



ANIMAL CRUELTY CASES IN CONNECTICUT 2005-2015

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ANIMAL CRUELTY STATISTICS

3,513 - Total offenses brought under the animal cruelty statute from 2005 through October 26, 2015

Procedural outcomes:

- 47% - not prosecuted
- 33% - dismissed
- 18% - guilty
- 2% - not guilty

(These numbers are based on charges with verdicts and include attempt, accessory, and conspiracy.)

Source: *Judicial Branch*

ISSUE

Summary of Connecticut's primary animal cruelty statute (CGS § 53-247) and the outcome of offenses brought under it from 2005 through October 26, 2015. (This report updates OLR Report 2013-R-0148.)

SUMMARY

CGS § 53-247 punishes people convicted of specified animal cruelty acts with maximum fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000, imprisonment ranging from maximum sentences of one to 10 years, or both. PA 13-258 § 114 classified certain of these violations as class D felonies without changing the prison terms or fines.

According to the Judicial Branch, from 2005 through October 26, 2015, 3,513 offenses were brought under this statute. Of those offenses, 631 (18%) resulted in

a guilty finding, 55 (2%) resulted in a not guilty finding, 1,175 (33%) were dismissed, and 1,652 (47%) were nolle (i.e., the prosecutor decided not to prosecute). (This does not represent the number of persons charged. An individual could be charged with multiple offenses or have multiple cases during a year.)

ANIMAL CRUELTY STATUTE

Connecticut law defines "animals" as all brute creatures and birds (CGS § 29-108a). CGS § 53-247 prohibits many abusive behaviors toward animals and provides different penalties based on the severity of abuse and the abuser's intent.



Cruelty to Animals

CGS § 53-247(a) prohibits people from overdriving, overloading, overworking, torturing, depriving of substance, mutilating, cruelly beating or killing, or unjustifiably injuring any animal. The law prohibits a person who impounds or confines an animal from (1) failing to provide it with proper care; (2) neglecting to cage or restrain it from injuring itself or another animal; or (3) failing to supply it with wholesome air, food, and water.

The statute also bans unjustifiably administering or exposing a domestic animal to any poisonous or noxious drug or substance intending that the animal will take it. Individuals who have custody of an animal may not treat it cruelly; fail to provide it with proper food, drink, or shelter; abandon it; or carry or cause it to be carried in a cruel manner. Fighting with or baiting, harassing, or worrying an animal to make it perform for amusement, diversion, or exhibition is also prohibited.

A first violation of any of the above provisions is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to one year, or both. Each subsequent offense is a class D felony, punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000, imprisonment for up to five years, or both.

Malicious or Intentional Cruelty to Animals

Under CGS § 53-247(b), maliciously and intentionally maiming, mutilating, torturing, wounding, or killing an animal is a class D felony. This offense does not apply to:

1. licensed veterinarians following accepted practice standards;
2. persons following approved slaughter methods;
3. students, employees, or persons performing medical research and associated with a hospital, educational institution, or laboratory; and
4. persons abiding by generally accepted agricultural practices or lawfully engaged in taking wildlife.

Animals Engaged in Exhibition of Fighting

Under CGS § 53-247(c), knowingly committing any of the following actions is a class D felony:

1. owning, possessing, keeping, or training an animal engaged in fighting for amusement or gain;
2. possessing, keeping, or training an animal to fight in an exhibition for amusement or gain;
3. allowing such acts to occur on premises under one's control;
4. acting as a judge or spectator at such an exhibition; or
5. betting or wagering on the outcome of an exhibition.

Intentionally Injuring or Killing Police Animals or Dogs in Volunteer Canine Service and Rescue Teams

Under CGS § 53-247(d), intentionally injuring (1) an animal performing its duties under a peace officer's supervision or (2) a dog performing its duties as a member of a volunteer canine search and rescue team is a class D felony, punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000, up to five years imprisonment, or both. And under CGS § 53-247(e), intentionally killing such an animal is punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000, up to 10 years imprisonment, or both.

ANIMAL CRUELTY OFFENSES BY STATUTE AND YEAR

Table 1 shows the number of animal cruelty offenses committed from 2005 through October 26, 2015. Ninety-six percent of the offenses were violations of the statutory subsection prohibiting people from using or treating animals in harmful ways (CGS § 53-247(a)). (The other subsections penalize people who intentionally, knowingly, or maliciously abuse animals in specific ways.)

Table 1: Animal Cruelty Offenses by Statute, 2005 through October 26, 2015

Violation Description	CGS §	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*	Total
Cruelty to animals	53-247(a)	192	419	323	356	286	252	308	367	222	329	313	3,367 (96%)
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	53-247(b)	8	2	14	3	4	2	1	5	7	0	10	56 (1.5%)
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	53-247(c)	0	0	0	0	11	2	11	0	0	0	47	71 (2%)
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(d)	1	1	2	6	1	0	1	1	1	4	1	19 (0.5%)
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(e)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		201	422	339	365	302	256	321	373	230	333	371	3,513

* 2015 is through October 26, 2015

Source: Judicial Branch

OUTCOME OF ANIMAL CRUELTY CASES

Table 2 shows the procedural outcome of animal cruelty offenses, by year, from 2005 through October 26, 2015. As the table shows, during this period 47% of the offenses were nolle, 33% were dismissed, 18% resulted in guilty findings, and 2% resulted in not guilty findings.

Table 2: Procedural Outcome of Animal Cruelty Offenses, 2005 through October 26, 2015

Finding	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*	Total
Dismissed	33	140	146	107	100	83	89	87	81	116	193	1,175 (33%)
Guilty	38	70	54	38	66	48	65	89	56	48	59	631 (18%)
Not Guilty	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	48	2	55 (2%)
Nolle	130	212	138	217	136	125	167	197	92	121	117	1,652 (47%)
Total	201	422	339	365	302	256	321	373	230	333	371	3,513

* 2015 is through October 26, 2015

Source: Judicial Branch

Attachment 1 shows the procedural outcomes of each statutory category of animal cruelty offenses for each year, 2005 - 2015.

Attachment 1: Procedural Outcomes for Each Year

2005						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	53-247(a)	32	31	0	129	192
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	53-247(b)	1	7	0	0	8
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	53-247(c)	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(d)	0	0	0	1	1
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(e)	0	0	0	0	0
Total		33	38	0	130	201
2006						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	53-247(a)	140	68	0	211	419
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	53-247(b)	0	1	0	1	2
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	53-247(c)	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(d)	0	1	0	0	1
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(e)	0	0	0	0	0
Total		140	70	0	212	422
2007						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	53-247(a)	146	49	1	127	323
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	53-247(b)	0	4	0	10	14
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	53-247(c)	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(d)	0	1	0	1	2
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	53-247(e)	0	0	0	0	0
Total		146	54	1	138	339

Attachment 1 (continued)

2008						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	106	35	2	213	356
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	0	1	1	1	3
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	1	2	0	3	6
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total		107	38	3	217	365
2009						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	100	53	0	133	286
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	0	2	0	2	4
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	0	11	0	0	11
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	0	0	0	1	1
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total		100	66	0	136	302
2010						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	82	46	0	124	252
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	0	1	0	1	2
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	1	1	0	0	2
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total		83	48	0	125	256

Attachment 1 (continued)

2011						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Gully</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	77	64	0	167	308
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	1	0	0	0	1
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	11	0	0	0	11
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	0	1	0	0	1
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total		89	65	0	167	321
2012						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Gully</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	87	86	0	194	367
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	0	2	0	3	5
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	0	1	0	0	1
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total		87	89	0	197	373
2013						
<i>Violation Description</i>	<i>CGS §</i>	<i>Dismissed</i>	<i>Gully</i>	<i>Not Guilty</i>	<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	81	53	0	88	222
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	0	3	1	3	7
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	0	0	0	1	1
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total		81	56	1	92	230

Attachment 1 (continued)

2014						
Violation Description	CGS §	Dismissed	GUILTY	Not Guilty	Nolle	Total
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	116	47	48	118	329
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	0	1	0	3	4
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total		116	48	48	121	333
2015*						
Violation Description	CGS §	Dismissed	GUILTY	Not Guilty	Nolle	Total
Cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(a)</u>	160	35	2	116	313
Malicious or intentional cruelty to animals	<u>53-247(b)</u>	1	8	0	1	10
Knowingly engaging in the exhibition of fighting animals	<u>53-247(c)</u>	32	15	0	0	47
Intentionally injuring a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(d)</u>	0	1	0	0	1
Intentionally killing a police animal or dog in a volunteer canine search and rescue team	<u>53-247(e)</u>	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	193	59	2	117	371

* 2015 is through October 26, 2015

Source: Judicial Branch

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