



News Release

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Gambling Commission agents seize 300 roosters, arrest ringleaders of illegal cockfighting operation in Port Orchard

OLYMPIA, Wash. – The Washington State Gambling Commission has seized 300 roosters and arrested two people for their roles in an illegal cockfighting operation in Port Orchard, Wash.

“Cockfighting is a brutal blood sport that is almost always operated solely for the purpose of conducting illegal gambling,” said Director Dave Trujillo. “With assistance from our law enforcement partners, we were able to take the ringleaders into custody and save these birds from a cruel and violent death.”

Over the past several years, the Washington State Gambling Commission has received complaints of illegal cockfighting occurring at a rural residential property in Port Orchard. An investigation revealed that the property owner hosts fights on the weekends and participants bring their own birds. The birds are routinely given steroids and other drugs to induce violent behavior, and have gaffs and knives attached to their legs. The birds, which are purposefully bred for fighting, are placed in a small ring where they fight to the death. Multiple fights are held throughout the event and wagers (\$100 - \$2,000) are placed on each fight. The property owner charges both an entry fee and a fee to dispose of the dead bird. The referee also charges a 10% commission on the winnings.

With assistance from multiple police agencies, Gambling Commission agents served a search warrant at the property during a fighting event on June 2. Agents collected evidence of animal fighting including breeding records, gaffs and medical kits. Additionally, agents seized over \$35,000 in cash believed to be wagers and/or winnings from the operation. More than 300 roosters were also seized.

Due to their aggressive behavior and the drugs they are given, fighting roosters cannot be rehabilitated and they cannot enter the food supply. The seized roosters were humanely euthanized on site by certified animal control staff. Hens and chicks were collected by animal control staff and will be rehoused.

A 56-year-old male and a 57-year-old male were arrested and booked into the Kitsap County Jail on charges of professional gambling, animal fighting, ownership in gambling device and leading organized crime. A third male was arrested and booked into jail for failing to provide his name to police.

In total, 27 people were detained at the residence. Attendance at an animal fighting event is a felony, and charges will be referred to the Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office.

The search warrant was served with the assistance of law enforcement officers from the following agencies: Washington State Patrol, Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, Pierce County Sheriff's Department, United States Postal Inspector, Homeland Security Investigations, Kitsap County Humane Society, King County Animal Control, Seattle Animal Control and Kirkland Animal Control.

The investigation is ongoing.

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