

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.)