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Animal Sexual Abuse Information & Resources
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ZOOSADISM: Summary Information for Law Enforcement Professionals

Sexualized animal abuse is a spectrum of behavior that involves animal cruelty, animal torture, and sadistic acts. Animal cruelty and violence is legally prohibited throughout the United States.

Generally speaking, animal cruelty is taken to mean neglect, abandonment, or physical abuse of an animal. In many states, if such abuse leads to serious bodily injury or death, penalties may escalate from a misdemeanor to a felony level crime. Animal torture is generally taken to mean prolonged or excessive abuse that leads to serious bodily injury or death. Zoosadism refers to animal torture that involves genital mutilation, sexual penetration or other sexually motivated acts.

Zoosadism (sometimes referred to as “animal crushing”) has serious and widespread implications for public safety and its depiction is specifically prohibited under U.S. federal law 18 U.S.C. §48. I

Increasingly, animal torture is being videotaped and posted to the internet, available on both the clear and dark web. Many sites have no restrictions barring access to content so the harmful images can be viewed by literally anyone of any age, any place in the world. Some sites are behind paywalls with tiered memberships for viewing, downloading, or requesting custom content.

Individuals who commit zoosadistic animal torture are different from people who starve, neglect, or simply "beat" their animals out of frustration or anger. Animal sadists (similar to sexual murderers of people) plan ahead, have lowered inhibition, lack empathy, and are prone to sexual violence with both humans and animals. They are sexually aroused by the violence, not the sex itself.

The actual prevalence of SAA is unknown but appears to be growing. In a report published in 2019, approximately 500 incidents were adjudicated in the U.S. over a 40-year period, including three cases of zoosadism (animal crushing). In the four years between 2020 and 2024, there have been more than 600 SAA cases prosecuted under state laws, and 20 zoosadism offenders prosecuted under federal law.

For more information, contact M. Jenny Edwards at mjennyedwards@chandleredwards.org or 425.522.3335.

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Definitions

- Animal cruelty refers to knowing or intentional neglect[1], or physical/sexual abuse of an animal that may result in injury or death. Example acts include beating with a variety of objects (including body parts like fists or feet), maiming, punching and/or kicking, blood sports, psychological torture (caging), neglect, abandonment
- Animal sexual abuse is a form of animal cruelty involving sexual contact between a person (or an object used by a person) and an animal's genitals, mouth, or anus. Physical injury may or may not be evident; death of the animal may occur as a result of the abuse.
- Animal torture is a form of animal cruelty involving intentional physical abuse or cruelty resulting in significant injury, mutilation, disfigurement, or death. Perpetrators derive satisfaction from witnessing or producing the animal's suffering. Torture means a live animal is intentionally crushed, burned, skinned, drowned, choked, suffocated, impaled, hung, penetrated with an object, or otherwise subjected to serious bodily injury for the purpose of causing pain
- Sadistic animal torture (aka animal "crushing" or zoosadism) is a form of animal torture for the sexual arousal or satisfaction of the perpetrator. Genital mutilation and anal/vaginal penetration with an object are common. Depiction (e.g., photos or videos) or documentation of the acts are common.
- Necrobestiality (sometimes referred to as necrozoophilia) is a form of animal sexual abuse in which the perpetrator prefers sex acts with a dead animal, or with an animal killed for the purpose of having sex with the corpse.

Research findings

- Animal cruelty is linked to domestic violence, assault, robbery, and rape (Arluke, Levin, Luke, & Ascione, 1999)
- Cruelty to very small animals (e.g. lizards and hamsters) may lead to more severe violence against human and non-human victims (Sorcinelli and Tozzi, 2016)
- Multiple studies have indicated that around a third to one-half of all sexual murderers have abused animals during childhood or adolescence (Griffiths, 2016).
- Animal torture is primarily motivated by the abuser's need for control and domination (Sauder, 2000), and is significantly associated with psychopathy, particularly in offenders who commit serial sexual offenses, including sexual homicide. (Lockwood & Hodge, 1998; Wright & Hensley, 2003)
- About one third of animal sexual abusers also sexually abuse children (Edwards, 2019)
- Zoosadism begins during adolescence, is characterized by an absence of empathy and affection for animals; is often part of a general pattern of human sexual assaults (Ferrari, 2020)

[1] Benign neglect such as failure to provide adequate food, shelter, or care may result in fines or citations, but not criminal prosecution unless significant injury occurs, involve multiple animals or instances, of it can be demonstrated the owner knew or should have known the neglect would result in harm to the animal.

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Cases prosecuted under federal law – 18 U.S. Code §48

Animal torture and its depiction (sometimes referred to as "animal crushing") are specifically prohibited under federal law.

- Charged: Kenneth Jermaine Griffin – FL, 2022 – Arrested April, 2022 for sharing encouraging a former student to sexually abuse an infant, record it, and send images to Griffin. Charged with distribution of an animal crush video and receipt, possession, and distribution of child pornography. In 2010, resigned teaching/coaching position after using MySpace to send sexually explicit messages to a 15-year-old former student.
- Pending: Sheheryar Kamran – VA, 2022 -
- Prentiss Madden - FL, 2021 - veterinarian shared video of himself sexually abusing a dog; also had "thousands" of images of child porn. Conviction: 21+y
- Teela Moore Hendrix - TN, 2021 - housewife created and shared videos of herself committing child and animal sexual abuse. Conviction: 20y
- Angel Ramos Corrales, 19 - CA, 2021 - beat and then slit his puppy's throat; posted vid on snapchat. Conviction: 2y
- Ryan K. Patrick - 2018. TX - Naval petty officer shared videos of puppies being drowned, chicks being ground up, and another puppy being set on fire. Conviction: 21m for distribution of a crush video.
- Krystal Morgan Scott - IN, 2020 - videotaped herself skinning, strangling 10+ cats & dogs. Conviction: 30m
- Brandon Frank Stricker, 47 - MT, 2020 - attempted to traffic a 14 yof, gave alcohol to 3 other minor fs, one girl sent him vids of her having sex with another minor, possessed child and animal pornography. Conviction: 14y for child porn & solicitation (crush charge dropped)
- Brent Justice & Angela Richards - TX, 2016 - operated live cam and produced videos for sale of animals being crushed and tortured. Justice (a pimp) got 57m; Richards (a prostitute) got 33m. Justice & Richards were also convicted in state court where she got 10y and he got 20y for aggravated animal cruelty.

Cases prosecuted under state laws

Intentional animal cruelty is prohibited in all 50 states. Most states consider torture or serious bodily injury (often resulting in death) as "aggravated" circumstances. Please contact your local district court for more information. Case examples:

- Dennis Rader – KS, 2005 – tortured, mutilated, hung small animals as a child. As an adult, he murdered at least ten people using the same methods he had used on animals. He referred to himself as "BTK" (for "bind, torture, kill"). He was convicted of 10 life sentences.
- Kipland Kinkel, OR, 1998 - 15-year-old high school freshman who boasted about lighting firecrackers in the mouths of squirrels and chipmunks. On May 21, 1998, Kinkel walked

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into his high school cafeteria armed with two pistols and a rifle and killed two students and wounded 22 others. Investigators later discovered that before coming to school that morning Kinkel had shot and killed his parents. Don Terry & Frank Bruni. He was convicted of 112y for 4c of murder.

- Richard Allen Davis – CA, 1996 - routinely set cats on fire as a teenager. As an adult he kidnapped 12-year-old Polly Klass from her bedroom, put her in the back seat of his car, and then strangled her to death. Received the death penalty.
- Keith Hunter Jesperson – OR,1995 - As early as age 5, Jesperson would capture and torture birds, stray cats, and dogs, severely beating the animals and then strangling them to death. He admitted to the rape, strangulation, and murder of at least 8 women in multiple states, for which he received multiple life sentences.
- Jeffrey Dahmer – WI, 1991 - killed at least 17, some of whom he cannibalized and/or
- had sex with the corpse. During his childhood, Dahmer had a fascination with dead animals and often examined, dismembered, and disemboweled them (Nichols, 2006; Purcell & Arrigo, 2006)
- Scott Dean Harberts – OR, 1989 - enjoyed trapping animals and watching them chew their paws off while attempting to escape. Harberts also shot his stepmother's dog for trying to jump out of a pickup truck. In July 1989, Harberts raped and beat to death the two-year old daughter of his housemate and best friend.
- Robin Gecht, Edward Spreitzer, and brothers Andrew and Thomas Kokoraleis – IL, 1982 – known as – the Ripper Crew or the Chicago Rippers, were implicated in the rape and mutilation or murder of 17 women. The men admitted to sadism, cannibalism, and Satan worship. Thomas Kokoraleis told investigators that the room had contained an altar, made from a board covered with red cloth, where cult members cut up humand and animal parts for sacrifice. Gecht was never tried for the 17 killings but was later convicted on a rape and non-fatal assault of a woman and sentenced to 120y. Spreitzer got life w/o parole; Andrew K was executed by lethal injection; Thomas was sentenced to 70y but paroled in 2019.

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