

Based on the California statutes reflected in the Animal Legal Defense Fund's 2025 California compendium, here is a concise summary of the potential penalties **if William Ohlson is convicted** of the charges currently filed. The compendium explains that both Penal Code §§ 597(a) and 597(b) are "wobbler" offenses, meaning prosecutors may pursue either misdemeanor or felony convictions depending on the facts of the case.

Potential Sentence if Convicted

Penal Code § 597(a) – Maliciously and intentionally killing, maiming, mutilating, torturing or wounding an animal

- Wobbler offense (misdemeanor or felony)
- **Misdemeanor:** Up to **1 year in county jail** and/or a **fine of up to \$20,000**
- **Felony:** Up to **3 years in state prison** and/or a **fine of up to \$20,000**

Penal Code § 597(b) – Overdriving, overworking, torturing, tormenting, cruelly beating, or otherwise subjecting an animal to cruelty or neglect

- Also a wobbler
- **Misdemeanor:** Up to **1 year in county jail** and/or a **fine of up to \$20,000**
- **Felony:** Up to **3 years in state prison** and/or a **fine of up to \$20,000**

Penal Code § 148(a)(1) – Resisting, delaying, or obstructing a peace officer

- This is generally a **misdemeanor** punishable by **up to one year in county jail** and/or a fine under California law.

Additional Consequences

If convicted under Penal Code § 597, the court may also impose:

- **Mandatory counseling** if probation is granted.
- The court must **consider ordering a psychological evaluation and a higher level of treatment.**
- **Immediate forfeiture of any lawfully seized animals.**
- An **animal ownership ban** of **5 years after certain misdemeanor convictions** or **10 years after a felony conviction**, unless later modified by the court.

Overall Exposure

Because the two animal cruelty charges are separate felony-capable offenses, **the theoretical maximum exposure could exceed three years** if the court were to impose consecutive felony sentences. However, **California sentencing rules are complex**, and whether sentences run concurrently or consecutively depends on factors such as the specific conduct, whether the offenses are found to arise from the same act, the defendant's criminal history, and the judge's sentencing decisions. It would not be accurate to simply add the maximum sentence for each charge together.

