

SPCA[®] Kids

Kind Matters

News

Term 3 2025

Welcome to the Term 3 issue of Kind Matters!

This issue is all about natural behaviours - the awesome things animals do. You'll also find fun activities, instructions for making an emergency pet plan, info about our photography competition, top photography tips and much more. Let's go!



Get your finger ready because it's that time again - the Kind Matters Photography Competition is back!

This year's photography competition is all about animals doing what comes naturally - animals being animals!

We want to see animals being themselves – showing off their **natural behaviours!** Think cats scratching, dogs digging, goats climbing, or birds preening. Your photo can be of *any* animal, as long as it captures them doing something instinctive that helps them **feel good** and express who they are – behaviours that support their positive welfare.

To enter and for Terms and Conditions, visit the Kids' Portal: www.spca.nz/kindmatters



Thank you to our competition sponsor, XP, for the amazing grand prize, and EUGY by Dodoland for our spot prizes.

WIN AN IPAD!
(worth over \$700)
or 1 of 5 Digital Cameras
Sponsored by



What's Inside



Natural Behaviours:

What are they and why are they so important?



SPCA Kids' News:

Read the latest animal news from around NZ!



Kind Conservation Craft:

Create cosy bug hotels for your neighbours in the wild.

and much more...



Visit www.spca.nz/kids for more animal information!





Celebrating Natural Behaviours



Have you ever had a really itchy mosquito bite and scratched it? Or felt so full of energy that you had to run, jump, or play a game? That's you expressing your natural behaviours!

Animals have natural behaviours too. These are things animals need to do - not just to stay healthy, but also to feel happy and comfortable. As animal guardians, it's up to us to give them the chance to do these things every day.



Birds bathing

What is a natural behaviour?

A natural behaviour is something an animal would normally do in the wild or in a natural environment. It might help them survive, like building a nest or hunting for food. It might also simply feel really good, like rolling in the grass or having a dust bath.

Some examples include:

- A dog sniffing and exploring during a walk
- A cat scratching to stretch and keep their claws healthy
- A rabbit digging and burrowing



Why are natural behaviours important?

Natural behaviours help animals feel good, both physically and emotionally.

They:

- Reduce boredom
- Relieve stress or anxiety
- Let animals explore and have fun
- Keep their bodies and brains active
- Make life more interesting and enjoyable

When animals don't get to express these behaviours, it can make them feel frustrated, stressed or even sick. Imagine if you were never allowed to talk, play, run, or do any of the things you love - it would be awful!



Goats climbing

For example:

- If a cat can't scratch, they might damage furniture trying to find a way to do it
- If a bird is kept in a small cage and can't fly, they may become bored, pluck their feathers, or

stop eating properly.

That's why it's so important for animal guardians to create spaces and routines that allow animals to express these natural behaviours in safe and positive ways.

What if animals do things we don't like?

Sometimes animals do natural things that don't always fit in with our homes - like digging up the garden, chewing shoes, or scratching the couch. But they're not being "naughty" - they're just being animals!

Instead of telling them off, we should give them better ways to do those same things, such as a chew toys instead of your shoes, or a scratching post instead of your couch.

How can we help?

Just like people need ways to move, play, and relax, animals need their own ways to stay happy and healthy. Here are three simple things you can do to help your animal companions express their natural behaviours:

1. **Exercise:** Animals need regular physical activity to stay strong and healthy!
2. **Enrichment:** Enrichment is all about keeping life interesting! It means giving animals toys, puzzles, or activities that let them think, play, and explore.
3. **Companionship:** Some animals are very social and need the company of their own kind.



Pig wallowing in mud



Dog digging

SPCA's Top Photography Tips

Want to learn how to create the very best shot of your animal friend? Check out these great tips below!



Hold your camera steady. If you shake or move too much you might end up with a blurry image.



Pay attention to the background. Make sure it complements the animal and doesn't distract.



Get on the animal's level to help you and the viewer see things from the animal's world.



Think about lighting to make sure that you can see the animal clearly.



Take care and make sure the animal is having a positive experience.



Have fun! Get creative, experiment and make sure the animal is having fun too!



Fill in the Blanks

Read the sentences and fill in the missing word. Only use each word once and cross them out as you fill in the blanks.



decrease

behavioural

negative

important

1. Animals have many different types of needs to fulfil for positive welfare. These include mental needs, health needs and _____ needs.
2. If an animal can't express their natural behaviours, it can have a _____ impact on their welfare.
3. Expressing natural behaviours helps animals _____ boredom, stress and anxiety.
4. It's _____ that we know what behaviours our animals need to express, so that we can provide them with opportunities to do so.



Learn more about natural behaviours [here](#)



Match the Natural Behaviour

Draw a line to match each of the behaviours to the correct animal.

basking

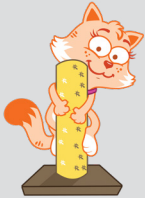
scratching

dust bathing

socialising

swimming

chasing



The Five Domains

The Five Domains are five important things to think about when looking after animals and making sure they have good welfare. They help us make sure animals have everything they need to feel good and live happy, healthy lives.

The first four domains are:

- **Nutrition** - E.g. having the right food and clean water
- **Environment** - E.g. having a safe, comfy place to live
- **Health** - E.g. staying healthy, regular vet visits, and immediate vet care if sick or injured
- **Behaviour** - E.g. being able to do natural things, like play or explore

These four things all affect the fifth domain, which is the animal's **mental wellbeing** – how they feel.

Good animal guardians make sure animals have more good experiences than bad ones. That means happy feelings, good health, and a life that's worth living!



Nutrition
food and water



Environment



Health



Behaviour

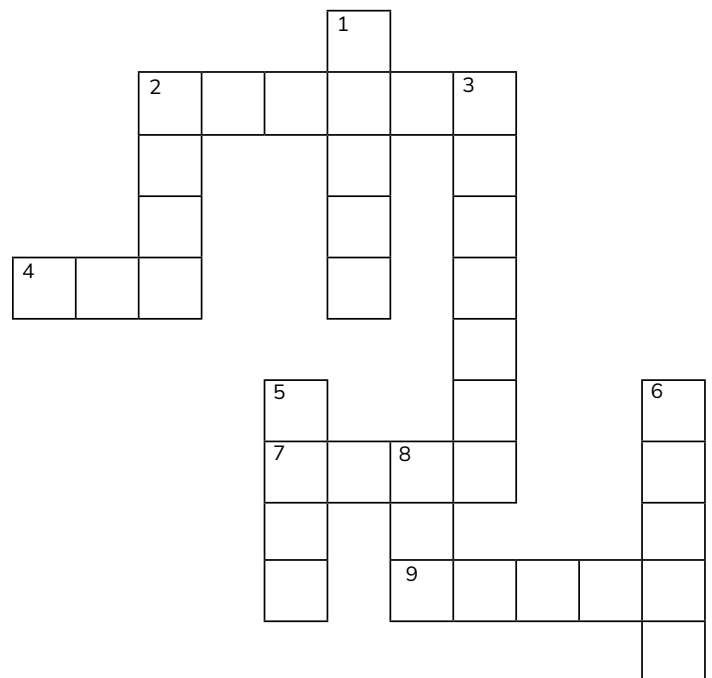


Mental Wellbeing
feelings and emotions

Visit the
Five Domains
section of
SPCA's Kids'
Portal to learn
more

Crossword

Use the clues to solve the crossword puzzle!



ACROSS

2. Kittens do this when they're practising their hunting skills.
4. Birds do this to get around or escape danger.
7. A natural behaviour that helps animals feel safe.
9. What animals do to clean themselves or each other.

DOWN

1. A natural way dogs explore the world with their nose.
2. A fun way young animals practise important skills.
3. Animals do this to learn about their environment.
5. Some puppies do this a lot.
6. Cats do this to get to high places.
8. What rabbits do in the dirt.

Helping SPCA Animals: David & Daniel's Toy-Making Mission

Brothers, David and Daniel, love animals, so when they had the chance to help SPCA, they jumped at it! They decided to make fun enrichment toys for animals in need, giving them something to play with and express their natural behaviours while they wait for their forever homes.



Daniel says they chose to support SPCA because it helps animals who need extra care, like those who are injured or homeless. David is a vegetarian because he wants to protect animals, but he was excited to find another way to help them.

Coming up with toy ideas was a mix of research and imagination. Daniel searched the [Kids' Portal](#) for inspiration

and made sure to use safe materials. He especially loved making an animal tower - a creative project using cardboard, toilet paper rolls, glue, and even a tiny slide, a party floor, and a sofa! He even added a snuffle ball for extra fun.



How did it feel knowing their toys would help animals in need? "I felt really happy and fuzzy all around," says David. He loves knowing that his hard work is making a difference.

David encourages other kids to give it a try. "If you don't enjoy making one toy, try another until you find one you like. It's always nice to have fun while helping animals!"

Thank you David and Daniel for your fantastic enrichment toys

**Are you a pawesome supporter?
Have you done something to
help animals in need? We'd love
to hear about it! Email us at
education@spca.nz**



Emergency Pet Plan

Emergencies can happen at any time - like earthquakes, floods, or even fires. Just like you have a plan to keep yourself safe, it's super important to have a plan in place for your animals too.

Being prepared is one of the best ways to care for animals. That means having a pet emergency kit ready (with food, water, medication, and a lead or carrier), knowing where your animals might hide if they get frightened, and making sure an adult knows what your pet needs.

Animals can get stressed during emergencies, so it helps if you stay calm, quiet, and gentle around them. Dogs might bark more or try to escape. Cats might hide under furniture. Be patient - and never leave your pets behind if your family has to evacuate!

[The Great New Zealand ShakeOut](#) is coming up on Thursday 16 October 2025! It's our national earthquake drill and tsunami hīkoi (evacuation). Join in and make sure your whānau includes your pets in your plan.

On the next page, you can create your very own Emergency Pet Plan to help keep your animals safe. Fill it in with an adult and keep it somewhere easy to find.

Visit the **Animals in Emergencies** section on the **Kids' Portal** to learn more!





Emergency Pet Plan

Keep this somewhere easy to find - like on the fridge!



Pet Details

Name of pet: _____

Type of animal: _____

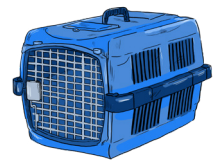
Breed/colour/markings: _____

My pet's photo (draw or stick here)

Pet's Guardian

Name: _____

Phone number: _____



Emergency Contact

Name: _____

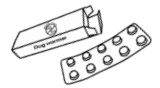
Phone number: _____



Veterinarian

Vet clinic name: _____

Vet's phone number: _____



Dietary Information

Types of food I eat: _____






How much: _____

How often: _____

Medications or Allergies

Medications I need (and when): _____

I am allergic to: _____

The Five Domains	Examples of what you need:
Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food, bottled water, bowls, treats
Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shelter, blanket, bedding
Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medication, animal first-aid kit, vaccination history
Behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toys, lead, collar/harness
Mental Wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comfort, companionship, love



Make sure you remember to include these things in your emergency kit!



Visit the [Kids' Portal](#) to learn how to help your farmed animals in an emergency.



We'd love to see your work! Take a photo of your emergency pet plan and send it to: education@spca.nz



Thousands Support Fireworks Ban

More than 90,000 people and their pets have spoken. The Pawprint Petition, launched by Animates last year was handed over to Parliament this year on June 3rd. It calls for a ban on the public sale of fireworks, with 93,248 human signatures and 79,904 extra "signatures" from animals!

The 79,904 digital paw prints, hoof marks, and even bird feet were added to show that animals are the ones truly affected by fireworks. While these animal signatures aren't official, they send a powerful message: our animals are scared, hurt, and in danger.

Fireworks might look fun to us, but for animals, they can be terrifying. Loud bangs and bright flashes can cause animals to panic and run away, get hurt, abandon nests or even die. Farm animals and wildlife suffer too - and not just on Guy Fawkes night. People often stockpile fireworks and set them off randomly, so animals don't get a break.

SPCA's scientific officer Alison Vaughan says the damage is very real. "Horses cut



A cat hiding under a blanket.

up in fences, dogs running through panes of glass - we've seen it all," she says. "Pets are just the tip of the iceberg though. Fireworks are impacting animals all across New Zealand: birds, farm animals and marine life."

The petition was handed to National MP Greg Fleming and NZ First MP Jenny Marcroft on the steps of Parliament. Fleming says the huge number of signatures proves that Kiwis care deeply about animal welfare.

So what happens now? A special group of MPs called a Select Committee will review the petition. They'll think about what the petition is asking for and make recommendations to the Government about what should happen next.

In the meantime, Vaughan says it's important to keep speaking up for animals, "Animal welfare should be something we all protect - together."

Lost dog found safe after flood adventure

In late May wild weather caused heavy flooding across parts of the South Island, including Brightwater near Nelson. Roads were damaged, homes were evacuated - and one family's beloved dog went missing

On a Monday afternoon, 8-year-old Shiva the dog fell into a fast-flowing drain and was swept away by the water. Her owner, Chloe Sellers, was heartbroken and said it all happened so quickly. "It was like a whirlpool," she said.

Chloe and her family searched for hours, even looking at maps to figure out where the drain might lead. They posted online asking for help and that's when local kids jumped in to help too!

A whole group of people in the community joined the search, and nearly 24 hours later, Chloe got the best phone call ever: Shiva had been found alive.

"I was crying and screaming," Chloe said. "Then I saw Shiva running toward me, super happy, like nothing had happened. Her tail was wagging, and she looked like she'd just been off on an adventure!"

Chloe said she was amazed by how many people helped. "The whole community came together. It was really special." Thanks to teamwork and kindness, this story had a very happy ending!



Shiva was lost for nearly 24 hours (photo credit The New Zealand Herald)



Flooding in Riwaka, near Motueka. (photo credit The New Zealand Herald)

Hen-Shaped Tree Up For NZ Tree of the Year!

In the hills of North Otago, just off State Highway 1, there's a tree that's been turning heads for over 50 years - and it looks just like a giant chicken!

Locals call it the Chook Tree, and it's a legend in the small town of Waianakarua. The huge macrocarpa has a curved neck, a round body, and a tail plume. It even has an "egg" - a Moeraki boulder tucked under its tail!

The chicken shape was first spotted in 1978 by local chicken farmers Norman and Evelyn Clarke after a storm damaged the tree. Since then, it's become a proud symbol of the town, known as "Henrietta" or "Big Chicken."

Now, it's back in the spotlight as it has just been crowned the winner of the 2025 New Zealand Tree of the Year competition

Brad Cadwallader, a trustee at the NZ Notable Trees Trust, says the contest celebrates special trees that bring communities together.

So, if you're driving through North Otago, keep an eye out for Henrietta - New Zealand's official Tree of the Year.



The tree is just off SH1 in Waitaki district. (photo credit stuff.co.nz)



Kind Habitats for Wild Neighbours



Just like our pets, animals in the wild have natural behaviours they need to express to stay happy and healthy.

By creating kind habitats in your backyard or school, you can support the insects, birds, and other wild creatures that share our environment. Insects, for example, are tiny but mighty helpers - they pollinate plants, keep the soil healthy, and help control pests. One easy way to support them is by making your very own bug hotel!

Follow the steps below to build a safe and cosy space for these important wild neighbours.

Materials

Bug hotels can be made out of many different natural and recycled materials. Have a look around your garden or local park, and in the recycling bin for materials to use.

Recycled materials you could use:

- Glass jar
- Ice cream container
- Milk carton
- Cardboard
- Twine or string



Natural materials you could use:

- Leaves
- Moss
- Bark
- Sticks



Instructions

- 1 Gather the materials you will use.
- 2 Clean the recycled items well before you start.
- 3 Start to build the hotel, fill the container with the natural materials.
- 4 Get creative and design a sign for your bug hotel.
- 5 Place the finished bug hotel in your garden.



Activity Answer Key:

Fill in the Blanks - page 3

1. behavioural
2. negative
3. decrease
4. important



SPCA

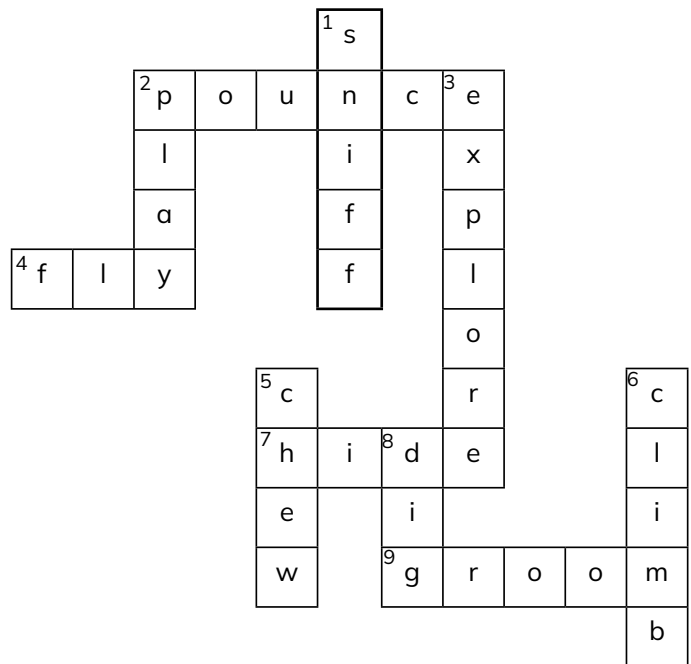
Cupcake Day - coming soon!

Ready to whip out the mixing bowls? SPCA Cupcake Day is back on September 17th! Whether you're baking, fundraising, or just enjoying a sweet treat, there's a way for everyone to join in.

You can visit <https://cupcakeday.sPCA.nz> for more information about Cupcake Day.



Crossword - page 4



Match the Natural Behaviour - page 4

basking

scratching

dust bathing

socialising

swimming

chasing



SPCA Education Webinars - Term 3

Have you heard of SPCA Education Webinars?

During these fun, interesting, and educational 30-minute webinars you will learn about a variety of topics, including animal welfare, responsible animal guardianship, and the role SPCA plays in the community!

Ask your teacher or parent/guardian to visit www.sPCA.nz/schools and register for a world of animal welfare!



Is there something you'd like to see in the next issue of Kind Matters?

We'd love to hear from you!

Email education@spca.nz with your ideas!

Share your ideas!

