



COMBAT CRUELTY

WHAT IS ANIMAL CRUELTY?

Animal abuse has many faces and comes in many forms. It's a dog in a puppy mill producing litter after litter of puppies. It's an elephant or tiger forced to perform for a circus crowd. It's a dog or rooster thrown into a pit and made to fight to the death. It's a raccoon tortured at the hands of teenagers for "fun." It may even be a pet in your neighborhood, who is mistreated or doesn't get enough food, water, or attention. In short, it's any behavior that's harmful or life-threatening to an animal.

Why should you care? Because it's the right thing to do. Because cruelty to animals is illegal. And because people who harm animals may also harm people. Stopping cruelty to animals helps everyone.

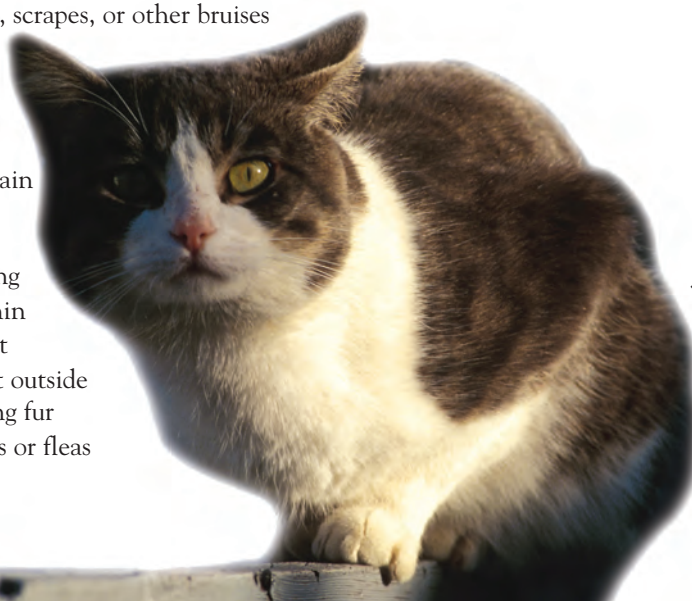
JUST THE FACTS

- ◆ Cruelty to animals is illegal in all 50 states and a felony in 44.
- ◆ Most cruelty investigated by humane officers is unintentional neglect that can be resolved through education.
- ◆ Intentional cruelty is knowingly depriving an animal of food, water, shelter, socialization, or veterinary care or maliciously torturing, maiming, mutilating, or killing an animal.
- ◆ Intentional animal abuse is often committed by a person who feels powerless and unnoticed. The motive may be to shock, threaten, intimidate, or offend others. Some who are cruel to animals copy things they have seen or that have been done to them. Others see harming an animal as a way to get revenge on someone who cares about that animal.
- ◆ Studies indicate that in homes where animal abuse takes place, child and spouse abuse are often occurring as well.

KNOW THE SIGNS

The following are common clues that an animal might be in trouble. They don't necessarily mean a pet has been hurt on purpose, but they shouldn't be ignored. Look out for animals who:

- ◆ have cuts, scrapes, or other bruises
- ◆ duck, whimper, or act aggressive when certain people approach
- ◆ are limping
- ◆ are too thin
- ◆ are almost always left outside
- ◆ are missing fur
- ◆ have ticks or fleas



FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES

Cockfighting and dogfighting are centuries-old "blood sports" in which two animals are forced to fight in a pit. People watching the fights bet on who will win. Those who organize and attend these fights see the animals' pain and suffering as "entertainment."

- ◆ Dogfights may last one to two hours and end only when one of the dogs is no longer willing or able to continue.
- ◆ Cockfights, which may last several minutes to half an hour, usually result in at least one animal's death.
- ◆ Dogfighting and cockfighting are against the law in all 50 states. Dogfighting is a felony in all 50 states, while cockfighting is a felony in 35 states.
- ◆ Animal fighting is usually accompanied by other illegal activities. Raids of animal fights often turn up illegal firearms and drugs. Young children are often present at animal fights, sometimes even taking part in gambling.



CAPE COD TIMES/STEVE HEASLIP

YOU CAN HELP!

- ◆ **Be on the lookout.** If you see any signs of animal abuse, write down the details, including date, time, location, and descriptions of the people and animals involved. If there are other people around, ask them for their names and phone numbers. Ask a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult for help in reporting the case. **You should never handle something as serious as animal cruelty alone!** Then contact your local animal shelter, animal care and control officer, or sheriff's department. (You can usually find this information in the phone book.) Provide them with the details you have gathered.
- ◆ **Be a role model.** Set a good example for others by being a responsible pet caregiver. Cats are safest when kept indoors. When outdoors, dogs should be walked on a leash or supervised in a fenced yard. Keep your pets safe and out of harm's way. Be kind to all animals and let others know that hurting animals is wrong. Speak up for animals and urge others to do the same!
- ◆ **Join Mission: Humane** and do the "Combat Cruelty" project. Spread the word about the need for tough anti-cruelty laws, and teach kids to be kind to animals. Visit humanesociety.org/teens to get started!