

CALIFORNIA PENAL CODE 597(a) – definition, classification, punishments:

597.

(a) Except as provided in subdivision (c) of this section or Section 599c, every person who maliciously and intentionally maims, mutilates, tortures, or wounds a living animal, or maliciously and intentionally kills an animal, is guilty of a crime punishable pursuant to subdivision (d).

(b) Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (a) or (c), every person who overdrives, overloads, drives when overloaded, overworks, tortures, torments, deprives of necessary sustenance, drink, or shelter, cruelly beats, mutilates, or cruelly kills any animal, or causes or procures any animal to be so overdriven, overloaded, driven when overloaded, overworked, tortured, tormented, deprived of necessary sustenance, drink, shelter, or to be cruelly beaten, mutilated, or cruelly killed; and whoever, having the charge or custody of any animal, either as owner or otherwise, subjects any animal to needless suffering, or inflicts unnecessary cruelty upon the animal, or in any manner abuses any animal, or fails to provide the animal with proper food, drink, or shelter or protection from the weather, or who drives, rides, or otherwise uses the animal when unfit for labor, is, for each offense, guilty of a crime punishable pursuant to subdivision (d).

(c) Every person who maliciously and intentionally maims, mutilates, or tortures any mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, or fish, as described in subdivision (e), is guilty of a crime punishable pursuant to subdivision (d).

(d) A violation of subdivision (a), (b), or (c) is punishable as a felony by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170, or by a fine of not more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000), or by both that fine and imprisonment, or alternatively, as a misdemeanor by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or by a fine of not more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000), or by both that fine and imprisonment.

(e) Subdivision (c) applies to any mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, or fish which is a creature described as follows:

(1) **Endangered species or threatened species** as described in Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 2050) of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code.

(2) **Fully protected birds** described in Section 3511 of the Fish and Game Code.

(3) **Fully protected mammals** described in Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 4700) of Part 3 of Division 4 of the Fish and Game Code.

(4) **Fully protected reptiles and amphibians** described in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 5050) of Division 5 of the Fish and Game Code.

(5) **Fully protected fish** as described in Section 5515 of the Fish and Game Code.

This subdivision does not supersede or affect any provisions of law relating to taking of the described species, including, but not limited to, Section 12008 of the Fish and Game Code.

(f) For the purposes of subdivision (c), each act of malicious and intentional maiming, mutilating, or torturing a separate specimen of a creature described in subdivision (e) is a separate offense. If any person is charged with a violation of subdivision (c), the proceedings shall be subject to Section 12157 of the Fish and Game Code.

(g) (1) Upon the conviction of a person charged with a violation of this section by causing or permitting an act of cruelty, as defined in Section 599b, all animals lawfully seized and impounded with respect to the violation by a peace officer, officer of a humane society, or officer of a pound or animal regulation department of a public agency shall be adjudged by the court to be forfeited and shall thereupon be awarded to the impounding officer for proper disposition. A person convicted of a violation of this section by causing or permitting an act of cruelty, as defined in Section 599b, shall be liable to the impounding officer for all costs of impoundment from the time of seizure to the time of proper disposition.

(2) Mandatory seizure or impoundment shall not apply to animals in properly conducted scientific experiments or investigations performed under the authority of the faculty of a regularly incorporated medical college or university of this state.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if a defendant is granted probation for a conviction under this section, the court shall order the defendant to pay for, and successfully complete, counseling, as determined by the court, designed to evaluate and treat behavior or conduct disorders. If the court finds that the defendant is financially unable to pay for that counseling, the court may develop a sliding fee schedule based upon the defendant's ability to pay. An indigent defendant may negotiate a deferred payment schedule, but shall pay a nominal fee if the defendant has the ability to pay the nominal fee. County mental health departments or Medi-Cal shall be responsible for the costs of counseling required by this section only for those persons who meet the medical necessity criteria for mental health managed care pursuant to Section 1830.205 of Title 9 of the California Code of Regulations or the targeted population criteria specified in Section 5600.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The counseling specified in this subdivision shall be in addition to any other terms and conditions of probation, including any term of imprisonment and any fine. This provision specifies a mandatory additional term of probation and is not to be utilized as an alternative in lieu of imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 or county jail when that sentence is otherwise appropriate. If the court does not order custody as a condition of probation for a conviction under this section, the court shall specify on the court record the reason or reasons for not ordering custody. This subdivision shall not apply to cases involving police dogs or horses as described in Section 600.

(Amended (as amended by Stats. 2011, Ch. 15, Sec. 410) by Stats. 2011, Ch. 131, Sec. 1.5. Effective January 1, 2012.)