South Carolina
STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Henry D. McMaster, Governor
Mark A. Keel, Chief

P.O. Box 21398
Columbia, South Carolina
29221-1398

WWW.SLED.SC.GOV
(803) 737-9000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 6, 2026

Renée Wunderlich
Director of Public Information

SLED HELPS RESCUE 11 DOGS, CHARGES RICHLAND COUNTY MAN WITH ANIMAL FIGHTING AND ILL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) charged Thomas Hoefer, 57, with Animal Fighting and Ill Treatment of Animals on Friday, November 6, 2026. SLED partnered with the Richland County Sheriff's Department, the Columbia Police Department, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). The ASPCA transported 11 dogs for medical evaluation and treatment.

Details can be found in the attached warrants.

Hoefer was booked into the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center in Richland County.

The case will be prosecuted by the 5th Circuit Solicitor's Office.

SLED's investigation is active and ongoing at this time. Anyone with information about possible dogfighting in South Carolina can submit a tip to SLED by emailing tips@sled.sc.gov.

Please see photos below.





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SLED news releases are published on SLED's website: www.sled.sc.gov
For media inquiries, please email SLED's Public Information Office: pio@sled.sc.gov

ARREST WARRANT

2026A4010205569

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Richland Bond Court

THE STATE 2026-05921

against

Thomas T Hoefer

Address: [redacted]

Hopkins, SC 29061-

Phone: SSN: [redacted]

Sex: M Race: B Height: 5 7 Weight: 195

DL State: SC DL #: [redacted]

DOB: [redacted]1969 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Douglas G Mcelwain - S04025

Offense: Animals / Animal Fighting or Baiting Act, penalty

Offense Code: 0540

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-27-0030

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the

[ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of

. The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date:

RETURN

A copy of this arrest warrant was delivered to defendant Thomas Hoefer on 11/6/26

Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

RETURN WARRANT TO:

Richland County General Sessions
1701 Main Street
P O Box 192
Columbia, SC 29202

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AFFIDAVIT

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Form Approved by S.C. Attorney General April 21, 2005 SCCA 518

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Richland Bond Court

Personally appeared before me the affiant Douglas G Mcelwain who being duly sworn deposes and says that defendant Thomas T Hoefer did within this county and state on or about 11/6/2026 violate the criminal laws of the State of South Carolina (or ordinance of [X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Richland Bond Court) in the following particulars:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Animals / Animal Fighting or Baiting Act, penalty

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

On or about 11/06/26, the Defendant, Thomas Thurston Hoefer, did violate the Animal Fighting and Baiting Act at [redacted]Goodside Road, Hopkins, SC, in Richland County. Facts to establish: On 11/06/26, SLED executed a search warrant at the property and found 11 dogs. Property records show Hoefer is the owner of the property and identified himself as the owner of the dogs. A forensic vet examined the dogs and found multiple dogs had scarring consistent with organized dogfighting. Items consistent with dogfighting were found during the execution of the search warrant. One of these items was a slat mill. A slat mill is like a treadmill. Unlike a treadmill which has a motor running the track, the track of a slat mill is on rollers. Slat mills are used by dogfighters to train and condition dogs prior to a fight. Hoefer is charged with violating the Animal Fighting and Baiting Act because multiple dogs on his property had scarring consistent with organized dogfighting.

Signature of Affiant

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Richland Bond Court

Affiant's Address: P. O. Box 21398
Columbia, SC 29221-

Affiant's Telephone:

ARREST WARRANT

TO ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THIS STATE OR MUNICIPALITY OR ANY CONSTABLE OF THIS COUNTY:

It appearing from the above affidavit that there are reasonable grounds to believe that on or about 11/6/2026 defendant Thomas T Hoefer did violate the criminal laws of the State of South Carolina (or ordinance of [X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Richland Bond Court) as set forth below:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Animals / Animal Fighting or Baiting Act, penalty

Having found probable cause and the above affiant having sworn before me, you are empowered and directed to arrest the said defendant and bring him or her before me forthwith to be dealt with according to law. A copy of this Arrest Warrant shall be delivered to the defendant at the time of its execution, or as soon thereafter as is practicable

Sworn to and subscribed before me on 11/6/2026

(L.S.)

Signature of Issuing Judge

LaTonya B. Derrick

Judge Code: 7451

Judge's Address: Richland County Central Bond Court
Columbia, SC 29209-

Judge's Telephone: (803)576-3281

Issuing Court: [X] Magistrate [ ] Municipal [ ] Circuit

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ARREST WARRANT

2026A4010205570

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Richland Bond Court

THE STATE 2026-05921

against

Thomas T Hoefer

Address: [redacted]

Hopkins, SC 29061-

Phone: SSN [redacted]

Sex: M Race: B Height: 5 7 Weight: 195

DL State: SC DL #: [redacted]

DOB: [redacted]1969 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Douglas G Mcelwain - S04025

Offense: Animals / Ill treatment of animals in general, torture

Offense Code: 2804

Code/Ordinance Sec: 47-01-0040(B)

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the

[ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of

. The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date:

RETURN

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Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

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Richland County General Sessions
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P O Box 192
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Form Approved by S.C. Attorney General April 21, 2003 SCCA 519

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[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)

Richland Bond Court)

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DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Animals / Ill treatment of animals in general, torture

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

On or about 11/06/26, the Defendant, Thomas Thurston Hoefer, committed the offense of Ill-treatment of Animals at [redacted]Goodside Road, Hopkins, SC, in Richland County. Facts to establish: On 11/06/26, SLED executed a search warrant at the property and found 11 dogs. Property records show Hoefer is the owner of the property and he identified himself as the owner of the dogs. A vet examined the dogs and found multiple dogs had scarring consistent with organized dogfighting. Items consistent with dogfighting were found during the execution of the search warrant. One of these items was a slat mill. A slat mill is like a treadmill. Unlike a treadmill which has a motor running the track, the track of a slat mill is on rollers. Slat mills are used by dogfighters to train and condition their dogs prior to a fight. Hoefer is charged with Ill-treatment of Animals because multiple dogs on his property had scarring consistent with organized dogfighting.

Signature of Affiant

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)

Richland Bond Court)

Affiant's Address P. O. Box 21398
Columbia, SC 29221-

Affiant's Telephone

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