

Animal Law



What is Animal Law?

Animal law is the body of law that relates to the treatment of nonhuman animals. Animal law encompasses those laws that govern the treatment of companion animals, livestock and farm animals, those animals used for entertainment or scientific research, those used by the fashion industry, and wildlife hunted for recreation. Some animal laws overlap with the fields of domestic violence law, human rights law, criminal law, international law, tort law, family law, housing law, consumer protection law, and entertainment law ([ALDF](#)). Additionally, because animal law encompasses endangered species protections, it is closely related to environmental law and because animal law governs scientific testing, it is closely related to issues of bioethics and the law ([Pavone](#)).

Animal laws differ by state, but there are several important federal laws: The [Animal Welfare Act of 1966](#) regulates the use of animals in research, exhibition, and transportation; the [Endangered Species Act of 1973](#) prohibits interstate and international import and export of all endangered species; and the [Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act](#) of 2019 outlaws some forms of animal cruelty. All of these laws, however, have substantial exemptions for animals used in scientific testing and pest control ([Kotzmann and Nip](#)). The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is an international environmental treaty that protects the welfare of wild animals ([Pavone](#)).

While many advocacy groups continue to fight for broader protections, popular support for animal welfare legislation has grown in recent years as scientists have argued that many nonhuman animals are sentient beings and as factory farming techniques have been exposed ([Pipia](#)). Public attitudes have also shifted recently as animal mistreatment and extinction have increasingly been connected to climate change, food safety concerns, and zoonotic infections ([Pavone](#)).

Where Do Animal Law Attorneys Work?

Private Sector

Animal protection organization—[Animal Legal Defense Fund](#)

Firm that handles animal law or related cases

Lobbying firm that represents animal, environmental, or food safety causes

Government

Prosecutor, particularly in areas with animal trading activity or roadside zoos

Department of Agriculture—[Careers](#)

Bureau of Land Management—[Careers](#)

Fish and Wildlife Service—[Careers in Conservation](#)

Animal Law Resources



Resume Boosters for Animal Law

Intern or extern with a firm that handles animal law cases

Intern or extern with an animal advocacy organization

Start a student chapter of the [Animal Legal Defense Fund](#)

Check out [these free webinars and CLEs](#) from the Animal Legal Defense Fund

Consider pursuing an [LLM in Animal Law](#)—Lewis and Clark Law School also offers online curriculum, clinics, and a summer program

Submit an article for publication in the [Animal Law Review](#)

What Classes Should I Take?

Bioethics and the Law

Civil Rights

Commercial Law

Decedents' Estates

Environmental Law

Family Law

Housing Adjudication Clinic

Land Use Law

Non-Profit Organization

Public Health Law

Professional Associations

American Bar Association

All University of Memphis law students have free membership to the [American Bar Association](#). Their website provides routinely updated information and interest-specific career advice. Join different sections to find out what they offer. Check out the [Animal Law Committee in the Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section](#).

Tennessee Bar Association

The Tennessee Bar Association's [Animal Law Section](#) focuses on promoting the study and understanding of laws, regulations, and court decisions dealing with legal issues involving animals. [Students can join for a reduced rate while in law school](#).

Animal Legal Defense Fund's Pro Bono Network

Attorneys and paralegals can join the ALDF's [Pro Bono Network](#) to volunteer on animal law cases.

Animal Law Links

[Animal Law Academy](#)—webinars, CLEs, articles, and other resources

[Pro Bono Spotlight](#)—articles about attorneys who volunteered their time to work on animal law cases

[Career advice](#) for aspiring animal law attorneys

[Where are they now?](#)—articles highlighting the careers of former student members of the Animal Legal Defense Fund