
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1976 No. 1040

Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1976

Interpretation

2.—(1) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 shall apply to Article 1 and the following provisions of this Order as it applies to a Measure of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

(2) For the purposes of this Order—

(a) a dangerous species of animal is a species—

(i) which is not commonly domesticated in the British Islands; and

(ii) whose fully grown animals normally have such characteristics that they are likely, unless restrained, to cause severe damage or that any damage they may cause is likely to be severe;

(b) subject to sub-paragraph (c), a person is a keeper of an animal if—

(i) he owns the animal or has it in his possession; or

(ii) he is the head of a household of which a member under the age of sixteen owns the animal or has it in his possession;

and if at any time an animal ceases to be owned by or to be in the possession of a person, any person who immediately before that time was a keeper thereof by virtue of the preceding provisions of this sub-paragraph continues to be a keeper of the animal until another person becomes a keeper thereof by virtue of those provisions;

(c) where an animal is taken into and kept in possession for the purpose of preventing it from causing damage or of restoring it to its owner, a person is not a keeper of it by virtue only of that possession.

(3) In this Order—

“damage” includes the death of, or injury to, any person (including any disease and any impairment of physical or mental condition);

“fault” has the same meaning as in the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1948 ;

“fencing” includes the construction of any obstacle designed to prevent animals from straying;

“livestock” means cattle, horses, asses, mules, hinnies, sheep, pigs, goats and poultry, and also deer not in the wild state and, in Article 8 also, while in captivity, pheasants, partridges, grouse and quails;

“nearest police station” means the police station nearest to the place where the animal was found;

“occupier” in relation to land, includes any person who, by virtue of any agreement, has a right to the exclusive use of the land for cropping or grazing;

“police force” has the same meaning as in section 35 of the Police Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 ;

“poultry” means the domestic varieties of the following, that is to say, fowls, turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea-fowls, pigeons and peacocks;

“premises” includes land;

“public road” includes any highway;

Changes to legislation: *Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, Section 2 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 28 May 2023. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

“species” includes sub-species and variety;

“structure” means any fixed or movable structure and includes any vessel, vehicle or aircraft.

Changes to legislation:

Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, Section 2 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 28 May 2023. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

[View outstanding changes](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- Instrument am. (prosp.) by [1998 c. 32 s.74\(1\)Sch.4 para. 11](#)