

The various forms of animal cruelty

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



Animal Cruelty

Everyday animals around the world are being beaten, neglected, or even maliciously murdered. Domestic animals are a constant target for violence from angry owners and unforgiving households. Not only are domestic animals the ones receiving abuse, but African animals and marine mammals are as well, like elephants, rhinos, and seals. Animal cruelty cases are rapidly increasing as humans try to find dominance in their own lives by exerting power over a helpless animal, or killing them for their body parts to later sell for a profit. But, a punishment for these horrid actions is a mere slap on the wrist. Harsher punishments should be enforced upon those who commit animal cruelty crimes because cruelty is inhumane, current punishments are simply not enough with cruelty rates are increasing.

In the year of 2010, a little more than 14, 608 cases were reported of animal abuse in the United States. Of those cases, 436 of them were in the state of Virginia alone. Many cases go unreported, however, animal mortality rates are still recorded reaching a whopping 32. 37% in 2010 (Pet Abuse). Last year, 18, 955 animals lost their lives to cruelty, in which Virginia accounted for 108. In the United States, 32. 4% of abuse cases are due to neglect, 11. 7% are due to shooting, and 9. 4% due to bestiality (Pet Abuse). A whopping 8, 626 dogs are abused in the United States alone. Cats account for 2, 878 cases, horses at 1, 387 and chickens at 707 cases. Of those cases, 45. 7% of the people were allegedly accused and sentenced but there was no proof of these actions. 7. 6% of the abusers were not charged and released with little to no punishment (Pet Abuse).

Not only is animal cruelty a problem in the United States, it is topping charts in Africa as well. Evidence provides that over 23, 000 elephants a year are unethically murdered for their ivory tusks (The Times Online). These tusks are then sold to other countries to make trinkets, name pendants, and other tourist items. Some elephants are not killed, leaving them to die of natural causes such as loss of blood or inability to survive without a protecting anatomical weapon. Further evidence provides that some die from overdose of the tranquilizer used to stun the animals if the hunter is not taking lengths to kill them. Rhinos are also in grave danger of these poachers. In 2010, 129 rhinos were killed or mutilated for their horns (Guardian). In the short months of the beginning of 2011, 136 rhinos have already been killed. Down from a population of 65, 000, rhinos now only reach about 18, 000. This is serious animal cruelty and seemingly nothing is being done about it in Africa. If caught, poachers only receive a small fine and continue on with their lives.

It seems as though the United States has rubbed off bad habits onto its neighbor, Canada, whose home to the largest and most brutal slaughter of marine mammals on earth of young or baby seals. The government has seemed to imply that the quota set of 275, 000 seals killed per year was a small number (Lin). This number, however, has since doubled as this horrifying action has turned into a spectacle for Canadian hunters. In 2001, a group of veterinarians conducted a study providing evidence that over 40% of seals were still conscious or alive when being skinned for their fur or meat. Studies also showed that 97% of the seals killed were less than 3 months old when killed and often times the deed was done in front of their mothers (Boycott Canada). Since the hunting of seals is used to provide food, the

government has not done much to step in. But, it has become much more than a food source and due to that, felony crimes should be implanted on those who commit this horrid type of abuse and murder.

Although the United States' animal abuse rate is high, there are many organizations dedicated to help rescue, provide homes, and enforce laws for these abused animals. The most known organization, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or commonly known as the ASPCA, was the first humane society created in the Western Hemisphere in 1866 by Henry Burgh (ASPCA). His mission was “ to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States”. His belief was that animals are entitled to kind and respectful treatment at the hands of humans, and must be protected under the law. One of the largest organizations in the world, the ASPCA, has legal authority to arrest and investigate those who commit crimes against animals, provide positive outcomes for at-risk animals such as shelters and new homes, and take care of victims of cruelty. Along with the ASPCA, members have formed People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). This organization is dedicated to ending inhumane animal treatment on farms, experimental procedures, and in any other industry. PETA works through education, investigations, animal rescue, legislation and much more to put a stop to the unethical treatment of animals. Both organizations operate under belief that animals deserve just as much domestic rights as humans do, and serve to put an end to the cruel punishments animals seem to face for no reason at all.

Thankfully, some of those punished for committing these crimes are broadcasted onto the media, putting realization that this type of action is wrong and one will be punished for it. Not only does the media recognize the felons, but it also provides emotional commercials, giving viewers reason to take action for their cause and put an end to the abuse of animals. Media plays one of the most important roles in an American's life by motivating them to do one thing or another. With these commercials and advertisements of organizations and examples of abuse, there will hopefully be more solutions to this ongoing problem.

Due to these problems being introduced to the public, they become more aware and more willing to help out. There are now new bills trying to be passed in Virginia in order to help. One is trying to get pets included into domestic violence protective orders. This means that pets get the same rights as people by being harassed or abused. There is a disagreement with this, especially in our class, that animals are meant to be lower than humans and that they should not have the exact same rights as people. Another one is increasing the penalty from a class 4 to a class 2 misdemeanor going from a \$250 fee to \$1, 000. This would be more of an incentive to not commit these crimes because North Dakota, South Dakota, Mississippi, and Idaho do not even have punishments for animal cruelty. Knowing that the punishment is much higher than before should hopefully help decrease these crimes rates as well. There is also a bill trying to get passed that veterinarians would have to report if they believe that animals are being abused or neglected. This can help save a dog's life in the end by catching an abusive owner before the dog's life is ended (American Humane Association).

Our presentation went really well. This is mostly due to people having strong opinions about animals because they have their own pets. The class has everyday encounters with these animals creating a bond between the two whether good or bad. This is what creates the emotions when pictures and videos were shown of abused animals. Everyone in the class agreed that this treatment was wrong and that something should be done about it. We also all agreed that the punishment should be raised from what it was but that it probably was not a good idea for the animals to have the exact same rights as humans because of the fact that these animals are owned and humans are not. Even though, we know that abusing animals is wrong, we could not really say that if we saw a family member, neighbor, or stranger abusing their animal that we would act upon it because it wasn't really our place to tell people how to treat their own animals. The sad part was, many of the students in the class owned pets that were beaten or neglected that were found on the side of the street or adopted from the humane society that had scratches, scarring, or even dismembered body parts. We spent most of the discussion just telling stories about what was wrong with our animals or how some of them acted around other people with the thought that they may be abused again. These stories really catch a person's heart when there are dogs that run whenever they see a male because they think they will be hit, or cats with a missing leg, or a dog with a missing eye. This clearly shows that animals need more help than they are receiving.