

Article 47.

Cruelty to Animals.

**§ 14-360. Cruelty to animals; construction of section.**

(a) If any person shall intentionally overdrive, overload, wound, injure, torment, kill, or deprive of necessary sustenance, or cause or procure to be overdriven, overloaded, wounded, injured, tormented, killed, or deprived of necessary sustenance, any animal, every such offender shall for every such offense be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(a1) If any person shall maliciously kill, or cause or procure to be killed, any animal by intentional deprivation of necessary sustenance, that person shall be guilty of a Class H felony.

(b) If any person shall maliciously torture, mutilate, maim, cruelly beat, disfigure, poison, or kill, or cause or procure to be tortured, mutilated, maimed, cruelly beaten, disfigured, poisoned, or killed, any animal, every such offender shall for every such offense be guilty of a Class H felony. However, nothing in this section shall be construed to increase the penalty for cockfighting provided for in G.S. 14-362.

(c) As used in this section, the words "torture", "torment", and "cruelly" include or refer to any act, omission, or neglect causing or permitting unjustifiable pain, suffering, or death. As used in this section, the word "intentionally" refers to an act committed knowingly and without justifiable excuse, while the word "maliciously" means an act committed intentionally and with malice or bad motive. As used in this section, the term "animal" includes every living vertebrate in the classes Amphibia, Reptilia, Aves, and Mammalia except human beings. However, this section shall not apply to the following activities:

- (1) The lawful taking of animals under the jurisdiction and regulation of the Wildlife Resources Commission, except that this section shall apply to those birds other than pigeons exempted by the Wildlife Resources Commission from its definition of "wild birds" pursuant to G.S. 113-129(15a).
- (2) Lawful activities conducted for purposes of biomedical research or training or for purposes of production of livestock, poultry, or aquatic species.
- (2a) Lawful activities conducted for the primary purpose of providing food for human or animal consumption.
- (3) Activities conducted for lawful veterinary purposes.
- (4) The lawful destruction of any animal for the purposes of protecting the public, other animals, property, or the public health.
- (5) The physical alteration of livestock or poultry for the purpose of conforming with breed or show standards. (1881, c. 34, s. 1; c. 368, ss. 1, 15; Code, ss. 2482, 2490; 1891, c. 65; Rev., s. 3299; 1907, c. 42; C.S., s. 4483; 1969, c. 1224, s. 2; 1979, c. 641; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 967, s. 1; 1989, c. 670, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 239; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1998-212, s. 17.16(c); 1999-209, s. 8; 2007-211, ss. 1, 2; 2010-16, ss. 1, 2; 2015-286, s. 4.32(a).)