MAJOR OFFENDERS DIVISION

LIVESTOCK AND ANIMAL CRUETY UNIT



Presented by
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ANIMAL CRUELTY UNIT OPERATION

- 2 Sergeants
- 6 Investigators
- YTD unit has reviewed and/or investigated **1503** cases
- YTD **734** "PAWS TIPS"

Unit receives cases from:

- Patrol
- Harris County Animal Cruelty Task Force
- BARC
- Crimestoppers
- Email
- Phone calls



Animal Cruelty related Laws

- Texas Penal Code – Chapter 42
- Texas Health and Safety Code – Section 821
- City of Houston Code of Ordinances – Chapter 6

The Link

The Link is described as the connection and correlation between violations of animal cruelty laws and other violent crimes such as domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, homicidal tendencies and sexual abuse.

Historically, Animal Cruelty was considered as an isolated incident, wholly separated from other forms of violence, but research has found it can be an indicator and predictor — one of the earliest ”red flag” warning signs of concurrent or future violent acts.



FBI Animal Cruelty Related Statistics

The FBI did not start tracking animal cruelty as a crime until 2016 when it was categorized as a "Group A" felony in its National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

Four Targeted Tracking Categories:

Simple / Gross Neglect – Accounts for roughly 69% of all tracked incidents. It is a passive failure of a person to provide basic care necessary for an animal's survival and well-being and statistically the most reported.

Intentional Abuse and Torture – Accounts for roughly 28% of all tracked incidents. It is the active, deliberate acts of violence or malice carried out against an animal. This is the specific sub-category most heavily scrutinized by behavioral analysts and threat-assessment teams when evaluating potential paths toward human violence.

Organized abuse and sexual abuse make up the remaining 3% of tracked incidents.

Organized Abuse – Systemic, commercial, or entertainment-based animal exploitation where animals are forced to fight for human amusement or financial gain.

Animal Sexual Abuse – Any instance of sexual assault, exploitation, or bestiality involving an animal. Bestiality became a specific criminal offense in Texas on September 1, 2017, under Senate Bill 1232. Before this law was passed, Texas did not have a dedicated penal code banning sexual acts with animals; instead, law enforcement had to rely on general animal cruelty or public lewdness statutes.

Animal Cruelty Incidents – Underreported?

- Statistics increase every year not because more cases are occurring , but because more cases are being reported and focus on education in the community has improved.

- Often, the primary offenses such as family violence, or murder, or child abuse would be recorded, and the animal abuse may or may not be mentioned in the narrative or a secondary title.

- Animal cruelty has historically been overlooked or not prosecuted in lieu of the more common criminal acts of human violence or dismissed in a plea deal. This is problematic due to Texas having a law if someone is convicted of animal cruelty, they cannot possess an animal for 5 years.

RECENT HPD CASES

Intentional Abuse and Torture

HPD Case – Suspect was seen intentionally striking a puppy on its head, causing its death, and capturing it on video. Suspect was arrested and charged with Cruelty to Non-Livestock Animals-Killed – 3rd degree Felony.

Previous History:

- Assault Bodily Injury X 2
- Assault Family Member X 2
- Agg. Assault Family
- Injury to Disabled Person
- Terroristic Threat X 4
- Indecent Exposure
- Violation of Protective Order
- Burglary of Habitation X 2
- Felon in Possession of Weapon

HPD Case – Suspect intentionally injured a stray cat, causing its death, and then setting fire to his apartment. Suspect was arrested and charged with Cruelty to Non-Livestock Animals-Killed, 3rd degree Felony, and Arson Investigator filed Arson Intended to Damage Habitat, 1st degree Felony.

HPD Case – Suspect committed burglary of a house and shot the dog. Suspect was charged with 1st degree Felony Burglary with Intent to Commit Other Felony with the other felony being animal cruelty. He currently has 5 open felony charges, with history of Aggravated Assault Deadly Weapon, UCW X2, Continuous Violence Against a Family Member.

A massive 2008 study evaluating over 44,000 adult men for sexual misconduct found that a history of bestiality was the largest single risk factor and strongest predictor for the increased risk to commit sexual abuse against human.

Animal Cruelty Unit has observed this link from a few cases we investigated.







According to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), raids on organized dogfighting and cockfighting rings almost universally yield concurrent arrests for major narcotics distribution and illegal firearms possession.

HPD Case: Suspect was investigated for dog fighting and charged with 6 felonies: PCS, Poss of Marijuana, and Cruelty to Non-Livestock Animals-Torture x 4. Suspect has previous history of PCS, UCW, and Dog Fighting conviction out of Georgia.

NATIONAL LINK COALITION
THE GLOBAL RESOURCE CENTER ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE

Working together to stop violence against people and animals



https://nationallinkcoalition.org

PROTECTING HUMAN AND ANIMAL WELFARE SHOULD BE THE SAME CONVERSATION.

Decades of research exposes The Link between animal abuse and other forms of family and community violence. In cases of child abuse, elder abuse, and domestic violence, abusers often purposefully threaten to harm a pet to demonstrate power, to violate trust, to force compliance, and to create a normalized culture of violence against their human victims. Acts of animal cruelty may be a precursor for human abuse, a risk factor for more severe violence, and a threat to public safety.

When animals are abused, people are at risk
When people are abused, animals are at risk.

Report Animal Cruelty

- Call 911 for emergency incidents
- Call 713-884-3131 for non-emergency incidents
- AnimalCrueltyUnit@HoustonTX.gov
- Submit a PAWS tip at www.927PAWS.org
- BARC 311