

Statement from Wayne Pacelle on Federal Arrests in Alabama After Raid on Massive Rooster Fighting

BLOUNT COUNTY , AL, UNITED STATES, June 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Federal, state, and local law enforcement raided a cockfighting pit on Saturday night where staged fights were in progress and rounded up 75 individuals in Blount County, Ala., including citizens illegally in the country and who were part of a rooster fighting syndicate in the Yellowhammer State.

“

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*Wayne Pacelle, president of
Animal Wellness Action*

[Animal Wellness Action](#) provided intelligence on the criminal operation to federal law enforcement and applauded the multi-agency operation to dismantle this criminal network and arrest dozens.

Four years ago, federal authorities led an effort to break up a major cockfighting network organized by Brent Easterling of Verbena, Ala., also by using the national anti-animal-fighting law because Alabama's state law against cockfighting is archaic and unworkable.

Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the [Center for a Humane Economy](#), issued the following statement regarding the cockfighting bust in Blount County, Alabama on Saturday.

“Animal fighting is rampant in Alabama, because the state's anti-cockfighting law is a joke – providing a maximum fine of \$50 and no jail time,” said Pacelle. “Cockfighting is a barbaric form of animal abuse, and no part of the United States should be a refuge from prosecution for this sickening crime. We applaud local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies for teaming up and invoking the strong federal law against cockfighting that allows for felony-level penalties for perpetrators of this sickening animal cruelty.”

Pacelle added, “Animal Wellness Action is pleased to have provided information and early support to get this enforcement action moving. We won't relent in our efforts to provide intelligence to law enforcement to pull up cockfighting at the root across America.”

In early June 2020, Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation released a

detailed report identifying major cockfighting operators and traffickers brazenly and openly operating in Alabama. One of those cockfighting kingpins was Brent Easterling, and Animal Wellness provided extensive evidence to the United States about his involvement and shared a dossier on him with the U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama and with other federal law enforcement officials. Animal Wellness Action noted that the Easterlings made hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps millions, on the illicit sale of fighting birds. Brent Easterling frequently transported his birds to Mexico, which is a major destination for U.S.-reared fighting animals and participated in fighting derbies all over the world, as a means of then marketing the birds he raised and trained to be cut up in fights.

Authorities indicted Brent Easterling and six relatives in 2021. They were sentenced in 2022, and the United States dismantled the two cockfighting pits at the center of his extensive animal fighting operation in middle Alabama.

Pacelle, who is spearheading the campaign to pass the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act in Congress, said that animal fighting is always bound up with other criminal conduct. The legislation, S. 1454 led by Senator John Kennedy, R-La., and H.R. 3946, led by Rep. Don Bacon, R-Neb., has been endorsed by both the Alabama Sheriffs' Association and the National Sheriffs Association.

"Never do we see a cockfight where animal cruelty is the only crime," Pacelle added. "Illegal gambling, narcotics trafficking, illegal immigration, and money laundering are comingled with this barbarism, and it's time to shut down all of the trafficking of fighting birds and the fights themselves."

Federal authorities at the site confirmed that this operation saw those other crimes at work. The ring was tied to a network of organized criminal activity, including illegal gambling, drug trafficking, and violent offenses, federal officials said.

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

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. Twitter: @TheHumaneCenter

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