



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photos/Video (Credit/ASPCA):

Photos: <https://aspca.box.com/s/ifc7qb4sddm61c9g6w2m93xk6laxvigv>

Video: <https://aspca.box.com/s/v7l40bnfvb4z6e5w9y3ypw7ywrxybarp>

ASPCA® Assists Indiana Gaming Commission in Rescuing Nearly 600 Birds and Dogs from Animal Fighting Case

The animals are being transported to temporary shelters established by the ASPCA to receive much-needed care

Morgan County, Ind.— At the request of the Indiana Gaming Commission (IGC), the **ASPCA®** (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) assisted with the removal of nearly 600 animals – including multiple dogs and more than 550 birds – from two properties in Morgan and Owen counties that are connected to alleged animal fighters. The ASPCA is also assisting local authorities with evidence collection, medical assessments, and veterinary forensic exams.

Search warrants were executed yesterday morning by the Indiana Gaming Commission, and officials discovered the animals living on two properties. The dogs were found tied to heavy chains and housed in a manner consistent with dogfighting, while roosters were found with physical alterations commonly associated with cockfighting. Animal fighting paraphernalia was also discovered on the properties.

“Animal fighting is one of the most heinous forms of animal cruelty, and sadly it is far more common in the United States than many people realize,” said **Jessica Rushin, senior manager of Partnerships for ASPCA Field Investigations and Response**. “To betray animals by forcing them to fight for their lives for so-called entertainment is despicable. We’re proud to work alongside the Indiana Gaming Commission to remove these dogs and birds from pain and suffering and hold those involved responsible.”

“There’s no place in Indiana communities for animal fighting and the illegal gambling that goes with it, and we are very pleased that we were able to shut down this operation,” said **Superintendent Rob Townsend of the Indiana Gaming Commission**. “This investigation started with a tip from a concerned citizen to Crime Stoppers, and by raising more awareness about this type of activity we see an increase in reports from the public that better allow us to tackle animal cruelty in our communities.”

The animals will be transported to temporary shelters at undisclosed locations, where they will be cared for by ASPCA veterinary and behavior experts until custody is determined by the court. The ASPCA’s Legal Advocacy department will work closely with law enforcement and prosecutors to ensure the best outcome for these animals.

The following animal welfare organizations provided ASPCA volunteers to assist with this case:

Animal Care Centers of NYC; Animal Care Services - City of Indianapolis; Charleston Animal Society; Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region; Humane Society of Southwest Missouri; Oregon Humane Society; Quincy Humane Society; San Diego Humane Society.

The ASPCA has assisted the IGC with multiple animal fighting investigations in recent years. In Indiana, conducting an animal fight and the possession of animals for fighting are level 6 felonies, each punishable by six months in county jail to 2.5 years in state prison, and a potential maximum fine of \$10,000.

The ASPCA deploys nationally to assist local authorities in animal cruelty cases, as well as disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, and tornadoes. It also provides local communities with resources including grants, training, and expertise to effectively assist animals during cruelty and disaster situations. In 2018, the ASPCA assisted nearly 22,000 animals impacted by cruelty and disaster situations. For more information on the ASPCA's efforts to end animal fighting, visit aspca.org/fightcruelty.

The charges outlined above are merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first animal welfare organization in North America and serves as the nation's leading voice for animals. More than two million supporters strong, the ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. For more information, please visit www.ASPCA.org, and be sure to follow the ASPCA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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