

Commercial Dog Racing in the United States



Dog racing is illegal in 44 states



A young greyhound at a Kansas breeding kennel.

Greyhound racing is cruel and inhumane

Dog racing is illegal in 44 American states plus the US Territory of Guam. At racetracks across the country, thousands of greyhounds endure lives of terrible confinement and many suffer serious injuries. Dogs in the racing industry are also subject to standard practices that are cruel and inhumane, in particular the killing of unprofitable dogs and the use of 4-D meat. Greyhound racing goes against the values of our community and should be prohibited.

Greyhounds endure lives of confinement

Greyhounds are confined for 20 to 23 hours per day

Racing greyhounds endure lives of terrible confinement. They live inside warehouse-style kennels in rows of stacked cages that are barely large enough for them to stand up or turn around. They are confined for long hours each day, with shredded paper or carpet remnants as bedding.

According to industry statements, greyhounds are left in their cages for 20 to 23 hours per day.¹ They are confined perpetually with two exceptions:

- A few times per month, greyhounds are removed from their cages and taken to a track, where they compete.²
- A few times per day, greyhounds are "turned out" in a large group and allowed to relieve themselves. These turn-outs account for a total cumulative period of three to five hours per day.³

Racetrack cages are barely large enough for dogs to stand up or turn around

The standard minimum size for dog track cages is 32 inches high, by 31 inches wide, by 42 inches deep, with some slightly larger.⁴ They are produced by commercial companies that specialize in racetrack cages, such as G&T Crates.⁵ According to the American Greyhound Council, greyhounds stand between 23 inches and 30 inches tall at the shoulder and weigh between 50 and 85 pounds.⁶ Using these dimensions provided by the industry, large greyhounds cannot stand fully erect in racetrack cages.

Greyhounds suffer serious injuries while racing

At dog tracks nationwide, greyhounds routinely suffer serious injuries. From 2015 through 2024, a total of 7,999 greyhound injuries have been documented. The most commonly reported injury was a broken leg. Other injuries included head trauma, electrocution, and broken backs.

- At two West Virginia dog tracks, 5,647 greyhound injuries were reported from 2015 through 2024.⁷ During the same period, 123 dogs died or were destroyed.⁸

- At Southland Greyhound Park in Arkansas which is no longer active, 899 greyhound injuries were reported from 2015 through 2022, including nine deaths.⁹
- Though Texas greyhound racing has ended, a significant number of injuries occurred at Texas tracks in recent years. At Gulf Greyhound Park and Valley Race Park, 396 greyhound injuries were reported between 2015 through 2020, including seventeen deaths.¹⁰

Greyhounds also suffer injuries in unofficial schooling races and training activities, but these injuries are not commonly reported on state injury forms.

The state of Florida did not report greyhound injuries to the public. Minimal injury data had become available through Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) investigative files, death notifications, and inspection reports.



Holly broke her leg racing in the United States.

An examination of these records identified 605 greyhound injuries between 2008 and 2020, including at least 90 dogs that died or were destroyed prior to May 2013 when statewide death reporting became mandatory. At Sanford Orlando Kennel Club in Seminole County, Florida, where an injury-reporting ordinance was passed at the county level, 169

greyhound injuries were reported between May 2017 and March 2020, including eleven deaths and 124 fractures.¹¹ Commercial greyhound racing was outlawed in November 2018 and became effective on December 31, 2020.

Injury reports document greyhounds who suffered and died

According to all state injury and death reporting, at least 556 racing greyhounds have died since 2015. For example:

- A two-year-old red brindle greyhound named WW Dougie Boy fractured his spine before a race at Mardi Gras Casino & Resort on May 28, 2024. Dougie Boy bolted out of the starting box and crashed into a stationary lure.
- A one-year-old brindle greyhound named Flying Betty Lou suffered a skull fracture during a schooling race at Wheeling Island Racetrack & Casino on August 25, 2021.¹²
- A three-year-old black greyhound named GT's Cocobolo suffered a heart attack during a race at Wheeling Island Racetrack & Casino on August 8, 2021.¹³
- A two-year-old white and black greyhound named TNT Quiet Riot was destroyed after breaking her neck during a race at Sanford Orlando Kennel Club on July 13, 2017.¹⁴

Greyhound racing is a dying industry

Across the country, dog tracks are closing

Since GREY2K USA began its initial American campaign in 2001, dozens of dog tracks have closed or ceased live racing operations. There are currently 2 dog tracks remaining in 1 state. Read more on our [state-by-state page](#).

Greyhound racing is a dying industry. This decline is the result of increased public awareness that dog racing is cruel and inhumane, coupled with competition from other, faster forms of gambling including internet wagering.



Empty stands at Tri-State Greyhound Park in West Virginia.

Gambling on dog racing continues to decline

At the same time that overall gambling on dog racing is declining, a trend toward off-track gambling continues. In 2022, over 96% of all wagers on dog races were made by simulcast or advance deposit wagering.¹⁵ When such costs are taken into consideration, it is likely that states are losing money on greyhound racing.

Thousands of puppies are bred each year for this cruel industry

According to the National Greyhound Association (NGA), there were once 300 greyhound breeding facilities and kennels in the United States.¹⁶ Today there are far fewer.

Females are impregnated, many through artificial insemination by a veterinarian, and have their litters on site.¹⁷ At a few months of age, puppies' right ears are tattooed with their birth date and order, and an individual registration number is tattooed in the left ear.

While at these breeding facilities, dogs are often kept outside in large dirt pens with minimal shelter. Greyhounds spend approximately one year at these locations before they begin to race.¹⁸

There is also evidence that some greyhound puppies disappear from record. According to Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the average litter size between 2006 and 2008 was 5.38 puppies per litter.¹⁹



Greyhound puppies in a breeding farm.

Over two-dozen cases of cruelty and neglect toward racing dogs have been documented

Since 2008, more than thirty cases of greyhound neglect and cruelty have been documented. These cases occurred in every state that had active dog tracks during this time period, and in the state of Kansas. For example, a kennel inspection found "persistent flea infestation" and poor conditions in Alabama.²² Four additional cases of dogs with parasite infestations were documented in Arizona, Arkansas, and West Virginia. In Arkansas, more than 140 neglected greyhounds were found at a breeding facility.²³ The same greyhound breeder previously had dogs confiscated in Kansas.²⁴

At least eight severe cases of greyhound cruelty or neglect were documented in Florida, including a case at Ebro Greyhound Park in which dozens of greyhounds were starved to death.²⁵ In Iowa, a trainer was fined and suspended for failing to provide adequate veterinary care for a sick greyhound.²⁶ In Texas, a trainer was fined after he caused an injured dog “unnecessary suffering.”²⁷

Evidence of Live Lure Training on Greyhound Farms



Live lure training in Oklahoma.

Live lure training or baiting, also called “bleeding,” refers to the use of small animals to excite and enhance a chase instinct in young greyhounds. Typically, screaming animals, most commonly rabbits, possums, and baby pigs. Often cruel and miserable deaths.

In the United States, live lure training was first caught on tape in 1978, by reporter Geraldo Rivera on the premiere episode of ABC’s 20/20. Following the report, the racing industry promised to police itself and eradicate the practice. However, in September 2011, a Texas greyhound trainer was caught on video training greyhounds with live rabbits.³¹

Four instances of live lure training were documented in 2020 and 2021.

- On June 10, 2021, a surveillance operation by GREY2K USA Worldwide revealed evidence of live lure training in Greenley, Colorado on a farm operated by longtime greyhound breeders John E. Lashmet and Jill Lashmet. Fifteen greyhounds were encouraged to chase, pin and maul their prey during the course of an hour.
- On July 16, 2020, in Abilene, Kansas, a greyhound breeder was filmed live baiting at least nine greyhounds on her farm located two miles from the National Greyhound Association Headquarters.²⁸
- On June 30 and July 2, 2020, evidence of live lure training was revealed in Elgin Texas. Five individuals encouraged dozens of dogs to chase, pin, and maul their prey.²⁹
- On March 3 and March 4, 2020, five individuals were recorded torturing live jackrabbits on a farm in Keota, Oklahoma. Forty-five greyhounds were shown killing dozens of jackrabbits.³⁰

The individuals shown “bleeding” or baiting greyhounds in 2020 and 2021 have business connections with national dog racing activities and fellow participants from multiple jurisdictions.

The exposure of live lure training over the past decade demonstrates the racing industry’s recalcitrance and compulsion for cruelty.

Other issues

“4-D” meat is used by the dog racing industry to reduce costs

At race tracks across the country, dogs are fed a diet based on 4-D meat.³² This meat is derived from dying, diseased, disabled, and dead livestock that

has been deemed unfit for human consumption.³³ The United States Department of Agriculture requires that charcoal be added to this meat to discourage human use.³⁴ According to an industry handbook, 4-D meat is used at commercial dog tracks because "it is the most economically feasible for the greyhound industry at this time."³⁵

As a result of eating 4-D meat dogs can be exposed to pathogenic microorganisms, including *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter jejuni*, and *Escherichia coli*.³⁶ In addition, the use of 4-D meat can lead to false drug positives due to drug residues that dogs ingest and pass into the urine.³⁷



"INEDIBLE BEEF" at a dog racing kennel in Florida.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, raw 4-D meat "may present a potential health hazard to the animals that consume it and to the people who handle it."³⁸ In 2014, two dogs died and close to 100 fell ill at Daytona Beach Kennel Club from a suspected case of "bad meat."³⁹

The dog racing industry defends the use of 4-D meat by claiming that it is also used by commercial pet food companies. While it is true that 4-D meat may be found in commercial pet foods, the use of 4-D meat at commercial dog tracks is distinctive because it is fed to dogs raw. Cooking meat destroys bacteria, but greyhound trainers are reluctant to do so for fear of negatively impacting racing performance.

Greyhounds are sometimes transported in a dangerous manner



Racing dogs shown muzzled as they are transported in the U.S.

Basically dogs typically race at several racetracks during their career, industry haulers transport large numbers of dogs from one track to another. During this process, dogs are often transported in cramped conditions, and some undergo cross-country trips in aluminum trailers. In recent years, there have been several documented cases of greyhounds dying while being transported. For example in 2010 two haulers were suspended for 30 days and fined \$500 after eight greyhounds died while being transported from Oklahoma to Arizona.⁴⁰

Thousands of dogs are killed every year when they are no longer profitable

Thousands of greyhounds are still killed every year. Because several states do not keep adequate public records, there are no verifiable statistics on the number of dogs killed nationally. In 2009, Gary Guccione, then Executive Director of the National Greyhound Association acknowledged that there are "no cumulative annual records" available regarding the ultimate fate of racing greyhounds.⁴²

Greyhounds have tested positive for prohibited drugs

In recent years, greyhounds have repeatedly tested positive for cocaine and other drugs. Between October 2016 and July 2017, three Florida greyhound trainers had a combined 30 greyhound cocaine positives.⁴³ In January 2011, a local television station reported that seven greyhounds had recently tested positive for cocaine at Daytona Beach Kennel Club.⁴⁴ In December 2009 a greyhound trainer was fined \$50 after a dog named Kiowa Fly Lucia tested positive for cocaine at Mobile Greyhound Park in Alabama.⁴⁵ Between 2007 and 2017, GREY2K USA documented 847 drug violations nationwide.⁴⁶

Throughout the country, female greyhounds are given anabolic steroids to prevent estrus. According to the industry manual Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound, this practice can cause side effects including increased aggression, weight gain due to water retention, loss of vigor, and virilization.⁴⁷

Greyhounds race in extreme weather conditions

Across the country, dogs race on the hottest days of summer and the coldest days of winter. For example, five greyhounds suffered from heat extreme exhaustion/stress after racing on hot days in May 2008, February and July 2010, and August 2011 at Southland Greyhound Park.⁴⁸

Regulation

Racing Commissions have demonstrated an inability and unwillingness to effectively regulate the greyhound industry. Regulators are slow or fail to act on disciplinary matters, often because of pressures from the racing industry.

Greyhound racing: Quick facts

How many states offer live dog racing?

There are currently 2 operational dog tracks in 1 state.

What are the most recent states to prohibit dog racing?

Maine (1993), Virginia (1995), Vermont (1995), Idaho (1996), Washington (1996), Nevada (1997), North Carolina (1998), Pennsylvania (2004), Massachusetts (2008, effective 2010), Rhode Island (2010), New Hampshire (2010), Colorado (2014), Arizona (2016), Florida (2018), Oregon (2022), Connecticut (2024) and Arkansas (2025) are the most recent states to prohibit dog racing.



What dog tracks have recently closed?

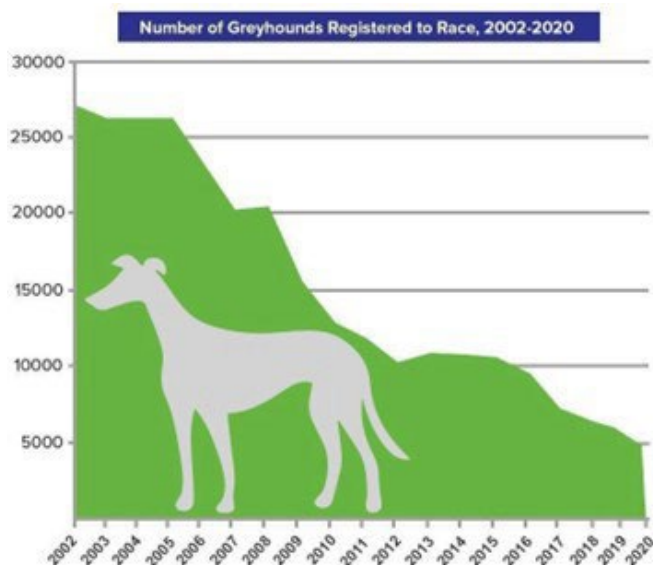
Since our formation in 2001, the dog racing industry has suffered a catastrophic decline. Altogether, forty-seven tracks have ended live dog racing and most have closed entirely: St. Croix Meadows (WI), Pueblo Greyhound Park (CO), Apache Greyhound Park (AZ), Multnomah Greyhound Park (OR), Plainfield Greyhound Park (CT), Geneva Lakes Kennel Club (WI), Post Time (CO), Shoreline Star (CT), Cloverleaf Kennel Club (CO), Jacksonville Kennel Club (FL), Tampa Greyhound Park (FL), Wichita Greyhound Park (KS), Corpus Christi (TX), Mile High (CO), The Woodlands (KS), Hinsdale Greyhound Park (NH), The Lodge at Belmont (NH), Seabrook Greyhound Park (NH), Wonderland

Greyhound Park (MA), Guam Greyhound Park (Guam), Phoenix Greyhound Park (AZ), Raynham Park (MA), Dairyland Greyhound Park (WI), Twin River (RI), VictoryLand (AL), Jefferson County Kennel Club (FL), Bluffs Run (IA), Tucson Greyhound Park (AZ), Mobile Greyhound Park (AL), Melbourne Greyhound Park (FL), Hollywood Greyhound Park (FL), Flagler Greyhound Track (FL), Pensacola Greyhound Track (FL), Sarasota Greyhound Track (FL), Ebro Greyhound Park (FL), Daytona Beach Kennel Club (FL), Sanford Orlando Kennel Club (FL), Birmingham Race Course (AL), Naples- Ft. Myers Greyhound Track (FL), Gulf Greyhound Park (TX), Orange Park Kennel Club (FL), Derby Lane (FL), Palm Beach Kennel Club (FL), Iowa Greyhound Park, Southland Park (AR) and Agua Caliente Racetrack (Baja California, Mexico).

How many dogs are required to operate a greyhound racetrack?

On average, a population of 500 to 1,000 dogs is required to operate a commercial racetrack. Generally, greyhounds compete at several tracks in multiple states during their short careers.

How many dogs are bred for racing, and adopted each year?



As dog tracks close, the number of greyhounds bred for racing continues to shrink. 4,898 individual dogs were registered to race in 2020 as compared to the 27,142 in 2002.⁴⁹ The number of greyhounds adopted into private homes each year is unknown.

Where does greyhound simulcast gambling occur?

In addition to live dog racing, greyhound simulcast betting exists in the sixteen states of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, West Virginia and Wyoming. It appears that greyhound simulcast gambling may also be offered at Native American tribal casinos in Louisiana and New Mexico. Greyhound simulcast wagering is also legal, but not operational, in Montana and Wisconsin.

States that once allowed dog simulcast wagering are increasingly outlawing it. Kansas and Massachusetts passed prohibitions in 2022. Colorado outlawed simulcast wagering on dog racing in 2023. In May 2024, New Hampshire prohibited simulcast betting on dog racing (effective January 1, 2027). Then in June, Arizona prohibited internet wagering on greyhound races (effective December 31, 2028). In 2025, Arkansas outlawed simulcast wagering on dog racing (effective January 1, 2028).

Join the team: Help end the cruelty of dog racing

Help a dog and make a new friend by adopting a rescued greyhound

To learn more about adopting a greyhound and to find a local adoption organization in your area, visit our adoption directory at GREY2KUSA.org/adopt

Support GREY2K USA and our national campaigns

GREY2K USA is a non-profit greyhound protection

organization that works to pass laws to protect greyhounds. To end greyhound racing, it will take the support of everyone who cares. To date, volunteers nationwide have contributed their time, money, and talents to help end this cruelty. To find out how you can help, visit us at GREY2KUSA.org or call 781.488.3526.

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