



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

SPCA REVIEWS ANIMALS & BIRDS ACT, PART IV, PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

November 4 2011 — In recent years, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) has seen an increase in reports of animal cruelty – our monthly average is currently 82. What has been most significant is the number of pet neglect cases we are seeing in our daily investigation work.

*One of the worst cases in 2010 was a beagle which had its mouth and paws taped together with masking tape to stop it from misbehaving in the owner's absence. Dogs tied up or confined in cages for prolonged periods make up almost a third of our monthly average of cases.

*Reports of rabbits kept in poor conditions or cats caged up all day in corridors are also becoming more common.

Stray animals are not free from danger or being abused. In 2009, the Bayshore Condominium poisoning of 20 cats made headlines for several days. Unfortunately as in most cases involving stray animals, there are no witnesses, and the cases remain unsolved.

The increase in the number of reported cases of animal cruelty in general, can be attributed to growing public awareness and a willingness to report and speak up against it, which is heartening. The strong public sentiment towards protecting animal welfare signals a need to transition the current legal framework towards a progressive approach that allows for legal intervention before acts of cruelty are committed and animal suffering occurs.

Although the current Animals and Birds Act (Cap 7, 2002 Rev. Ed. Sing.) governing animal welfare and cruelty to animals, has provided adequate animal protection (particularly with increased penalties in 2002, which SPCA had appealed for since 1994), the law should be strengthened further to address present day challenges.

Since December last year, the SPCA together with volunteer law interns, has drafted recommended amendments to Part IV (i.e. the 'Prevention of cruelty to Animals' sections 42 to 44) of the Animals & Birds Act and the following recommendations are among those that are proposed:

(1) The penalties under the Animals and Birds Act 2002 should be increased to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or to imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or to both. This is intended to serve as a greater deterrent than the current penalties.

(2) An explicit duty to exercise reasonable care in the care and supervision of animals should be imposed upon any person responsible for or in charge of an animal (in addition to the owner). A breach of this duty of care would be an offence. This targets pet owners who are negligent in the care of their pets and is intended to intervene before an animal suffers or before cruelty occurs.

(3) Banning offenders from keeping a pet: a prohibition order (prohibiting ownership, keeping or dealing with animals in any manner) should be included as a possible order by the court in addition to a fine or imprisonment, as the case may be. This would operate to prevent recalcitrant offenders from having a chance to abuse animals again.

(4) Sale of pets to those below the age of 16 should be prohibited, except with the knowledge and express consent of their parents. This reinforces the need for legal responsibility in pet ownership, to prevent ignorant or unwitting abuse or neglect of pets.

(5) A recommended list of prohibited acts should be included to identify specific acts that endanger animal welfare or are known to cause suffering amounting to cruelty to animals. Commission of any of the acts in the prohibited list should attract a substantially deterrent penalty.

In the light of increased reported cases of animal cruelty to the SPCA, whom the public looks to, to alleviate animal suffering and cruelty, it is hoped that the relevant authorities can institute an urgent review of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals section IV of the Animals & Birds Act without delay.

We will be inviting public feedback online at www.sPCA.org.sg/lawreview.html from various stakeholders and the public, for a one month period. Following this, the information gathered will be collated and considered, before the draft is submitted to the Ministries of National Development and Law.

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About Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is a registered animal welfare charity and our two main objectives are to promote kindness to animals and to prevent cruelty to animals. Relying mainly on donations from the public and fundraising, the Society provides various animal welfare services including a 24 hour emergency service, cruelty investigation, education programme for schools and organisations, a sterilisation

voucher programme for strays as well as running an animal shelter for abused and abandoned pets and strays.
For more information, visit <http://www.sPCA.org.sg>