



ANIMAL RIGHTS EXTREMISTS

Background

- The goal of animal rights extremists is to inflict economic damage on individuals or groups that believe all animals—human and non-human—have equal rights of life and liberty. They are willing to conduct criminal activity to advance this ideology.
- The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) is one of the most active groups in the animal rights movement. It was formed overseas in 1976 as a splinter group of the UK-based Band of Mercy.
- Animal rights extremists inflict economic damage on individuals or businesses they assess are exploiting or abusing animals. A small percentage of these extremists condone violence to achieve their goals, including threats, harassment, arson, and bombings.
- Animal rights extremist groups are normally decentralized. For example, ALF has no formal membership but instead relies on like-minded individuals who claim “direct actions” on the group’s behalf.



Threat to New Jersey: Low

From 2001-06, there were eight documented cases of animal rights extremism in New Jersey involving acts of vandalism and animal liberation. There have been no reported incidents since 2006, when key members of Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) were convicted and received prison sentences of four to six years.

- Animal rights extremists have largely achieved their objectives by successfully urging lawmakers to sponsor bills preventing animal cruelty, eliminating the need for violence or harassment. In August 2013, Governor Christie signed “Patrick’s Law” to increase penalties for animal abuse, and in February 2015, the Pet Purchase Protection Act was signed to prevent “puppy mills” – establishments that breed dogs, typically under inhumane conditions.
- Animal rights extremists have refocused their efforts on education and nonviolent action, protesting animal testing at university laboratories and pharmaceutical companies. For example, Hugs for Puppies – a Philadelphia-based extremist group previously associated with SHAC – has changed its name to The Humane League. The group now focuses on animal advocacy through public education and corporate campaigns.



In 2008, animal rights extremists incinerated a biomedical researcher’s car because of his affiliation with animal testing at the University of California-Santa Cruz

Intelligence Gaps

- Which animal rights extremists, or groups, in New Jersey are threatening businesses?
- Other than website defacements, are animal rights extremists attacking perceived animal rights violators via cyber attacks?

New Jersey Nexus

In 2006, six members of SHAC were convicted of “animal enterprise terrorism” under the Animal Enterprise Protection Act (AEPA). Following these convictions, Congress expanded AEPA into the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, successfully deterring animal rights extremists nationwide from targeting corporations for fear of being branded as domestic terrorists.



ALF propaganda poster



ALF logo

Contact Information

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