



74 greyhound deaths logged by Florida race tracks after new reporting law goes into effect

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Florida's dog-racing tracks and racing kennels are now reporting the number of greyhounds that die on their grounds under a new state law that took effect last spring -- the first time in the industry's 80-plus years in the state that such numbers are being publicly revealed.

The Miami Herald reports 74 greyhounds died at Florida's 13 dog-racing tracks in the final seven months of 2013, or one every three days, according to an analysis of the newly mandated statistics.

"According to the death notices reviewed by Grey2K, a Massachusetts-based advocacy group committed to ending greyhound racing, a total of 31 greyhounds died or were euthanized for racing-related reasons -- from injuries, suspected heatstroke and unknown causes," The Herald writes.

"Another 17 deaths appeared to be racing-related, based on the comments that the dogs fell, collided or were hit during the race."

The Florida law mandating the industry to officially cite a greyhound's death within 18 hours was reportedly passed in 2010, but still does not require tracks and kennels to notify the state of dog injuries, as is done, elsewhere.

There are now reportedly 21 greyhound tracks operating in the U.S., although The Herald writes the industry is currently suffering through a 25-year-long drawback in attendance, wagering and profits.

The newspaper cites Spectrum Gaming Group -- a New Jersey-based research firm hired by Florida officials to study the industry in the Sunshine State -- in writing the greyhound racing industry logged almost \$1 billion in wagers in Florida in 1990, but that figure had fallen to just more than \$260 million by 2012.

According to the Herald review, Derby Lane in St. Petersburg and the Daytona Beach Kennel Club logged the most greyhound deaths on their grounds over the period from May 31 to Dec. 31, 2013 -- 12 each.

The Florida Greyhound Association, an industry lobby, reportedly opposes extending the new law to the mandatory reporting of dog injuries, and instead favors state-mandated infrastructure improvements at dog-racing tracks that they say would ultimately improve safety for the animals.

Meanwhile, Cary Theil, Grey2K's executive director, told The Herald, "In the states where we have passed greyhound injury reporting laws, the number of dogs euthanized has declined significantly.

"In Massachusetts, the number of greyhounds that were killed dropped by 43 percent in the first year after passage of an injury reporting law."

Click for the story from the Miami Herald.