



The cruelty of glue traps – Glue Traps (Offences) Bill

Ensuring animals have a good life by advocating on their behalf

Key facts...

- ★ A glue trap is a sheet of plastic, cardboard or wood coated in non-drying glue with the aim to capture rodents.
- ★ They are indiscriminate as many other animals can fall victim to them. Cats and kittens, birds, hedgehogs, squirrels, snakes and even a parrot have been caught.
- ★ The RSPCA believes that glue traps are inherently cruel, cause significant suffering to animals and should be banned.
- ★ Between 2016-2020 the RSPCA received 236 reports of incidents involving glue traps.
- ★ The RSPCA welcomes the introduction of the Glue Traps (Offences) Bill and hopes it will become law. However there are a couple of areas where we would like to seek further clarification and amendment (namely the scope of the offences and the exemption for pest controllers).

What is a glue trap?

A glue trap is a trap (also known as a 'glue board' or 'sticky board') that is a sheet of plastic, cardboard or wood coated with non-drying glue with the aim to capture rodents and animals like cockroaches and other insects. They are widely available and a cheap method of pest control.

However the sticky traps can cause immense suffering to rodents, as the animals can remain alive for at least 24 hours after capture and it can take even longer for them to die. They are also indiscriminate as pets and wildlife can also fall victim to their use.

Glue traps are not designed to kill, but to capture. They are used in the pest control industry to capture large numbers of animals in a short space of time; one example could be an infestation of mice in a hospital kitchen. The animals will be trapped and it is up to the operator to then kill them. Although there are [guidelines](#) for the use of glue traps by the industry, which state that they should only be used by trained pest control operatives, these are guidelines only. Furthermore, pest controllers do not receive standardised training on how to kill rats and mice that have been caught on such traps.



Many do-it-yourself shops have stopped selling these traps, but smaller shops will sell them to the general public, along with on-line retailers and the manufacturers. As a result, they can be used by members of the public, or shop and restaurant owners, who do not know how the trap works and the instructions that accompany the trap are often inadequate or poorly written. Animals are often caught and left to die, because the person using the trap is not equipped to kill the trapped animal humanely. Non-target species are also caught due to a lack of knowledge about how the trap works.

Legal developments in other countries

Glue traps are banned in the Australian capital territory, Tasmania and Victoria. They are also banned in the Republic of Ireland and New Zealand (although in the latter country a licence can be applied for to use them).

A [report](#) from the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission on the use of rodent glue traps in Scotland concluded that *"it is the view of the Commission that there is no way that glue traps can be used without causing animal suffering."* The Commission noted the welfare impacts on target species and non-target

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species, availability of alternatives to glue traps and legislation that has been implemented in other countries. Their recommendation to Scottish Ministers was for an *"immediate outright ban"* on the sale and use of glue traps, or if this was not possible, a ban on the sale of glue traps to the general public and the introduction of a licensing regime to regulate their use.

Case study

The RSPCA was called to a property in West London in March 2020 when the residents had put down a glue trap for mice but when they saw what happened to the mouse they contacted the charity for help. The mouse had tried to get itself free and severely damaged its back legs and was suffering considerably. An RSPCA officer attended and the mouse was put to sleep as nothing could be done to save him and the callers were advised to use humane deterrence in the future.



RSPCA position

The RSPCA believes that glue traps are inherently cruel and should be banned. Between 2016 and 2020 the RSPCA received 236 reports of incidents concerning glue traps and fewer than a third of these involved rodents. Cats and kittens, birds, hedgehogs, squirrels, snakes and even a parrot have been caught. Our inspectors and veterinary teams will do their best to remove the glue from these animals' fur, feathers and scales but, sadly, many are too injured to survive.

Glue Traps (Offences) Bill

The RSPCA welcomes the introduction of this Bill and looks forward to working with Defra and politicians on it as it progresses through Parliament. We are keen to see the principles of the Bill explained at Second Reading however there are two areas where we feel further clarification and amendment is needed:

- The primary offence (clause 1(1)) is setting a glue trap to capture a rodent and the following offences focus on rodents. As this briefing has made clear, glue traps are indiscriminate and often capture and inflict serious harm to non-target species. The RSPCA is concerned that the focus on rodents could provide a loophole for those who wish to set such traps. Instead we believe this should be amended to prohibit such traps that are set to capture "vertebrates".
- The Bill provides an exemption to the general prohibition that allows pest controllers to use glue traps under licence. The RSPCA comes from a starting place that we do not believe such an exemption is necessary due to the inherent cruelty such traps cause. However, if there is to be an exemption for pest controllers then the definition (clause 2(12)) needs to be tightened to ensure pest controllers have the necessary competencies and training to be humane in their work. As currently drafted we feel it is too wide an exemption. We would also prefer that pest controllers must apply for a licence each time they use these traps, if this provision remains,

