

The Political Animal: Animal Wellness Announces Rewards Program to Ensure Enforcement of National Anti-Cockfighting Law

Puerto Rico, Guam, and other U.S. territories must stop staged animal fighting Dec. 20th

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, December 10, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- By Wayne Pacelle

From Alabama to Wyoming, every state forbids cockfighting. So too does the federal government. And hundreds of local governments restrict this kind of cruelty. The courts, at every level, have repeatedly held these laws as a proper exercise of government authority.

When it comes to opinion about the wide range of uses of animals in society, cockfighting brings us as close to consensus as we may get.

Yet a small percentage of the American population treats cockfighting as a "God-given" or "cultural" right. More than a few of our brethren have boldly proclaimed they'll defy these laws. That's not exactly big news when it comes to this clan, because cockfighting busts happen routinely. There are plenty of scofflaws willing to roll the dice when it comes to their freedom for the pitiable opportunity to see an animal choke on its blood.

The U.S. territories are the current backdrop for the tension between an enthusiasm for animal fighting and an adherence to the rule of law. These are the only jurisdictions in the U.S. that have openly allowed cockfighting over the last decade or so. In fact, when I went to Guam in September, I attended a fight at a place called "The Dome," with perhaps 175 people betting on the blood baths that played out in front of us all.



Cockfighting Map



Cockfighting Match

But like never before, risk looms for cockfighters, especially in the territories where a federal law taking effect on December 20th threatens to upend their industry. The law bans animal fighting everywhere, including American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

The Governor of Guam has already told 17 village mayors not to seek special permission for cockfights at their local festivals. She's said that she cannot authorize a practice that is explicitly illegal. But the question remains, what about other cockfighting events? Will cockfighters, as an excuse to continue their favored practice, lean on the rickety argument that cockfighting is an essential part of their culture?



Cockfighting Ring

I have news for them. Their ace-in-the-hole argument is a dud. It's the phony trope that cockfighters sputter everywhere when their hobby is at legal risk.

Oklahoma and New Mexico cockfighters said their practice was part of their culture. Guamanian cockfighters say it's part of their Pacific Island ethos. Filipinos say so, too. Vietnamese say it's in their blood. Latino cockfighters say it's their tradition.

You get the point.

When people of every ethnic heritage lay claim cockfighting as a cultural right, there is a dilution effect, giving the argument no taste or color. No relevance.

The reality is, cockfighting probably started 3,000 years ago during the Roman era and spread as the empire expanded. It's been practiced throughout much of the world ever since.

There were plenty of other moral horrors that were part of the human experience. Flaying as corporal punishment. Bull or bear baiting. Slavery.

In other words, cockfighting isn't the only form of persecution that was widespread and enduring.

In the United States, and in so many other parts of the world, shameful practices do not persist indefinitely.

Responsible people call them out as shameful. That's precisely why government policymaking is an ongoing enterprise in society.

Today, [Animal Wellness Action announced rewards of \\$2,500](#) for people who deliver information that results in the arrest and prosecution of illegal cockfighters. We'll be promoting this rewards program in the coming weeks and months, especially in the U.S. territories.

It's hard to believe that anyone would risk 5 years of imprisonment and a \$2,500 fine to watch animals hack each other to death. Really, there must be some other form of entertainment that can bring these people joy. But more than a few will tempt fate, and that's why we must encourage law enforcement to treat this crime with the seriousness it deserves. And it's also

proper to ask regular people to report cruelty when they see it.

Our rewards campaign is featured on our new campaign website, www.endcockfighting.org. As Edmund Berke famously said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Animal Wellness Action is helping animals by promoting legal standards preventing cruelty. You can help animals by [making a donation](#) today.

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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