

Hawaii Cockfighters Among Top Traffickers of Animals to Guam, Philippines for Illegal Activity, Investigation Alleges

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, USA, September 1, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action (AWA) and the Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) today asked U.S. Attorney Kenji M. Price, representing the District of Hawaii, to investigate allegations that a substantial number of residents in the state are knee-deep in the business of illegal trafficking of fighting animals and perhaps making millions of dollars from the trade.



Hawaii has become one of America's top cockfighting states | Photo Credit: Craig Swanson Design

“Hawaii is at the center of the cockfighting trade in the Pacific Rim, with the state acting as a hub-and-spoke model for animal fighting activities in Asia, in the Pacific islands, and in the United States,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. “Hawaii cockfighters are breeding fighting animals to be hacked up in fighting pits within the state and throughout the world.”

“

Hawaii cockfighters are breeding fighting animals to be hacked up in fighting pits within the state and throughout the world.”

Wayne Pacelle

Through public records requests to the Guam Department of Agriculture, AWF and AWA obtained nearly 2,500 pages of avian shipping records dated November 2017 to September 2019. These records detail approximately 750 shipments of birds by 71 individuals from more than a dozen states to Guam, where more than 130 individuals

purchased the birds for fights in the U.S. territory. These shipping records revealed that Hawaii had more shippers of fighting birds to Guam than any other state and sold, after Oklahoma and California, the third largest volume of birds to this long-time hotbed of cockfighting.

According to sources on Guam, AWA and AWF learned that the shippers use the U.S. Postal Service to transport the birds, packing the live animals into boxes and sending them in the cargo

holds without food or water. Shipments to Guam are just indicators of a far more brisk trade in U.S.-produced fighting birds to other foreign jurisdictions, including the Philippines, Vietnam, and other nations where the activity is not uncommon. A detailed report covering the findings of the investigation points to apparent illegal animal fighting activities by a range of individuals immersed in the animal trafficking.

Richard Torres, of Triple T Gamefarm, uses the U.S. Postal Service to ship birds for fighting purposes in apparent violation of federal law. "If your chickens don't win [at fighting derbies]," he notes, "nobody going to buy em." Asked what he likes about roosters, he said the following: "Just the beauty, their courage, the way they, you know, no matter what they'll continue fighting even if they're chopped up, you know, chopped up to pieces and they just keep coming, you know, determination." He adds, "The thing that gives me the most pride is when my customers call and they tell me that they won a derby."

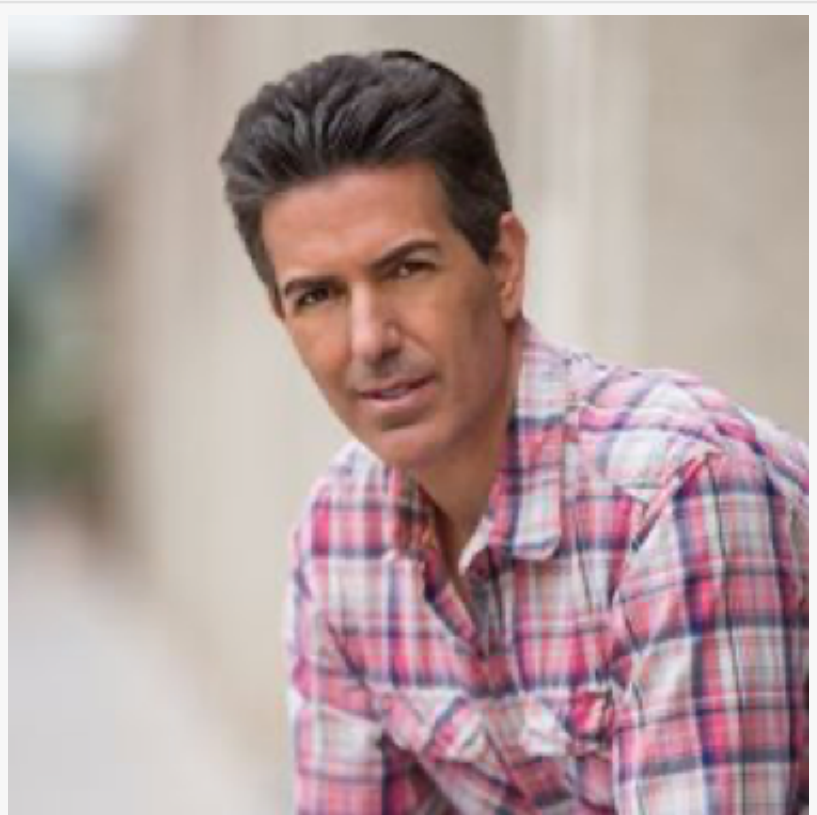
Bid Etrata shares pictures on his Facebook page of his participation in cockfighting in the Philippines and in Guam. Of his fight in the Philippines he said, "I'm very fortunate to say that I'm with Gerry Ramos fighting under 'Hawaiian Sid'."

John Cambra is long-time participant in the Slasher World Cup in the Philippines, including as recently as January 2020. He has had previous federal indictments for illegal cockfighting.

Bryson Au, of Red Raiders Gamefarm, said in a 2018 broadcast interview with the Philippines-based BNTV that he "spars every day" and was in "five derbies this year so far." When asked if he has a job he says, "Not right now...because I'm winning."

Gino Joseph, on Oahu, says in his BNTV interview that, "There's a lot of people here that are really good rooster men. What holds us down is the fact that we not supposed to be doing it here."

Vernon Lowry, in his BNTV interview describes his birds as, "high flying good cutting roosters" and "very good for long knife."



Wayne Pacelle

**animal
wellness
foundation**

**animal
wellness
action**

Animal Wellness Brands Logo

“Possessing and shipping birds for cockfighting have been banned under federal law since 2002 and felony offenses since 2007,” noted Drew Edmondson, the four-time Oklahoma Attorney General and co-chair of the National Law Enforcement Council for Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation. “Possessing and transporting birds for fighting are serious federal felonies, and the people involved are taking enormous risks to participate in this kind of cruelty to animals.” General Edmondson has been leading the fight against cockfighting in Oklahoma, where he defended the state’s 2002 ballot initiative outlawing cockfighting and making it a felony offense.

“Hawaii has one of the nation’s weakest anti-cockfighting laws, and the presence of that anemic law has given false comfort to the people involved in the industry,” noted Margery Bronster, a former Hawaii Attorney General. “The federal law, however, is as strong as it can be, and it’s my hope that the U.S. Attorney for the District of Hawaii takes a serious look into the evidence that’s been amassed in this investigation.”

Under current federal law, it is a crime to:

- Knowingly sponsor or exhibit an animal in a 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 using 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.

Penalties for each violation of any one of these provisions allows for a maximum of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for perpetrators, except for an adult attending an animal fighting venture. Penalties for an adult in attendance are 1 year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Animal Wellness Action has aggregated information on illegal animal fighting activities on www.endcockfighting.org.

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.

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.

WAYNE PACELLE

ANIMAL WELLNESS ACTION

+1 202-420-0446

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/525315113>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2020 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.