her any relief from the torturous device .

As stoic as she was and as strong as her will to live, after a little over a month - she ultimately lost the battle. With this bird I saw firsthand her suffering, her strength, her trust - even with the pain she was in she let me remove the trap, she endured the surgery to remove what was left of her foot, and she fought hard for 1 month to live. But how many unsuspecting animals fall prey to these traps and struggle in pain and fear for hours and days and then slowly give up and become silent. Oftentimes when caught - and the fear takes over the animal will chew off its own leg to become free of its unrelenting captor and then go on to slowly bleed to death as it races to freedom.

It's not just wild animals that fall victim - there is story after story of dogs, cats and even children who have become caught in leg-hold traps. Just recently I was sent an article about a dog that failed to come home for 10 days, and then it did return home emaciated and starving and missing a foot - she had chewed it off to become free from a leghold trap - they later found the trap with the remains of her foot in it. In this case they removed the rest of her leg surgically and she will survive but how long did she suffer? The inhumanity is truly beyond words.

To say that these traps are necessary to control wildlife makes little sense to me because I feel they are more like land mines. They have no target. They just lie and wait for any unsuspecting victim to become helplessly snared - I imagine, more often than not, it's not the intended victim.

I agree that in some instances there has to be control over some populations of wildlife but why not then just target those that must be controlled and do that in a way where they don't have to suffer for such lengths of time. I realize that in passing a bill banning trapping in CT, our state would be losing some money per year in permit sales but I ask you, does the suffering that occurs from these brutal snares make that money worth it?

I know that most of you will never have to look into the eyes of one of the victims and see the fear that lies there but I ask you to please find it in your hearts to vote against this archaic sport and let our state join the ranks of the others that have already done so.

Although this owl is just one of so many that have lost their lives so brutally - my hope is that her life and death not be in vain. Thank you so much for your time -- **please support SB 994.**

Kathy Grasso
17 Hickory Lane
Higganum, CT 06441

