



Piracy Act 1698

1698 CHAPTER 7 11 Will 3

An Act for the more effectuall Suppression of Piracy.

Rot parl. III Gul. III p. 2. n. 5

Recital of Stat 28 Hen. VIII. c. 15 § 1. ; Reasons for passing this Act

Whereas by the Offences at Sea Act 1536 it is enacted that Treasons Felonies Robberies Murthers and Confederacies committed on the Sea shall be enquired of tryed and determined according to the common Course of the Laws of this Land used for such Offences upon the Land within this Realme whereupon the Triall of those Offenders before the Admirall or his Lieutenant or his Commissary hath bene altogether disused And whereas that since the making of the said Act and especially of late Yeares it hath bene found by experience That Persons committing Piracies Robberies and Felonies on the Seas in or neare the East and West Indies and in Places very remote cannot be brought to condign Punishment without great Trouble and Charges in sending them into England to be tryd within the Realme as the said Statute directs insomuch that many idle and profligate Persons have bene thereby encouraged to turne Pirates and betake themselves to that sort of wicked Life trusting that they shall not or at least cannot easily be questioned for such their Piracies and Robberies by reason of the great Trouble and Expence that will necessarily fall upon such as shall attempt to apprehend and prosecute them for the same And whereas the Numbers of them are of late very much increased and their Insolencies soe great that unlesse some speedy Remedy be provided to suppress them by a strict and more easie way for putting the ancient Laws in that behalfe in Execution the Trade and Navigation into remote Parts will very much suffer thereby

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 Short title given by [Statute Law Revision Act 1948 \(c. 62\)](#), [Sch. 2](#)

Commencement Information

I1 Act wholly in force at Royal Assent

[1]—^{F1}

VI.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/02/1991.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Piracy Act 1698 (repealed 5.11.1993). (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

F1 Ss. [I]–VI repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act 1867 \(c. 59\)](#)

VII Natural-born Subjects committing Acts as herein mentioned, deemed, and upon Conviction, to suffer according to Stat. 28 Hen. VIII. c. 15.

If any of His Majesties . . . ^{F2} Subjects . . . ^{F2} shall committ any Piracy or Robbery or any Act of Hostility against other His Majesties Subjects upon the Sea under Colour of any Commission from any Forreigne Prince or State or Pretence of Authority from any Person whatsoever such Offender and Offenders and every of them shall be deemed adjudged and taken to be Pirates Felons and Robbers . . . ^{F3}

Textual Amendments

F2 Words repealed by [British Nationality Act 1948 \(c. 56\), Sch. 4 Pt. 1](#)

F3 Words repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act 1948 \(c. 62\), Sch. 1](#)

VIII Commanders of Ships, &c. turning Pirate, &c. or attempting to corrupt other Commanders, &c.

And be it further enacted That if any Commander or Master of any Shipp or any Seaman or Marriner shall in any place where the Admirall hath Jurisdiction betray his Trust and turne Pirate Enemy or Rebell and piratically and feloniously run away with his or their Shipp or Shippes or any Barge Boate Ordnance Ammunition Goods or Merchandizes or yield them up voluntarily to any Pirate or shall bring any seduceing Messages from any Pirate Enemy or Rebell or consult combine or confederate with or attempt or endeavour to corrupt any Commander Master Officer or Marriner to yield up or run away with any Shipp Goods or Merchandizes or turne Pirate or goe over to Pirates or if any Person shall lay violent Hands on his Commander whereby to hinder him from fighting in Defence of his Shipp and Goods committed to his Trust or that shall confine his Master or make or endeavour to make a Revolt in the Shipp shall be adjudged deemed and taken to be a Pirate Felon and Robber . . . ^{F4}

Textual Amendments

F4 Words repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act 1948 \(c. 62\), Sch. 1](#)

IX, X. ^{F5}

Textual Amendments

F5 Ss. IX, X repealed by [Criminal Law Act 1967 \(c. 58\), Sch. 3 Pt. III](#)

XI When Officers and Seamen killed or wounded in defending Ship which shall be brought to Port, Judge of the Admiralty, &c. may levy £2 per Cent. upon

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the Owners, &c. for Benefit of such Officers and Seamen, or their Widows and Children, as herein mentioned.

And forasmuch as it will alsoe conduce to the suppressing of Robberies on the Sea if due Encouragement be given and Rewards allowed to such Commanders Masters and other Officers Seamen and Mariners as shall either bravely defend their owne Shipp or take seize and destroy Pirates Sea-Rovers and Enemies when any English Shipp shall have been defended against any Pirates Enemies or Sea-Rovers by Fight and brought to her designed Port in which Fight any of the Officers or Seamen shall have been killed or wounded it shall and may be lawfull to and for the Judge of His Majesties High Court of Admiralty or his Surrogate in the Port of London or the Mayor Bailiffe or Chief Officer in the severall Out-ports of this Kingdome upon the Petition of the Master or Seamen of such Shipp soe defended as aforesaid to call unto him Four or more good and substantiall Merchants and such as are no Adventurers or Owners of the Shipp or Goods soe defended and have no Manner of Interest therein and by Advice with them to raise and levy upon the respective Adventurers and Owners of the Shipp and Goods soe defended by Processe out of the said Court such Summe or Summs of Money as himselfe and the said Merchants by Plurality of Voices shall determine and judge reasonable not exceeding Two Pounds per Cent of the Freight and of the Shipp and Goods soe defended according to the first Costs of the Goods which Summe or Summs of Money soe raised shall be distributed among the Captaine Master Officers and Seamen of the said Shipp or Widows and Children of the slaine according to the Direction of the Judge of the said Court or his Surrogate in the Port of London or the Mayor Bayliffe or Chiefe Officer in the severall Out-Ports of this Kingdom with the Approbation of the Merchants aforesaid who shall proportion the same according to their best Judgement unto the Shippes Company as aforesaid having speciall Regard unto the Widows and Children of such as shall have beene slaine in that Service and such as have beene wounded or maimed.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2 Jurisdiction of High Court of Admiralty now exercisable by High Court: [Administration of Justice Act 1956 \(c. 46\), s. 1\(1\)](#)

XII Rewards to Informers, of Conspiracy to destroy or run away with Ship.

And for the better and more effectuall Prevention of Combinations and Confederacies for the running away with or destroying of any Shipp Goods or Merchandizes Be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That a Reward of Tenne Pounds for every Shipp or Vessell of One hundred Tons or under and Fifteene Pounds for every Shipp or Vessell of a greater Burden shall be paid by the Captaine Commander or Master of every Shipp or Vessell wherein any such Combination or Confederacy shall be sett on foot for the running away with or destroying any such Shipp or the Goods and Merchandizes therein laden to such Person as shall first make a Discovery thereof upon due Proove of such Combination or Confederacy the same to be paid at the Port where the Wages of the Seamen of the said Shipp are or ought to be paid after such Discovery and Proove made.

XIII F6

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Textual Amendments

F6 S. 13 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1867 (c. 59)

XIV ^{F7}

Textual Amendments

F7 S. 14 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1948 (c. 62), **Sch. 1**

XV ^{F8}

Textual Amendments

F8 S. 15 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1867 (c. 59)

XVI, ^{F9}
XVII.

Textual Amendments

F9 Ss. 16, 17 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1948 (c. 62), **Sch. 1**

XVIII ^{F10}

Textual Amendments

F10 S. 18 repealed by the Act 9 Geo. 4 c. 31, s. 1

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