

## **James Island vet accused of abusing, killing cat**

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A James Island veterinarian has been accused of abusing and ultimately killing one of his feline patients.

Dr. Thomas Sheridan, owner and operator of Folly Road Animal Hospital, was charged Friday with ill treatment of animals.

Deputies said Sheridan is accused of striking a cat's head against a surgical table while treating the cat for an abscessed tooth. The cat died, deputies said.

An employee at the animal hospital, Toni Zotto, signed a statement that she had witnessed the attack, according to the Charleston County Sheriff's incident report.

Sheridan denies the accusation, according to his lawyer, Peter Beck.

"He's shocked. He's never been accused of anything before," Beck said. "He denies it happened."

Magistrate Jack Guedalia set bail at \$21,850.

Sheridan, who is the South Carolina Aquarium's chief animal care consultant, told the judge that he has operated his clinic on James Island for three years.

State veterinarian officials suspended Sheridan's license Friday pending the outcome of his case, Beck and Sheridan said. A necropsy of the cat was to be performed at the John Anchrum Society for the Prevention of Criminal to Animals. Officials there declined to comment on the case Friday.

Pam Ruff said she had sent her 5-year-old cat, Ande, to the animal hospital to have a tooth pulled and his teeth cleaned. When she called the office at 11:30 a.m. on Aug. 4, she said she was told her cat was fine.

But at 1 p.m., the office called and said her cat had died. Several hours later, law enforcement authorities informed her of the accusation against Sheridan.