

February 26, 2024

Working dog loses leg after days in trap

Family's harrowing experience sparks calls for updates to trapping regulations

PEACE RIVER REGION – A BC family is sharing the traumatic story of their working dog who lost a leg after spending days in a trap set near their farm. Pearl, an Anatolian Shepherd Dog, is a working livestock guardian dog and family companion on the Hartley farm, located northwest of Fort St. John.

Pearl went missing on Saturday, February 3. Clayton and Ricki Hartley couldn't find Pearl until the following Monday, when they found her suffering in a leg-hold trap near their property. It is believed the trap was set to target wolves. Despite rushing her to a veterinarian, Pearl's injuries were so severe amputation was necessary. She is recovering but will not be able to work as a livestock guardian dog. The Hartleys were not informed of trapping in the area, and no warning signs were posted. Pearl's incident happened within weeks of another trapping incident near Kitimat, where a dog was caught in multiple leg-hold traps set for wolves. Like the Hartley's situation, no warning signs were posted.

The Fur-Bearers, a wildlife protection charity, has advocated for common sense updates to trapping regulations for over a decade, but the government has not introduced any changes to protect the public from commercial and recreational trapping. Data obtained by The Fur-Bearers shows that the Ministry of Forests was aware of 74 trapping incidents involving pets from 2015-2021, an average of over 10 incidents per year.

"Residents of British Columbia shouldn't fear going for walks with their dogs or allowing Livestock Guardian Dogs to effectively do their jobs," says Lesley Fox, Executive Director for The Fur-Bearers. "But the inaction of the government has made that a reality. There is no way to know if a casual walk with your family's best friend will end in a horrifying tragedy – despite clear, simple solutions that could prevent it. It's time for the government to listen and protect families from the dangers of commercial and recreational trapping."

The Fur-Bearers have five common sense updates to trapping regulations that will immediately begin protecting the public:

- Mandatory warning signs near active traps,
- Mandatory notification of active trapping for nearby landowners,
- Mandatory ID tags on traps,
- Mandatory reporting of trapping incidents involving domestic animals; and,
- Setbacks of 1,000 metres from publicly accessible areas and dwellings.

An open letter was sent by The Fur-Bearers to Premier David Eby calling for these trapping reforms; The Fur-Bearers have also contacted the BC Conservation Officer Service regarding its response to the trapping incident.

Residents are encouraged to visit TheFurBearers.com to learn more and contact their MLA to call on the government to protect the public from the risks and dangers of the commercial trapping industry.

may be credited to the Hartley Family. A backgrounder attached to this release includes a statement from the Hartly Family and links to relevant materials, videos, and statistics.

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