

THE FINAL ROUND

Cockfighting State Laws

Cockfighting is illegal in 47 states and the District of Columbia, but the federal Animal Welfare Act does not prohibit the interstate transportation of birds for fighting purposes. Twenty-seven states have made cockfighting a felony offense, 19 have made possession of birds for fighting a felony offense, and nine have made being a spectator at a cockfight a felony offense.

This information is current as of August 2001. For the most up-to-date information, visit our website, www.AnimalFighting.org.

Type of Activity

| State | Cockfighting | Possession of Birds for Fighting | Being a Spectator at a Cockfight |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alabama | Misdemeanor | Legal | Legal |
| Alaska | Felony | Felony | Misdemeanor ⁵ |
| Arizona | Felony | Felony | Misdemeanor |
| Arkansas | Misdemeanor ⁴ | Legal | Legal |
| California ⁶ | Misdemeanor | Misdemeanor | Misdemeanor |
| Colorado | Felony | Felony | Felony |
| Connecticut | Felony | Felony | Felony |
| Delaware | Felony | Felony | Misdemeanor |
| Florida | Felony | Legal | Misdemeanor |
| Georgia | Misdemeanor | Legal | Legal |
| Hawaii | Misdemeanor | Legal | Legal |
| Idaho | Misdemeanor | Legal | Misdemeanor |
| Illinois | Felony ² | Felony | Misdemeanor |
| Indiana | Felony | Misdemeanor | Misdemeanor |
| Iowa | Misdemeanor | Legal | Legal |
| Kansas | Misdemeanor ³ | Legal | Legal |
| Kentucky | Misdemeanor | Legal | Legal |
| Louisiana | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| Maine ¹ | Felony | Felony | Misdemeanor |
| Maryland | Felony | Legal | Legal |
| Massachusetts | Felony | Felony | Misdemeanor |
| Michigan | Felony | Felony | Felony |
| Minnesota | Felony | Felony | Misdemeanor |
| Mississippi | Misdemeanor | Legal | Legal |
| Missouri | Felony | Legal | Misdemeanor |
| Montana | Felony | Felony | Legal |
| Nebraska | Felony ² | Felony ² | Felony ² |
| Nevada | Felony ² | Legal | Felony ² |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| New Hampshire | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| New Jersey ¹ | Felony | Felony | Felony |
| New Mexico | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| New York | Felony | Felony | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| North Carolina | Felony ² | Legal | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| North Dakota | Felony | Felony | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Ohio | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Oklahoma | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| Oregon | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | Legal | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Pennsylvania | Felony | Felony | Felony |
| Rhode Island | Felony | Felony | Felony |
| South Carolina | Felony | Felony | Felony ² |
| South Dakota | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | Legal | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Tennessee | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Texas | Felony | Legal | Legal |
| Utah | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | Legal | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Vermont | Felony | Felony | Felony |
| Virginia | <i>Misdemeanor</i> ³ | Legal | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Washington | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| West Virginia | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | Legal | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Wisconsin | Felony | Felony | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Wyoming | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Totals | 27 Felony 20 <i>Misdemeanor</i> 3 Legal | 19 Felony 8 <i>Misdemeanor</i> 23 Legal | 9 Felony 27 <i>Misdemeanor</i> 14 Legal |

| District/ Territory | Cockfighting | Possession of Birds for Fighting | Being a Spectator at a Cockfight |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| American Samoa | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| District of Columbia | Felony | Felony | <i>Misdemeanor</i> |
| Guam | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| Puerto Rico | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| Virgin Islands | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| Totals | 1 Felony 0 <i>Misdemeanor</i> 4 Legal | 1 Felony 0 <i>Misdemeanor</i> 4 Legal | 0 Felony 1 <i>Misdemeanor</i> 4 Legal |

¹These states do not have felony or misdemeanor offenses per se but rather have penalties equivalent to felonies and misdemeanors.

²A repeated offense can trigger a felony prosecution.

³While not specifically prohibited by state law, cockfighting can be prosecuted under the general anticruelty statute.

⁴While not specifically prohibited by state law, cockfighting can be prosecuted under the general anticruelty statute as well as other statutes addressing cockfighting.

⁵In Alaska a first offense is a violation, and a second offense is a misdemeanor.

⁶While cockfighting-related activities are prosecutable as misdemeanor crimes, felony charges may be leveled against persons responsible for the mutilation of birds. (See *The People v. Modesto Ruiz Baniqued et al.*, Superior Court No. 97F06010.)