

# Acting on an Investigation from Animal Wellness Action and SHARK, Hunt County Sheriffs' Office Breaks Up Cockfight

*Animal Wellness Action and SHARK investigators sniff out, document, and trigger break-up of fourth Texas cockfighting derby in March*

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, March 31, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For the fourth time in the last month, and acting on tips from concerned citizens, Animal Wellness Action and Showing Animals and Kindness (SHARK) have been on site to document a series of illegal cockfighting derbies in northern Texas. In this latest case, on Sunday near Wolfe City, the groups alerted the Hunt County Sheriffs' Office to the staged animal battles in real time.

Hunt County sheriffs' deputies responded in force, arrested 21 individuals, and seized 67 birds at a major derby with approximately 100 attendees.



Cockfighting Match

"We applaud the Hunt County Sheriff and his team for responding to our urgent call that there was a cockfight in progress — breaking up the fight, causing cockfighters to scatter, and apprehending nearly two dozen perpetrators," said Kevin Chambers, a senior investigator for Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. "No county should tolerate this malicious animal cruelty, which is a felony under state and federal law."

Animal Wellness Action and SHARK have broken up fights this month in Ellis, Martin, and Titus counties in Texas. Like the Hunt County Sheriff, the Ellis County Sheriff's Office also had a robust response to the crime in progress, but the sheriffs in Martin and Titus provided lackluster or no responses at all. The animal wellness organizations have called on the Texas Department of Public Safety to act against the organizers of the fights in Martin and Titus Counties.

"We received a credible tip of a fight in Hunt County, and we are grateful to the Sheriff and his deputies for responding with urgency to stop more bloodletting," said Steve Hindi, president of SHARK. Hindi has been on scene for a number of these investigations, and his organization secured fight schedules and other details about these fighting derbies.



We applaud Hunt County authorities for responding to our urgent call over a cockfight — breaking up the fight, causing cockfighters to scatter, and apprehending nearly two dozen perpetrators”

*Kevin Chambers, Oklahoma state director for Animal Wellness Action*

The organizations also disrupted a fifth cockfighting derby in the region, just over the border in Oklahoma, in Murray County. Hunt County and Titus County also are close to the Oklahoma border, and southeast Oklahoma has long been a national hotspot for illegal animal fighting, with cockfighting outlaws clustering there.

“We’ve worked hard to pinpoint illegal cockfighting operators and illegal fighting pits in Oklahoma, and it’s clear that the cockfighters think they can get away with conducting their fights over the border in northern Texas,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “If we have our

way, there will be no refuge anywhere in the United States for dogfighting and cockfighting.”

Animal Wellness Action has led the fight to block three bills in Oklahoma to weaken the anti-cockfighting law.

B-roll footage is available to authorized media on request.

Texas law enforcement have stepped up their game in addressing illegal fights. There has been a steady drumbeat of cockfighting interdictions, including fights in Galveston, where nearly 100 birds were seized in a large-scale cockfighting operation; in Potter County, where more than 160 roosters were seized and, according to the sheriff, “many” participants were “unlawfully” in the United States; in San Jacinto, where suspects were “expected to face multiple felony charges, ranging from animal cruelty, cockfighting, illegal gambling, unlawful weapon possession, organized crime, and federal firearm possession by illegal immigrants”; in Cherokee, where two dozen were arrested on similar charges; and in Lynn County, where the sheriff brought felony charges “because of organized criminal activity.” Earlier this month, the El Paso County Sheriffs’ Office obtained a warrant and arrested a man for having a collection of cockfighting paraphernalia, along with 16 roosters trained to fight.

There have been a series of interdictions at the border, including a law enforcement action where officers “made an unusual discovery, roosters deeply hidden within passenger vehicles,” according to press releases. Border Patrol and Customs seized this shipment of fighting implements from Mexico City. And on February 17, CBP officers working at the Paso Del Norte international crossing seized 180 rooster gaffs and 7,500 Viroton animal steroid tablets from a traveler arriving from Mexico. CBP issued the traveler a \$2,000 penalty.

Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy are advocating for passage of the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act, which has been endorsed by

the Sheriffs' Association of Texas and dozens of county sheriffs, including those on or near the border. Officials there say it is critical legislation that addresses a pervasive and deeply troubling issue: the rampant and barbaric practice of animal fighting, which is inextricably linked to a host of other serious crimes.

U.S.-based cockfighters are deeply involved in a massive trade with Mexican cartels that control many major cockfighting venues south of the border. This illicit activity is creating a separate border crisis centered around animal trafficking, posing serious threats to both Americans and Mexicans.

"I consider passing the FIGHT Act in Congress as urgent a priority as we have at Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy," Pacelle said.

U.S. Representatives from Texas who cosponsored the FIGHT Act last Congress are Jasmine Crockett, D-30; Lloyd Doggett, D-37; Lizzie Fletcher, D-7; Lance Gooden, R-5; Sylvia Garcia, D-29; and Troy Nehls, R-22. Texas's senior Senator, Republican John Cornyn, is a cosponsor of the Senate bill led by Cory Booker, D-N.J., and John Kennedy, R-La.

A fact sheet on the FIGHT Act can be found [here](#).

## ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. Twitter: @AWAction\_News

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter

SHARK is a non-profit organization with supporters around the United States and beyond. With a small core of volunteers, and a staff of five, SHARK battles tirelessly against rodeos, bullfighting, pigeon shoots, turkey shoots, canned hunts and more. President Steve Hindi has an open invitation to debate "the opposition."

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