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Snares Past & Present

When you mention snares or snaring to most people, they think of a bent-over pole with a noose fastened to the end of it. They imagine an animal sticks its head through the noose, the pole springs free, and the animal is jerked off its feet and hung. The fact is that in days-gone-by, this is how snaring was practiced, and this is the image that remains with many people today.

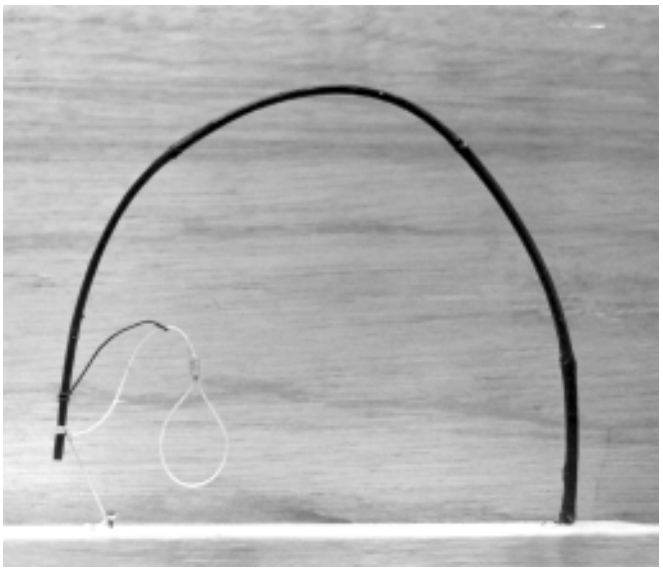
Obviously, a snare like this would be lethal to any animal that got in it. However, there are a couple of reasons why our forefathers constructed and used snares in this manner. First, the only things available for making snares was cord or fine wire. Neither one of these materials is exceptionally strong and an animal could easily bite the snare in two or break it. Also, they had no means for holding the noose closed to keep it cinched around the animal. For these reasons, they employed the spring pole. The pole pulled the noose closed, and ultimately dispatched the animal so it could not break the snare and escape.

Although this outdated misconception of snaring still exists, modern snares and modern snaring methods are significantly different from those of the past. Modern snares are made of stranded steel cable. This cable is extremely strong and resistant to abuse, yet it is flexible enough to form easily into a loop. An animal can't easily break this cable or bite it in two. The modern cable snare also has a locking device to keep the loop from opening back up once it starts to close.

With these two features, it is no longer necessary to use a powering device to keep a snare closed, and animals can be held alive because the cable can withstand their efforts to escape. This gives the potential for the modern cable snare to be used as a non-lethal trapping device.

Because old-fashioned snares only functioned in a lethal manner, snaring was banned in Ohio in 1919. But with the modern cable snare and its potential for holding animals alive and unharmed, the snare has be reinstituted as a legal device for Ohio's trappers.

This guide has been prepared to help familiarize you with the modern cable snare. It is designed to give you the basic knowledge you need to use snares safely and efficiently.



When most people think of snaring, this is what they visualize. This may be how snaring was practiced in days-gone-by, but today's modern cable snares are not used in this manner.

The Modern Cable Snare

The modern cable snare is made of stranded steel cable. This cable comes in two basic configurations known as 7 x 7 and 7 x 19. The 7 x 7 cable consists of 7 strands of small diameter wire wound into a larger strand. Then, 7 of these larger strands are wound together to make the finished cable. The 7 x 19 cable uses 19 very small wires wound into a strand with 7 of these strands making up the cable. Ohio regulations specify that multi-strand steel cable is the only material that can be used for snares.

This cable comes in several different sizes that designate the diameter of the cable. Cable measuring 3/32 of an inch in diameter is the most popular size for snaring.

Another integral part of the modern cable snare is a sliding lock. As the snare loop is pulled closed, the lock slides down the cable. However, the lock will not slide in the opposite direction. This is what keeps the animal from backing out of the snare or shaking the snare off.

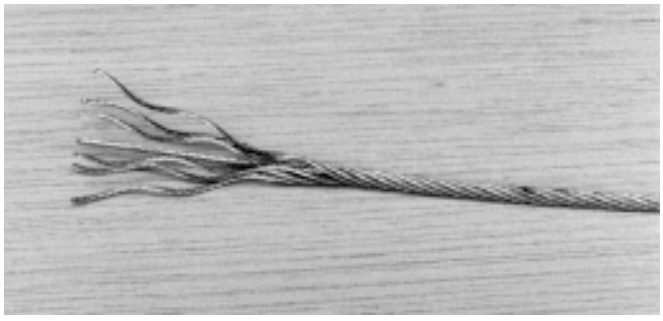
Locks come in a wide variety of shapes, forms, and configurations. Ohio law requires a relaxing lock which is defined as a lock that stops exerting pressure when an animal quits pulling on it. Locks that use springs or other powering devices to hold them closed are not legal for use in Ohio.

Modern cable snares also have some device on the end of the snare for fastening it in place. The simplest form of this is a loop fashioned in the end of the cable. However, most snares utilize a swivel as an end fastening device. Swivels are highly recommended because they allow the animal some freedom of movement while it is detained in the snare. They also help keep the cable from getting badly kinked and twisted as the animal is detained in the snare which could possibly lead to breakage of the cable.

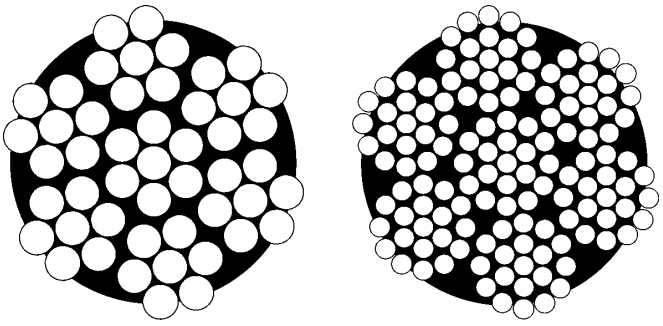
Ferrules are used to hold the lock and fastener in place on the snare. These ferrules are hammered or crimped into place on the snare cable. There are three basic types of ferrules: aluminum, coiled steel wire, and annealed steel nuts.

Another component that may be found on a snare is a stop crimped on the cable that prevents the snare loop from closing past a minimum diameter. These are commonly known as deer stops because they allow a deer to shake a snare off its foot should the deer get its foot in the snare. Deer stops that keep the snare loop from closing past a 2-1/2 inch diameter may be required on an Ohio snare depending on the lock you use. If you use a lock or lock system that allows the lock to break away from the snare at a pressure of 350 pounds or less, a deer stop is not required. If you use a lock requiring a deer stop, the stop must be installed no less than 7-7/8 inches from the lock as measured along the length of the cable. This maintains the 2-1/2 inch minimum loop diameter.

Snare Cable



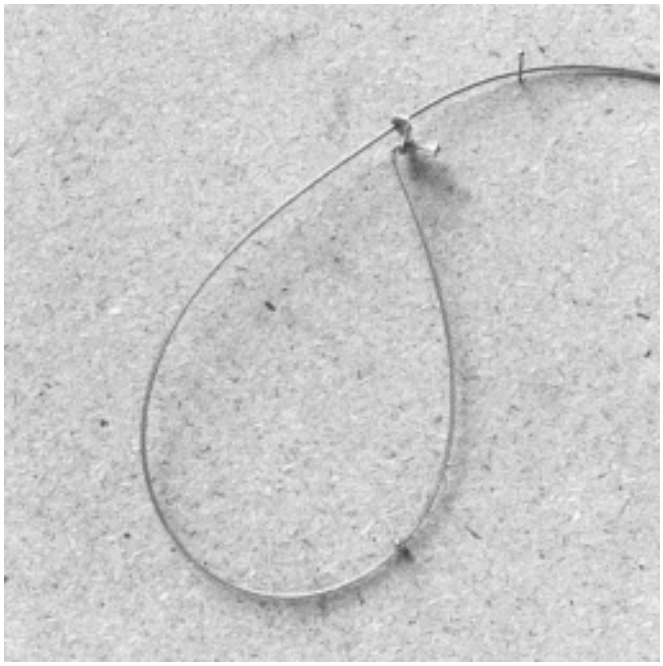
Modern snares are made of multi-strand steel cable. It is sometimes called aircraft cable. This cable is very strong and can hold an animal alive over an extended period of time. This eliminates the need to construct the snare as a lethal device. This piece of cable has been unraveled to show the individual strands.



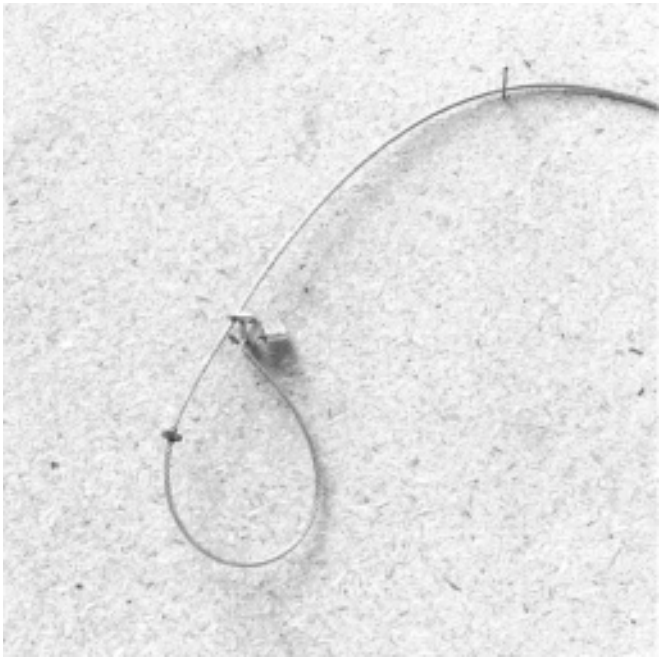
7x7 **7x19**

There are two basic types of cable. 7x7 cable has seven large strands of cable each made of seven small wires. 7x19 cable has seven large strands each made of nineteen small wires.

How the Lock Works



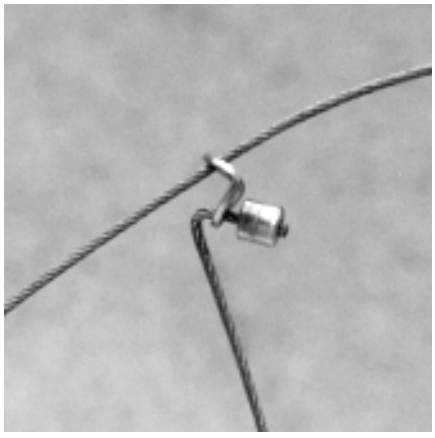
The lock is a very important part of the snare. The lock can only travel in one direction on the snare cable. The snare is set with an open loop so the animal can enter the snare.



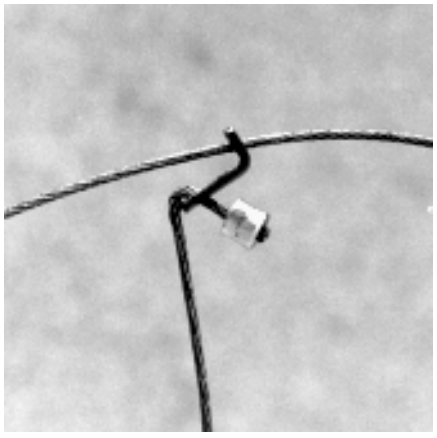
As the animal pushes against the snare, the loop is drawn closed and the lock slides down the cable. Since the lock cannot travel backwards on the cable, it holds the loop closed and keeps the animal from escaping.

Locks

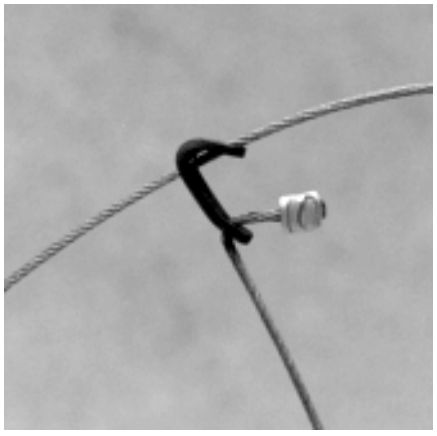
A wide variety of snare locks are available. The following are some of the more common types of snare locks.



This is one of the more commonly used snare locks. It is called a washer lock. A deer stop may be required with this lock on an Ohio snare.

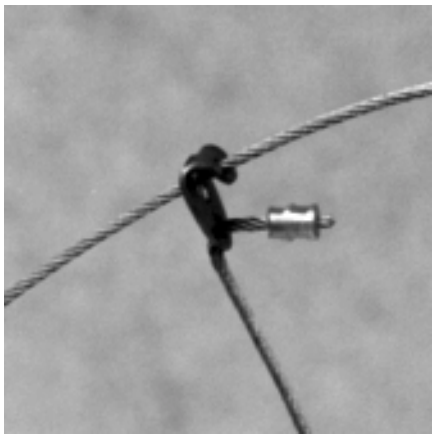


This is an "L" lock. It functions in the same manner as a washer lock. A deer stop may be required with this lock.

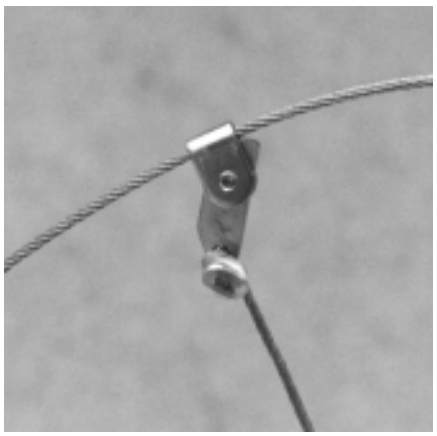


This is a "Thompson" style lock. This lock was one of the earliest locks developed for use with multi-strand steel cable. There are several other brand-name locks that follow this design. This lock may require a deer stop.

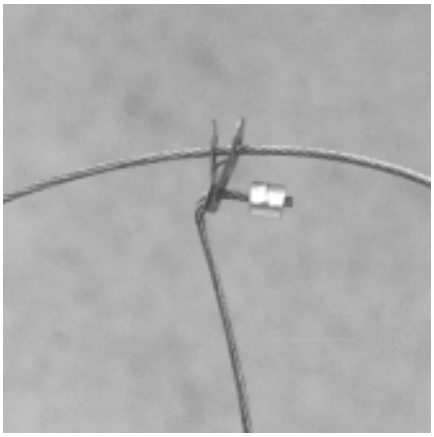
Locks (continued)



This is a "Reichart" lock. It is made from a bend washer. A deer stop may be required with this lock.



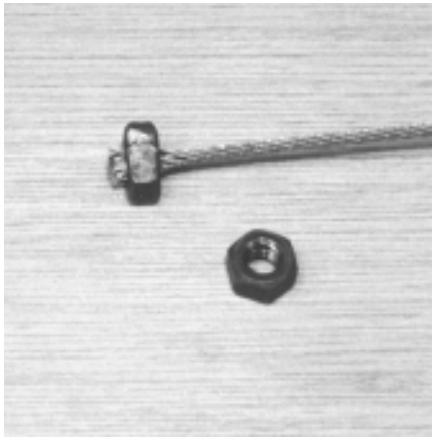
This is a "Cam" lock. The lever at the bottom of the lock binds against the cable in a camming action to hold the lock closed. A deer stop may be required with this snare.



This is a "Gregerson" lock. It is made of thin sheet metal. This lock will tear away from the snare cable if a force of approximately 350 pounds is applied.

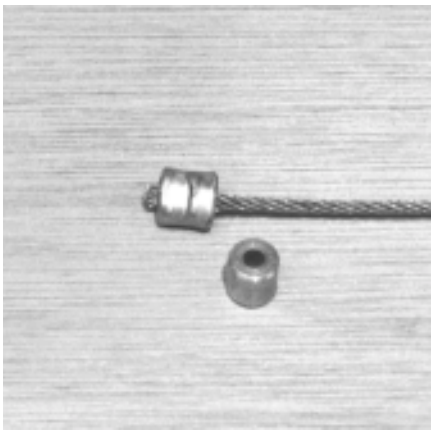
Ferrules

Ferrules are used to hold the lock on a snare. They are also used to hold the swivel on a snare or form an end fastener on the snare. The ferrules are hammered or crimped onto the snare cable.

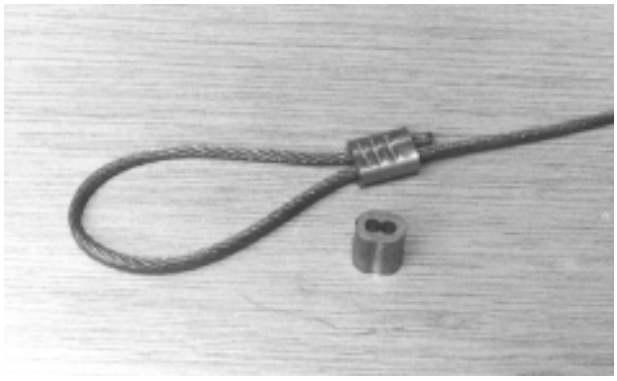


Special steel nuts are often used as ferrules. These nuts are heat treated to keep them from cracking when they are hammered on.

Another type of ferrule is made of coiled steel wire. The coil is slipped over the cable and hammered in place.



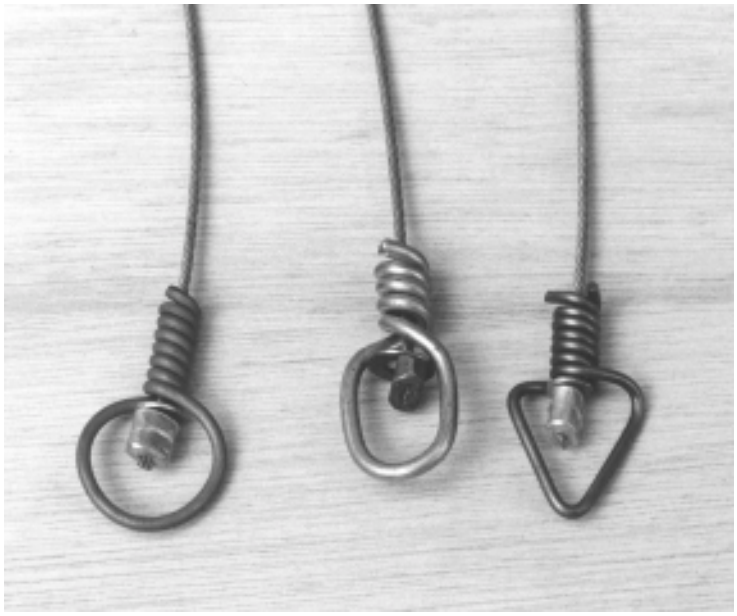
This ferrule is made of aluminum and is called a single aluminum ferrule. It is designed to hold one piece of cable.



This is a double aluminum ferrule. It is used to form a loop on the end of a snare cable.

Swivels

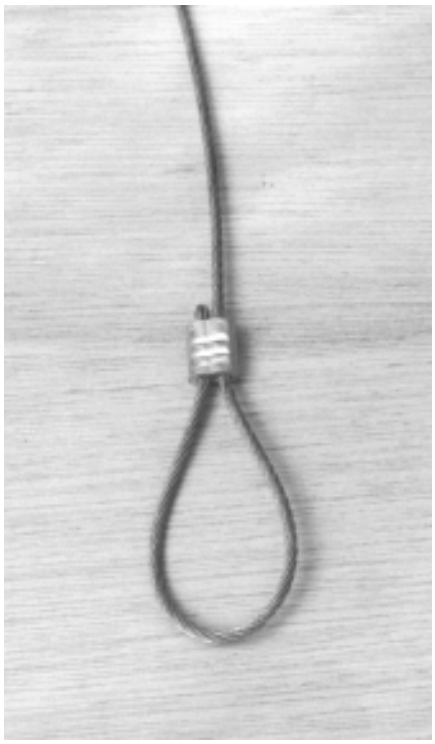
It is highly recommended that a snare be equipped with a swivel. The swivel provides a means for fastening the snare in place and also provides some comfort to the animal. A swivel also helps keep the snare cable from getting too badly kinked and twisted while the animal is detained in the snare. If a cable gets badly kinked and twisted, there is a possibility it could break allowing the animal to escape.



Swivels for snares are most commonly made out of wire. These are some typical examples of wire snare swivels.

When a swivel is used on a snare, a small washer is placed on the cable to keep the swivel from binding against the end ferrule.

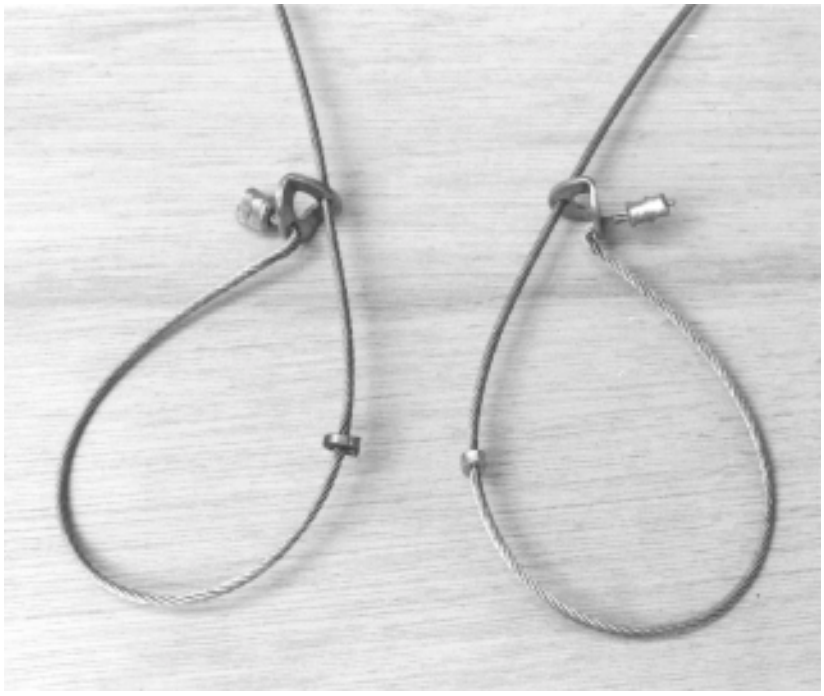
This snare swivel is made of stamped metal. Any type of swiveling device can be used for a snare swivel.



(Right) Some snares are equipped with simple loops on the end for fastening, however this is not recommended. You could, however, fasten a box-type swivel to the loop to provide for swiveling.

Deer Stops

Deer stops are installed on snares to prevent the loop from closing past a minimum diameter. This will prevent the snare from closing around a deer's foot if one of these animals should accidently encounter the snare.



Deer stops are installed by crimping the stop onto the cable. At the left is a type of stop that can be added after the snare is assembled. At the right is a small nut used as a stop. It must be placed on the cable as the snare is assembled.

The deer stop keeps the lock from going past a certain point and keeps the snare from closing down completely.

A Used Snare

Unlike other trapping devices, snares can only be used once. After an animal has been caught in a snare, the cable will be bent and will no longer function properly.