



Snaring Feral Hogs

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Feral hog populations in the Plum Creek Watershed and elsewhere across Texas appear to be growing, and impacts on agriculture, wildlife habitat, and water quality often accompany a local increase in hog numbers. Effective management of these animals demands a diverse set of approaches to reduce their numbers and impacts. While some techniques aim to capture multiple feral hogs, these often require more materials and can be more difficult to construct and transport. For situations where capturing a small number of animals inexpensively and with little maintenance is desirable, the use of snares can be a key component of a larger control strategy.

Feral Hog Snaring Regulations

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) regulates hunting in Texas, and a hunting license is required to take feral hogs. However, this requirement is waived if the landowner or lessee is taking animals or grant permission to individuals to take feral hogs causing damage or depredation on the property. When snaring feral hogs, deer stops are not required in Texas. However, snares should be equipped with deer stops if deer are common in the area, and snares should be checked daily. It is illegal to snare a deer, so take proper precaution to avoid doing so. Snares are not species-specific, so it is very likely that you may capture other animals on occasion. Since non-target, unprotected game species may be snared, it is recommended to possess a hunting license, which is required for snaring animals such as bobcats, raccoons, and opossums. Before using snares for capturing feral hogs, understand the hunting laws outlined in the *TPWD Outdoor Annual* and contact the local TPWD game warden for additional details on the use of snares for feral hog control.

Snare Preparation

To prepare a snare for feral hog management, a 1/8" galvanized steel cable is recommended. New commercial snares and extension cables can be cleaned by boiling in detergent and hanging outdoors for a few months until they turn a dull gray. This process will take the sheen off new snares and allow for easier concealment. Snares also can be aged to dull gray by boiling them in 4 tablespoons of baking soda for one hour. Snares can also be colored to a dark appearance by boiling in brown logwood crystals and dye. Commercial dyes for snares can be obtained at various trap supply dealers. After boiling, snares should be kept clean of foreign odors and stored in a container with cedar boughs, broomweed, or other natural smells. Wear clean gloves when handling and setting snares to avoid scent contamination.

When considering snare placement, look for animal travel ways (trails) or crossings under fences that surround crop fields or pastures (Fig. 1). Snare design consists of a loop of steel cable attached to a secure object and placed so that the loop catches the animal as it passes through a confined space. The snare should have a sliding lock device allowing the loop to close but not open easily. A heavy swivel can be used on the end of the cable that is attached to an anchored structure (fence post, tree, utility pole) to minimize problems of twisting and breaking the cable by the captured animal (Fig. 2). Finally, a deer stop device should be installed in most situations to prevent the snare from closing entirely. A single ferrule, small nut, or other similar hardware can be crimped to the snare cable to ensure the snare does not close around the leg of a deer or other non-target animal. With a stop, the snare should close to no smaller than 2.5 - 3".



Figure 1. Locations where hogs cross under fences provide good locations to set snares. Look for evidence of hog activity, such as tracks and hair, to reduce the likelihood of capturing non-target species.

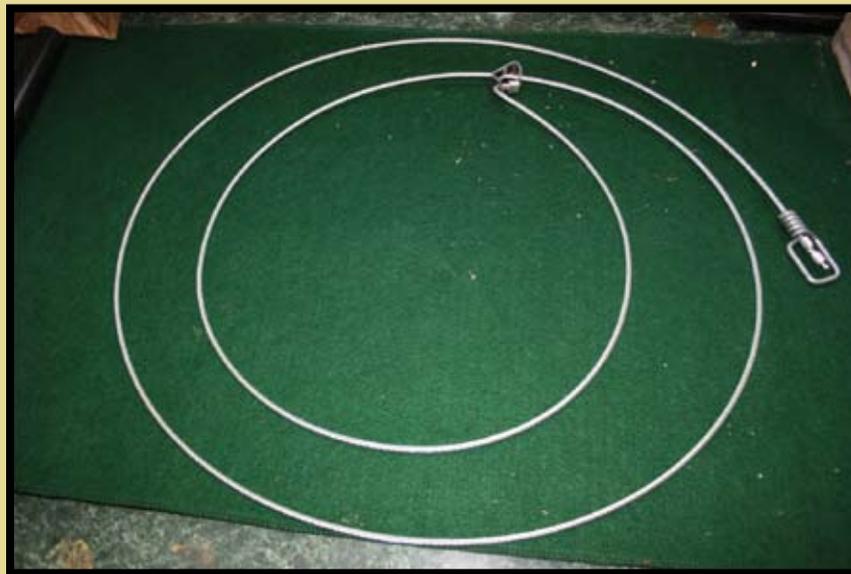


Figure 2. A complete 1/8" cable snare with lock and end swivel for capturing feral hogs.

Fence Snare Sets

Snares for capturing feral hogs are commonly placed under fences where hogs are known to cross. These “crawls” can be identified by tracks on the trail or hair caught on the fence. Frequently, hogs push under a fence and bend the bottom wires up into a highly visible arc. A game camera can help determine feral hog behavior in the area and identify optimal sites for snare placement. A snared feral hog (particularly large animals) can cause considerable damage to the fence and surrounding area. Do not tie the snare to the fence wire. Instead, secure it to a large drag or fixed anchor point as described above. Check snares daily to minimize fence damage.

The swivel end of a snare is most often tied with a doubled or tripled length of tie wire to a secure anchor point or drag (Fig. 3). The loop is suspended from the bottom wire of the fence with U-shaped wire clips or a single wrap of small gauge copper wire so that the loop pulls free easily when the animal passes through it. Where fences are weak or to prevent landscape damage by captured hogs, a cable extension can be used to attach a snare to a large log, uprooted stump, or similar weighted object which then serves as a drag.



Figure 3. Installation of a fence snare set. Once in place, the snare becomes difficult to see, as it blends into the fence or background.

Trail, Tree, and Post Sets

In areas where the risk of capturing sheep, goats, calves, deer, or other non-target animals is low, snares can be set in trails used by hogs. Snares can also be set directly onto rubs that hogs are using. Hogs use rubs in an attempt to scratch off and remove parasites. Rubs may be found on utility poles, bridge pilings, or on trees surrounding wallowing areas (Fig. 4). One advantage to setting snares on rubs is that the probability of catching non-target species is greatly reduced. In addition, multiple snares can be set in known wallowing areas where rubs are common, increasing the potential for capture.

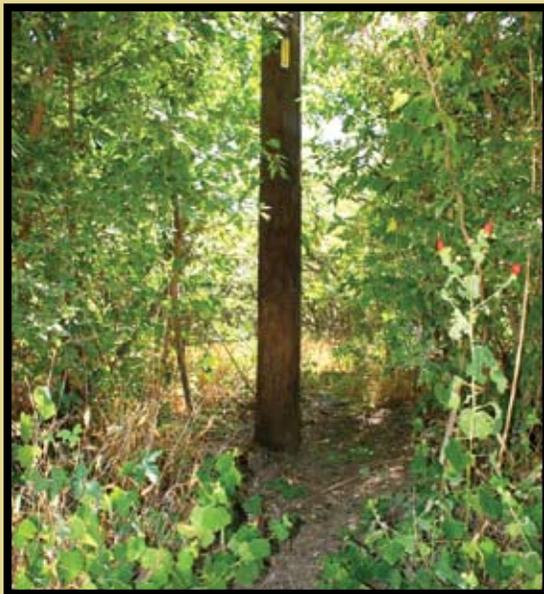


Figure 4. A feral hog trail crosses under a fence near a utility pole. This rub makes an ideal location to set a snare. Rubs can also be found on utility poles near foraging areas.

A flexible yet durable piece of wire (clothing hanger or baling wire) can be used to hang the snare (Fig. 5A). Simply bend an inverted S-shape in the wire to give support to the snare. The tail end of the wire can be angled down into the tree or post for extra support. This method also insures that the support wire does not slip. When setting the snare, it is important to place the lock at either the 11 o'clock or 1 o'clock position to insure proper triggering of the snare when a hog enters the loop (Fig. 5B). A loop of 10-12 inches is effective and should be suspended about 7-8 inches off the ground to catch a 30-pound hog. Loop size and height will need to be increased for catching larger hogs (Fig. 5C). For larger hogs, a loop size of 20" or greater may be appropriate. If the snare is not long enough, it can be attached by cable extensions to trees, drags, poles or steel stakes driven into the ground.

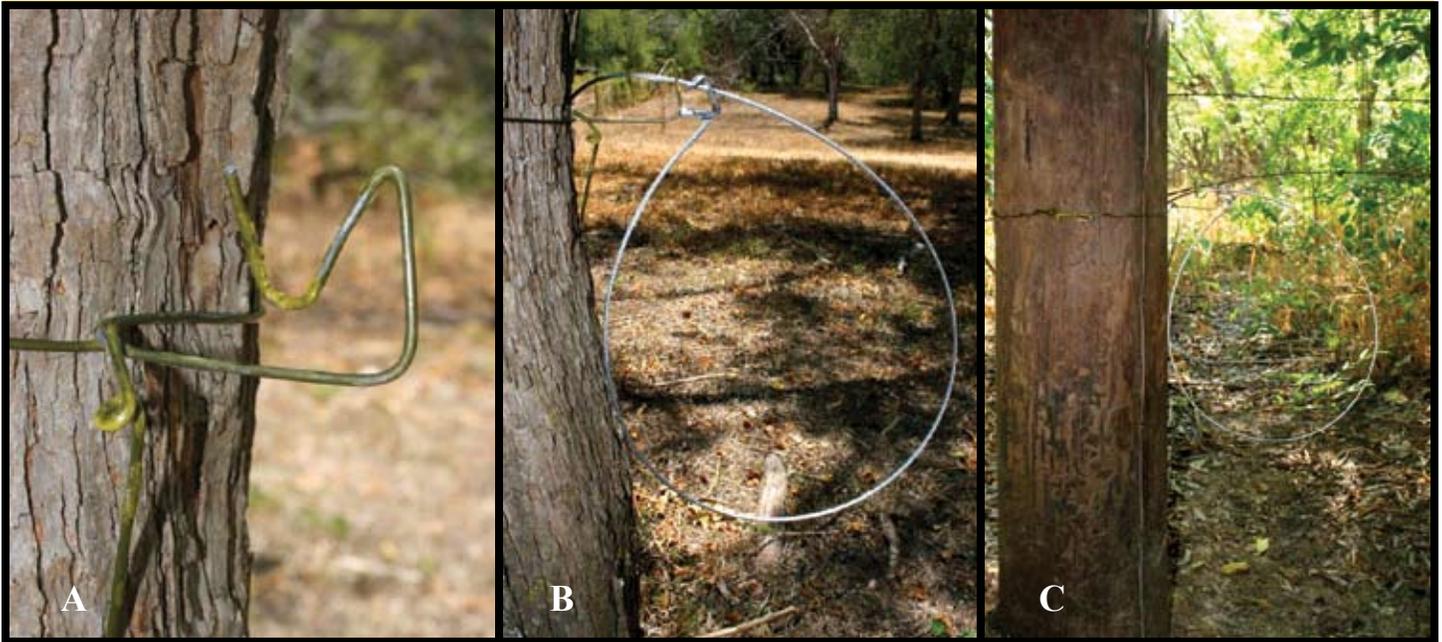


Figure 5. Close-up of snare construction (A). A brace made from a clothing hanger or other heavy wire is a useful tool to set a snare at a rub location or known feral hog trail (B). Feral hogs will return to this utility pole for rubbing (C). A wire brace was used to extend the snare into position.

Snaring Advantages

- Relatively inexpensive and does not require pre-baiting.
- Can be effective in catching trap-shy hogs.
- Can be used in a variety of situations.
- Can be quickly and easily set and requires very little maintenance.

Snaring Disadvantages

- Captures only one hog at a time.
- Inappropriate where trail sets cannot be used due to the risk of capturing non-target species.
- Inappropriate where no anchor or structure is available.
- Large hogs occasionally break snares.

Methods to Avoid Capturing Non-Target Animals

- Avoid setting snares on trails used by livestock and other non-target animals.
- Avoid setting snares under fences where deer or dogs are known to pass.
- Carry a catch pole to release dogs and other non-target wildlife.
- Keep detailed records on the location and number of snares so that all can be found.
- Remove snares when they cannot be checked frequently.

Snares can be an important part of a feral hog management strategy. While they may not capture more than a single animal and risk taking non-target species, they can be an inexpensive, low-maintenance approach applicable to many different situations.

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