

Animal Wellness Groups Offer \$5,000 Reward for Info that Leads to Animal Fighting Arrests, Convictions

Reward Comes After U.S. Attorney for the Virgin Islands Announces That the United States Will Vigorously Enforce the Federal Anti-Cockfighting law

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 4, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the wake of an announcement by the U.S. Attorney for the Virgin Islands that she won't stand by as illegal animal fighting occurs, the Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) and Animal Wellness Action (AWA) today announced a \$5,000 reward for information resulting in successful prosecution of any individual for violating the federal law (7 U.S.C. § 2156) against animal fighting.



Photo Credit: Craig Swanson, Swanson Design

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Wayne Pacelle, President of Animal Wellness Action

“Cockfighting is a bloody, barbaric, dehumanizing activity,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. “We applaud U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert for treating animal cruelty crimes with the seriousness they deserve.”

Under the federal anti-animal fighting law, it is a crime to:

- Knowingly sponsor or exhibit in an animal fighting

venture.

- Knowingly attend an animal fighting venture, or knowingly cause an individual who has not attained the age of 16 to attend an animal fighting venture.
- Knowingly buy, sell, possess, train, transport, deliver, or receive any animal for purposes of having the animal participate in an animal fighting venture.
- Knowingly use the mail service of the U.S. Postal Service, or any “written, wire, radio televisions or other form of communications in, or use a facility of, interstate commerce,” to advertise an animal for use in an animal fighting venture, or to advertise a knife, gaff, or other sharp

instrument designed to be attached to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture, or to promote or in any other manner further an animal fighting venture except as performed outside the U.S.

- Knowingly sell, buy, transport, or deliver in interstate or foreign commerce “a knife, a gaff, or any other sharp instrument” designed or intended to be attached to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture.

“We are especially concerned with the proliferation of cockfighting during the coronavirus pandemic,” Shappert said, in a statement her office released today. “The World Health Organization has identified the illegal transport of cockfighting birds as a health risk for people and animals. Fighting birds that have been infected with influenza are a source of possible transmission to humans, and this is especially dangerous when cockfighting participants are handling bloodied birds, with knives attached to the bird’s legs.”



Wayne Pacelle

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Penalties for each violation of any one of these provisions allow for a maximum of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for perpetrators, except for an adult attending an animal fighting venture. Penalties for an adult attendee are one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

An “animal fighting venture” involves a fight conducted or to be conducted between at least two animals for purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment.

Prohibitions on attending on selling, buying, possessing, training, transporting, delivering, or receiving an animal in an animal fighting venture; attending an animal fighting venture; or trafficking in knives or gaffs for use on a bird have long applied to all U.S. territories. As of Dec. 20, 2019, it is also a federal crime to sponsor or exhibit an animal in an animal fighting venture.

“Federal agencies and officers have a duty to enforce our laws against the barbaric practices of

cockfighting and dogfighting,” added Pacelle. “But their good works depend on the cooperation and alertness of citizens. We ask people who know about illegal animal fighting activities to help us stop these forms of cruelty.”

What to do:

Anyone with information about illegal cockfighting activities can send information to animalcrueltytips@animalwellnessaction.org. Residents can also contact the appropriate U.S. attorneys, the FBI, USDA, or Commonwealth law enforcement agencies.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Animal Wellness Action (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.

WAYNE PACELLE

ANIMAL WELLNESS ACTION

+1 202-821-5686

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