

SPCA® Kids

Kind Matters

News

Term 1 2026

Kia ora to our amazing animal-loving superheroes!

In this issue of Kind Matters, we're exploring how tamariki can be animal superheroes in everyday ways. The best part? You don't need superpowers to make a big difference for animals. We've packed this issue with helpful tips on how you can be an amazing animal guardian and care for the animals within your family and community.

Get ready for fascinating facts, creative crafts and fun activities to enjoy! Plus, don't miss our **NEW** competition, where you can share your ideas for being an animal hero!



Hey there, pawesome Kiwi creators! Ready to show off your super skills? Our new Animal Superhero Drawing Competition is here! Imagine yourself as an animal guardian - maybe you're rescuing a furry friend, feeding a hungry pet, protecting the environment or simply showing kindness to animals in the wild. You can draw it any way you like: realistic, superhero-style or totally imaginative!

Remember to add a short description telling us how you're being a superhero for animals, and you could WIN amazing prizes!

You can find the entry sheet at the end of this issue of Kind Matters or on the Kids' Portal, and make sure you enter by Sunday 19th April 2026.

For Terms and Conditions and for more details, visit: www.sPCA.nz/kindmatters

Get creative, have fun and show us your superhero powers!

What's Inside



Be a Superhero for Animals - Learn why animals need heroes and how to be a pawesome animal guardian.



Animal Care Chart - Fill in the chart to keep track of all the ways you care for your animals.



Craft: Cardboard Tube Hay Toy Create the perfect boredom buster for your furry friends.

and much more...



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



Be an Animal Hero!



Become the Superhero Every Animal Needs!

Do you enjoy playing fetch with your dog or brushing your cat's soft fur? If you have animals at home or want to learn how to be the BEST animal guardian you can be, this section is for you!

Animals need heroes every day - and that hero could be YOU! Being an animal guardian means helping animals stay happy, healthy and safe. You don't need superpowers - just kindness and care.

Why Do Animals Need Heroes?

Animals aren't toys, and they're definitely not funny-looking humans! Animals are living, breathing creatures with their own personalities and feelings. Yes, they feel - just like we do!

- They feel **pain** when they're hurt.
- They feel **hunger** when they need food.
- They feel **fear** when something scares them.
- They feel **happiness** when they're cared for.
- They feel **loneliness** when they're left alone too long.



When we understand why animals do what they do, and what they need to stay healthy and happy, we can be the best guardians possible.

What Does Being an Animal Guardian Mean?

It means:

- Caring for their needs - food, water, shelter and love.
- Keeping them safe - regular vet checks and making sure their home is clean and secure.
- Respecting their feelings - never hurting or scaring them.
- Protecting their world - keeping beaches, parks and forests clean so wildlife can thrive.

Every time you feed your pet, give them fresh water, play with them or help protect nature, you're being an animal hero!

Top Tips for Animal Heroes

Want to be a true guardian? Here are some easy ways:

- **Fresh clean water every day** - it's as important as food!
- **Clean homes** - whether it's a hutch, aquarium, paddock or kennel, keep it tidy.
- **Play time matters** - animals need fun and exercise to stay happy.
- **Wildlife safety** - never feed wild animals human food; it can harm them.
- **Protect nature** - pick up your rubbish and recycle to keep habitats safe.

Design Your Animal Hero Badge

Every hero needs a badge!

Draw and colour your very own animal hero badge. You could:

- Add a paw print, your favourite animals or a superhero symbol.
- Write your superhero name.
- Add a fun motto like "Kindness is a Superpower!"





Animal Care Chart



As well as buying things animals need, it's important to spend time looking after them too. It takes time to feed and keep them company, clean their bowls, toys, bedding and enclosures, give them exercise and play with them.

Sometimes, when we're busy having fun, it can be easy to forget our responsibilities - like cleaning. That's why it's also important to have a responsible adult helping us to make sure animals are always well cared for.

Our animals need us to feed and take care of them, so it's very important we don't forget! This Animal Care Chart will help remind you of the jobs you need to do to take good care of your animal.



1. Print out the 'Animal Care Chart' on the next page or create your own one on blank paper.



2. Draw symbols of the jobs you need to do to care for your animal(s).



3. Put it somewhere where you will see every day to remind you of the jobs you need to do to help care for your animal.



4. Tick your chores off as you do them each day.



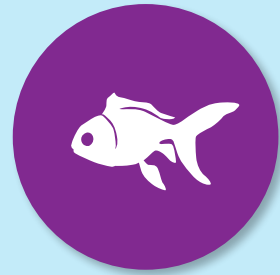
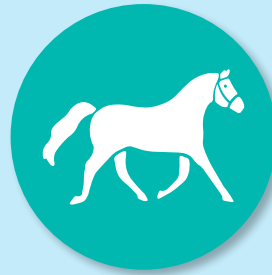
Caring for Animals

Animals are amazing friends, but they need more than food and water - they need YOU! Your time, care and attention make all the difference. Some pets need exercise and fun activities, others need special homes or regular vet visits to stay healthy.

Curious about how to care for different animals? Check out the [Kids' Portal!](#) It's full of cool info and videos about companion and wild animals - from cats and dogs to turtles, birds and more!



Animal Care Chart



Name: _____ Date: _____

Animal Name: _____

Responsibility

M

T

W

T

F

S

S

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Notes:



A Big Thank You to Our Book Review Stars!

Kia ora tamariki! A huge thank you to everyone who entered the Animal Book Review Competition. Your entries were amazing, and the range of books you reviewed blew us away!

Check out the winning entry from Jimmy, age 8! He shared amazing information about his chosen book, drew a fantastic illustration of his favourite part and we especially loved his message about how important it is to protect creatures in need.

You can see Jimmy pictured below, proudly enjoying his prize pack - tino pai and well done, Jimmy!

**Animal Book Review
COMPETITION!**

Choose a book about animals (it could be a picture book, a short story, or even a non-fiction/fact book). Then tell us what you think! Complete the book review below - and don't forget to add lots of detail!

Did you like the book? ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Title: Dog Town

Author: Katherine Applegate and Gennifer Choldenko

Illustrator: Wallace West

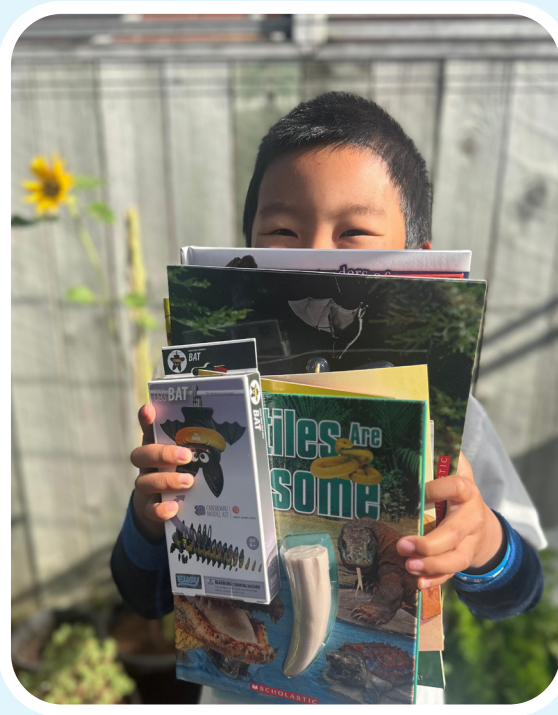
Genre: Fiction

What was the book about? What was your favourite part? Why?

The book is about three animal friends: a three-legged cat, a mouse, and a robot dog. With their hearts filled with hope, they embarked on a journey to find a home, experiencing a three-legged life, escaping a dog shelter, walking in winter, being locked in a furniture store, and finding friends. I love the part when they were united with their families, wise words were said and friendship was made.

Reading about this/these animal(s) made me feel...
sad when they were lost in the cold. I felt happy when they were back where they belong - home. After the story, I feel we have to protect those creatures in need. Even

Draw your favourite part or favourite animal from the book:

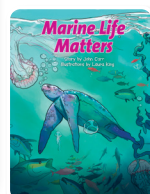
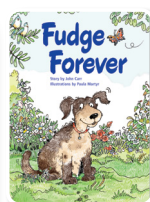
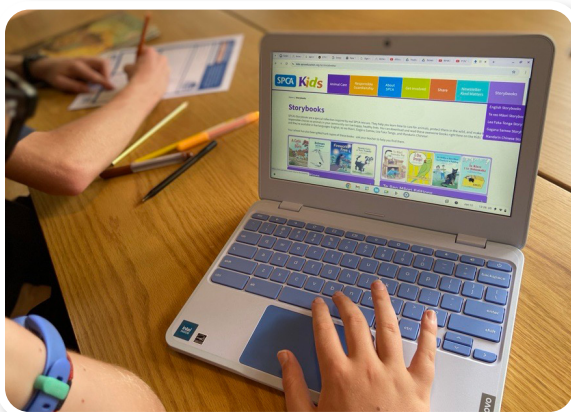


Storybooks - new on the Kids' Portal!

SPCA's Storybooks take you on fun, exciting adventures where you'll learn how to care for animals and be a true animal guardian! Each story explores kindness, empathy and keeping animals happy, healthy and safe.

Download and read these awesome books on the Kids' Portal, and they're available in five languages: English, te reo Māori, Gagana Samoa, Lea Faka-Tonga and Mandarin Chinese!

Your school has also been gifted hard copies of these books - ask your teacher to help you find them.



Fun Animal Facts

1. Cats use their whiskers like superhero senses to feel their way around in the dark and judge if they can fit through spaces.
2. Dogs have an incredible sense of smell and can even detect changes in our body chemistry when we're happy or sad.
3. Octopuses are so smart they can open jars and solve puzzles!
4. Pigs are as clever as dogs - they can learn tricks, play games and even recognise their own names!
5. Sheep can remember and recognise up to 50 different faces for years!





Spot the Difference



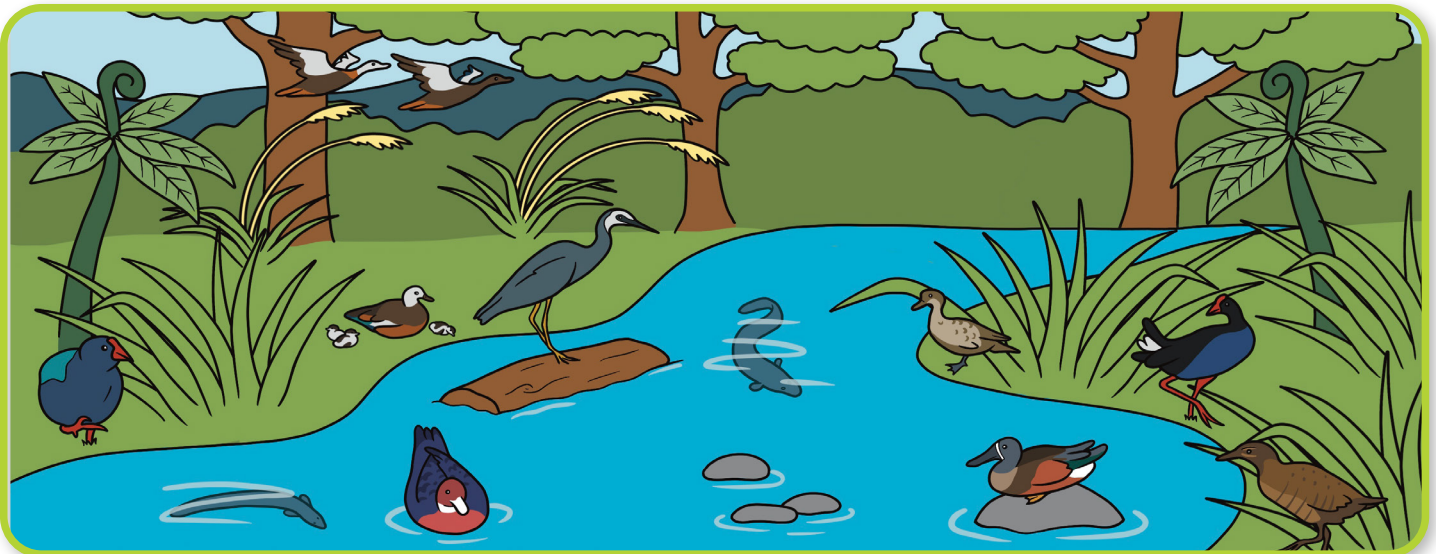
Freshwater and wetland habitats are home to many important New Zealand plants, birds, insects and fish. These habitats include lakes, rivers, swamps and streams. Sadly, 90% of our wetlands have been destroyed, mostly because of farming and houses being built on or near them.

Look at the two pictures below. The first shows a healthy freshwater habitat before humans arrived. The second shows how things have changed now that people are living in Aotearoa.

As an animal hero, you can help protect animals living in freshwater and wetland habitats by:

- Planting native plants near waterways.
- Keeping rubbish out of streams and rivers.
- Learning how human actions affect animals and their homes.

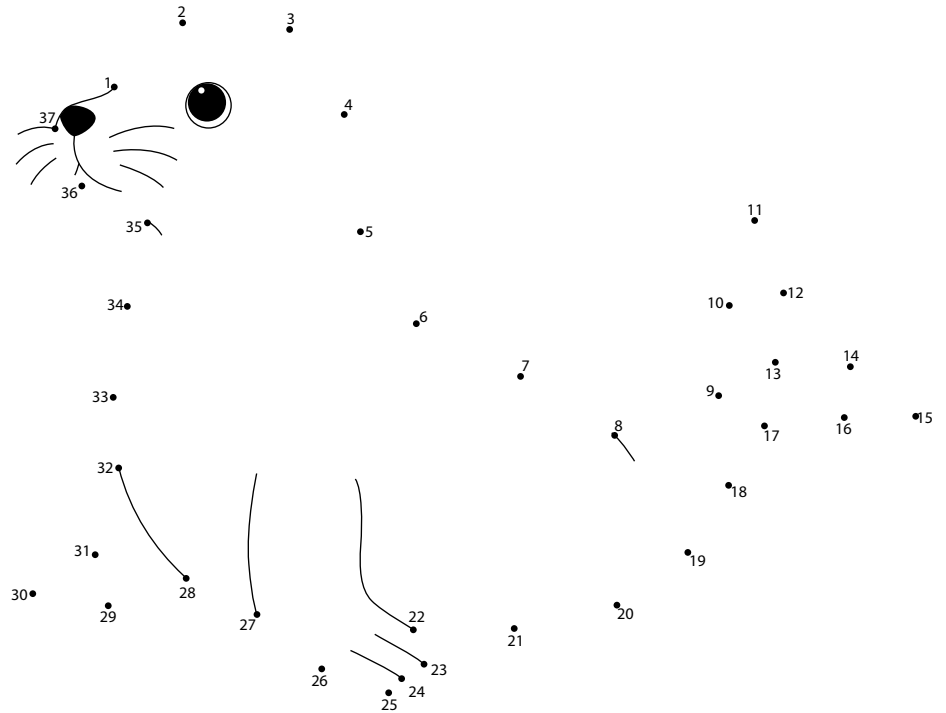
Make a list of the changes that you can see:



Connect the Dots

Start at number 1 and carefully join the dots in order to reveal the hidden animal. Take your time and follow the numbers closely! When you're done, you can colour it in and even draw its habitat to make your picture extra amazing.

The animal is a _____



Answer on page 10

Celebrate Seaweed

From 28 February to 8 March 2026, it's time to celebrate New Zealand's amazing seas! Seaweed is all about discovering the wonders of the ocean - its habitats, marine life and the incredible creatures that call it home.

Top tip: Start a 'plastic-free challenge'. Challenge your friends and family to go a day (or a week!) without using single-use plastics.



How to Draw Animals



This issue's competition is all about drawing! We can't wait to see your amazing animal artwork. Need some inspiration? Head to the [Kids' Portal](#), where you'll find fun step-by-step instructions for drawing different animals. From furry friends to feathered pals, there's something for everyone!

SPCA Kids

How to Draw a Cat

Drawing is a super fun activity, especially when you're drawing animals! Follow the step-by-step instructions below to learn how to draw a cat. Once you've got the hang of it, get creative with your drawings!

Instructions:

- Start by drawing two curved triangles with a curver in the middle for your cat's ears.
- Next, draw a half circle, from one ear to the other for your cat's head.
- Draw a similar shape inside the ear, just smaller.
- Draw two lines, slightly curved from your cat's head.
- Draw two circles at the bottom of the lines for paws and bring the lines up to finished the cat's back legs.
- Draw two curves with circled at the end for your cat's back legs.

Visit www.kids.spscaeducation.org.nz for more things to make and do.

SPCA Kids

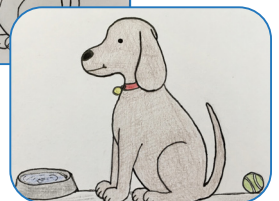
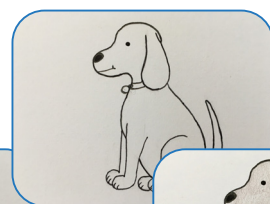
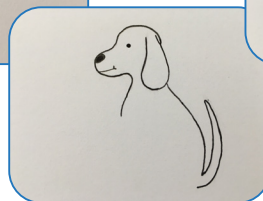
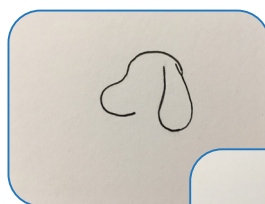
How to Draw a Dog

Drawing is a super fun activity, especially when you're drawing animals! Follow the step-by-step instructions below to learn how to draw a dog. Once you've got the hang of it, get creative with your drawings!

Instructions:

- Start by drawing a curve like the one above.
- Next, draw another curve to make your dog's muzzle.
- Draw a teardrop shape for your dog's ear.
- Draw your dog's eyes, nose and mouth.
- Extend the line for your dog's muzzle down to create a neck.
- Draw a curve downward for your dog's back.

Visit www.kids.spscaeducation.org.nz for more things to make and do.





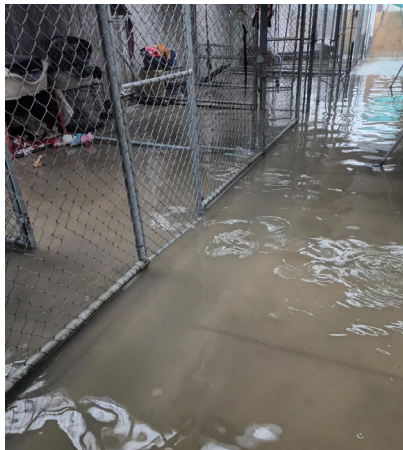
Animals safe after Gisborne SPCA flood rescue

At the beginning of January, heavy rain caused flooding at SPCA's Gisborne Centre - but thanks to quick-thinking helpers, all the animals are safe! The drama unfolded in the adoption room, where a local family was visiting to find a new animal friend when the water started rising.

"Without hesitation, they jumped in to help us," said SPCA Centre Manager Kayla Newman. "They were soaking wet by the end of it, but still positive and wanting to adopt. They were true heroes in that moment and really showed the kindness of our community."

The family helped staff move animals to higher ground while fire and emergency crews arrived to assist. The Centre shared videos of the flooding on Facebook, and soon the community rallied with donations of towels and supplies.

"The response has been overwhelming," Newman said. "We've had so many messages of support, offers to help and people checking in on the animals and our team. It's been really heartwarming."



Recent flooding at Gisborne SPCA.

All the animals are now safe and well, but the clean-up continues. Newman says the best way people can help is by supporting the SPCA in any way they can - adopting, donating, fostering or even sharing their message.

"Every bit of support helps us care for animals, especially after an event like this," she added.

So, if you've ever thought about being an animal hero, now's your chance! SPCA is grateful for every helping hand - and paw!

The cat who came home for Christmas - after 14 years

Christmas came early for Paul Myburgh when he got the surprise of a lifetime: his beloved ginger tabby, Mo, returned home after being missing for 14 years.

Mo was adopted from SPCA back in 2010 and quickly became the neighborhood superstar. "He was an incredibly friendly cat," says Paul. "Loved people, and would even walk to the bus stop to greet us!" But Mo's love for attention and treats may have led him astray. One day in 2011, he didn't come home. Paul's family searched everywhere - posters, vets, lost-and-found sites - but Mo had vanished.

Years passed. The family moved houses and sadly accepted that Mo was gone forever. Then, out of the blue, Paul got an email while grocery shopping: Mo had been found! A vet clinic scanned his microchip and matched him to Paul's details. Paul raced to pick him up, and guess what? Mo was still the same curious, food-loving cat - just older and fluffier!

Where was Mo all that time? No one knows for sure. He was found 16 km away and looked like he'd been living rough.



Mo after his 14-year adventure. (photo credit: 1News)

But thanks to his microchip, he's home for Christmas and getting spoiled in his golden years.

If Mo hadn't been microchipped and registered, he might never have made it back. Microchips are tiny, painless and can save your pet's life. So if you have a furry friend, make sure they're chipped - it's the best gift you can give them!

Did you know? Cats can roam up to 20km from home! Microchips are tiny (about the size of a grain of rice) and painless to insert.



A microchip.

Government passes law allowing pig crates to continue

A recent law passed has sparked strong reactions from animal welfare groups, who say it will harm pigs and damage New Zealand's reputation for caring well for animals.

The law allows farmers to keep using farrowing crates - small metal cages that mother pigs (called sows) stay in before and after giving birth. In these crates, sows can stand up and lie down, but they cannot turn around or move freely. Many animal experts say this causes stress and stops the sow from doing natural things, like building a nest for her piglets.

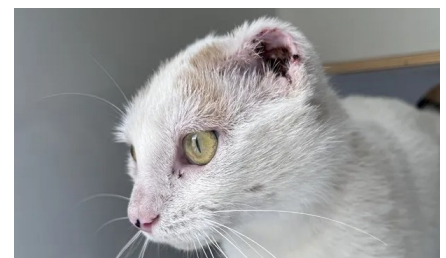
In 2020, the High Court ruled that using these crates was against animal welfare rules. Most people who submitted opinions - about 89% - also said they were against keeping the crates. But the government decided to change the law so the crates could stay.

There are alternatives to pig crates available that allow sows to move more and protect piglets as well, but installing bigger pens can be expensive. SPCA will continue working to end the use of animal cages and push for better treatment of farm animals in the future.



A sow in a farrowing crate.

Tilly's tale: a sunny warning for pets



Tilly after her life-saving surgery.

Did you know pets can get skin cancer too? In New Zealand, the sun's harsh rays put animals with white or light fur at higher risk. Areas like ears, noses and mouths are especially vulnerable because they have less fur for protection.

Tilly the cat learned this the hard way. When she came into SPCA's care, her ears were badly damaged by cancer. Vets acted quickly, performing surgery to remove her ear flaps to stop the disease from spreading and to save her life. Today, Tilly is healthy and happy in her forever home.

SPCA says her condition could have been prevented with regular pet-friendly sunscreen. So this summer, keep your furry friends safe: give them shade, avoid the hottest part of the day and always use sunscreen made for pets.

Craft: Cardboard Tube Hay Toy

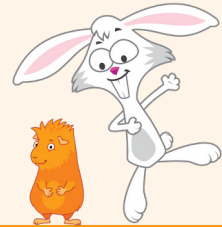
Did you know that being an animal hero isn't just about caring for pets - it's also about keeping them happy and entertained?

Animals like rabbits and guinea pigs need enrichment to stay healthy and avoid boredom. Enrichment means giving them things to explore, chew and play with - just like toys for us! This easy-to-make cardboard tube toy is the perfect boredom buster for your small animal friends.



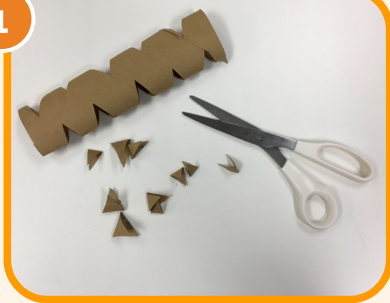
Materials:

- Cardboard tube
- Scissors
- Twine
- Hay



Instructions:

1



Cut diamond shapes along the cardboard tube. Remember to take care when using scissors!



2



Cut two small holes at one end of the cardboard tube and thread the twine through.



3



Secure the ends together by tying a knot.



Nature's Heroes

Did you know some animals are like superheroes in the wild? They help their friends, protect their families and use amazing skills to survive. Here are a few incredible examples:



Dolphins care for each other. If one is hurt, others help it swim to the surface so it can breathe.



Kea work together to solve puzzles. Their teamwork and curiosity help them survive in harsh mountain habitats.



Humpback whales have been seen protecting other sea creatures from orcas - even species that aren't their own!



Little Blue Penguins (Kororā) take turns to incubate eggs and feed chicks. They stick together and show amazing loyalty and care.

Superhero Name Generator

Every hero needs a name! Now it's your turn to create your very own animal hero identity.

Instructions:

1. Pick a hero title like Captain, Defender or Protector.
2. Add your favourite animal.
3. Combine them to make your superhero name.

Examples:

- Love dogs? You could be Defender Dog.
- Love lions? Try General Lion.
- Love penguins? How about Protector Penguin.



HERO TITLE IDEAS:

Guardian,
Doctor, Inspector,
Captain, Defender,
Protector, General,
Rescue Ranger.



My superhero name is: _____



What's Your Animal Hero Power?

If you were an animal hero, what special power would you have? Would you help pets, protect wildlife or save animals in danger?

Examples:

- Super speed to rescue lost pets and get them home fast.
- Mega kindness so scared animals feel safe and cared for.

My animal hero power is _____

SPCA Education Webinars

Have you heard of our SPCA Education Webinars?

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

Ask your teacher or parent/guardian to visit www.spcan.z/educationwebinars to register you to a world of animal welfare!

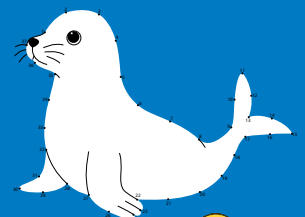


Ask an Expert

The Kids' Portal is jam-packed full of information. But, if you still can't find what you're looking for, feel free to contact our expert [here](#)!

Connect the Dots (page 7)

The animal is a seal.



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 you ideas!

Share your ideas!





Animal Guardians of Aotearoa

DRAWING COMPETITION!

Become the superhero every animal needs! Imagine yourself looking after an animal in any way you like. Your drawing could show things like rescuing an animal in need, feeding or giving care, protecting the environment, keeping them company or creating a safe space for them.

Be creative
- you can
be realistic,
superhero-like
or imaginative!

Write a sentence explaining how you are being a hero to your animal:

