



### Thanking students from Hillpark School for their support!

Welcome to another exciting issue of Kind Matters! This edition is all about a very special rodent – the guinea pig! Take a look at our valuable guinea pig information to help prepare yourself for adoption and for tips to ensure you're being the very best responsible guinea pig guardian that you can be.

You don't want to miss this issue's entertaining activities, fun craft, DIY enrichment toy, and happy adoption tale!

We also have an important message – we have decided to extend our art competition to give all of you creative cats more time to send us your awesome animal art. Check out the details below:

## SPCA Competition

**Be in to win a cool prize! Do you have art supplies and a love for animals? If so, we want to see your artistic abilities!**

Send us your imaginative work of art that highlights your favourite animal doing something that makes them happy and keeps them healthy! It could be a drawing of a rat playing with an enrichment toy, a pig foraging (searching) for their favourite food, or a goat climbing on their very own adventure playground. You can visit the Kids' Portal for a little inspiration!

Scan and email your masterpiece to [education@sPCA.nz](mailto:education@sPCA.nz) or post it to Kind Matters, SPCA NZ, PO Box 15 349, New Lynn, Auckland 0640 by 19 July 2019. Please provide your name, age, school, and contact details as well!

Please note: by entering SPCA competitions, you're agreeing for SPCA New Zealand to share your work on the SPCA Kids' Portal and on SPCA's social media.

## What's Inside



### A Closer Look at: Guinea Pigs – Hauora Poaka

Learn more about these super cool rodents.



### Kind Conservation: Black-Billed Gulls – Tarāpuka

How can we protect these special endemic birds?



### Craft Time: Plant Pet

Make and care for your own plant pets!

and much more...





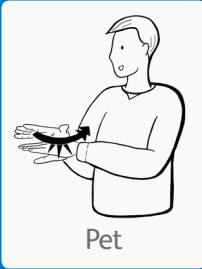
# New Zealand Sign Language Week

6-17 May, 2019 is New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Week! NZSL is one of New Zealand's national languages, along with Māori and English.

Join us in celebrating NZSL Week by learning these animal-related signs!



Animal



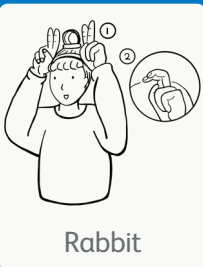
Pet



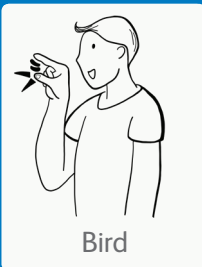
Dog



Cat



Rabbit



Bird

What other signs can you learn?



## A Closer Look at Guinea Pigs – Hauora Poaka

Soft fur, a cute squeak, and tiny little feet are just some of the features that make guinea pigs adorable companion animals. Unlike other baby animals, baby guinea pigs (pups) are born with hair, eyes wide open, a full set of teeth, and the ability to run around. They will rely on their parents for warmth and food until they are weaned at 14-21 days of age. So not only are they cute, but they're extremely fascinating as well!

Just like any other animal, guinea pigs are sentient beings with thoughts, feelings, and needs. One of these needs is food and water. It is up to us as guardians to ensure they're getting the right amounts and types of healthy food and fresh, clean water.

Guinea pigs are herbivores – this means they only feed on plants and plant-based foods. To keep their

digestive system moving and their energy levels up, they need to graze throughout the day and night. The best type of food for this is fibre which comes in the form of hay.

Another important part of a guinea pig's diet is vitamin C. Just like us, guinea pigs cannot make their own vitamin C, so they need lots of vegetables and fruits to obtain the vitamin.

Overall, guinea pigs need a diet of hay, fresh grass and garden greens, pellets, and a variety of fruits and vegetables to acquire the vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients that make them happy and healthy. This healthy balance also helps with their dental hygiene and digestion. Talk to your vet about the best food for your guinea pig!

## Fun Fact: Guinea pigs aren't actually pigs!

Even though they are called guinea pigs, these amazing little animals are neither from the African country Guinea, nor are they pigs!

Guinea pigs are actually rodents originally from the Andes Mountains in South America. The reason for the 'guinea' part of their name is not exactly known, however, it is said that perhaps they were given the name 'pig' because of the fact that their body shape is similar to a pig's and their squeaks may resemble a pig's snorts!

Another name for these adorable critters is 'cavy' which comes from their scientific name, *Cavia porcellus*.



# Happy Tales: Gwyneth's New Life

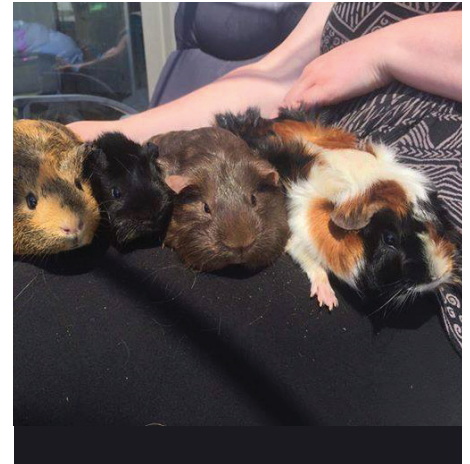
Gwyneth the guinea pig was brought in to one of our SPCA Centres, along with her brothers, when they were all newborns. Baby Gwyneth and her siblings were an unplanned litter, so their guardian at the time was not prepared to look after them.

Being so young, Gwyneth needed a lot of love and care from SPCA to grow up healthy and strong. She was given healthy food, fresh water, shelter, enrichment, and the time needed so that she could find the perfect home for her. Gwyneth was also spayed before she was adopted. This special operation ensured she could not have babies that would end up in need of a new home, like she did.

Once Gwyneth was ready for adoption, she was very lucky to find a wonderful guardian – one that was aware of the responsibilities that come with having a guinea pig. Gwyneth was also fortunate enough to gain 3 awesome guinea pig sisters!

Her new mum says, "we love Gwyneth to bits, she completes our lovely guinea pig fam bam."

Though Gwyneth had a difficult start to her life, she is now a very happy guinea pig with the perfect life!



## Kind Conservation: Tarāpuka (Black-Billed Gull)

When you think of New Zealand, one of the first things that comes to mind is the fact that it is home to many incredible birds – kiwi, tui, kererū, kākāpō, pārerā – the list goes on.



Each of these birds have defining physical features and unique characteristics that make them special. Whether it's long whiskers, a curved beak, a beautiful song and call, or a brush-tipped tongue that sets them apart, they're all remarkable. One such bird is the tarāpuka or black-billed gull – the world's most threatened gull species.

Just like their name suggests, black-billed gulls have long, thin black bills that help them gobble up small fish, grubs, and insects. Their defining features include a white body, light grey wings, a black tail, and two little black legs and feet, that are sometimes red depending on the time of the year.

There are two other gull species in NZ – the black-backed gull (karoro) and red-billed gull (tarapunga) but the black-billed gull is the only endemic gull. This means they can only be found here in New Zealand and nowhere else in the world!

The majority of these intelligent birds can be found near rivers on the South Island, with a very small percentage on the North Island. Sadly, black-billed gulls have a rapidly declining population and are now classified as nationally critical, meaning they are severely threatened and facing an immediate high risk of extinction.

### Kind Conservation Actions:

We need to make sure we're doing our part to respect and help the protected black-billed gulls.

- > Spread the word about the need to protect these special birds.
- > Always give them lots of space and do not disturb them. Disturbing adults can cause them to abandon their eggs/chicks.
- > Do not feed them. Human food will not provide them with the nutrition they need and could make them sick.
- > Keep your dog on lead and under control.
- > Ensure your cat has a collar with a bell and is well fed.
- > Stay on designated walking and driving paths around rivers, lakes, and beaches.
- > Never litter.
- > Clean up rubbish on beaches and other natural environments.
- > If you are lucky enough to see black-billed gulls from a distance, let DOC know where and when you saw them. A photo or video is extra helpful.

**These actions will not only help black-billed gulls, but other wildlife as well!**





## Responsible Guardianship Tip:

### Spay and Neuter

Guinea pigs are naturally social animals that live in herds (groups). To be happy, as well as feel safe and secure, they need at least one other guinea pig friend. Guinea pigs can become lonely, less curious, less vocal, and less active without a friend. It is not natural for them to live without others of their kind. It is, however, extremely important for guinea pigs living together to be spayed/neutered.

Spay (for girls) and neuter (for boys) are special operations for animals that prevent them from having babies.

Spaying and neutering is so important because thousands

of abandoned, neglected and unwanted animals enter SPCA Centres and other animal rescue shelters around New Zealand every year. Some of these animals are lucky enough to be adopted, but sadly there are far more animals in need of a kind, caring family than there are families available.

One guinea pig can have up to 13 babies in one litter and finding homes for those babies isn't easy! It is our responsibility as animal guardians to help stop the overpopulation of companion animals by ensuring our companion animals are spayed and neutered.

## Matching Game

Match the words to the associated freedom!

Freedom from hunger and thirst

Freedom from discomfort

Freedom from pain, injury, or disease

Freedom to express normal behaviour

Freedom from fear and distress

a) Love and understanding

b) Enrichment and exercise

c) Shelter and a comfortable place to rest

d) Food and water

e) Medical care

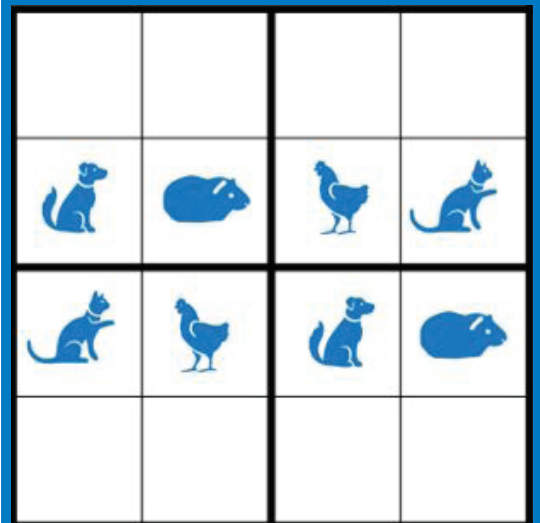
Did you solve them all? Answers on page 5

## SPCA Animal Sudoku

This Sudoku works just like a regular Sudoku, but instead of numbers, you need to figure out where the animals go!

The Sudoku is divided into 4 blocks that are made up of 4 squares each. You can only have one of each animal in every block of 4, as well as in each row and column.

Draw the animals in the appropriate squares!



Did you solve it? Check page 5 for the answers!

## Book Nook

Title: Storm Gets a New Family

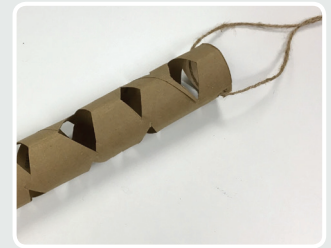
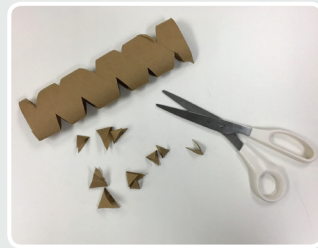
Author: John Carr

Illustrator: Philip Webb

Storm used to spend his days chained to a kennel till his life was changed by a bolt of lightning and a girl with friendly eyes.

You can find the SPCA book series in both English and te reo Māori at your school or you can buy your own set online at: [www.sPCA.nz](http://www.sPCA.nz)





## Make it Yourself: Paper Towel Hay Toy

This super simple toy is a great boredom buster for small animals! Just like other animals, guinea pigs must be allowed to express their normal behavior. This hay toy will help keep their minds busy while they get the fiber that they need from the hay!

### Materials needed: Instructions:

- > Paper towel roll
  - > Scissors
  - > Twine
1. Cut diamond shapes along the paper towel roll. Remember to take care when using scissors!
  2. Cut two small holes at one end of the paper towel roll and thread the twine through.
  3. Secure the ends together by tying a knot.

## Craft Time: Plant Pet

With winter coming, it's time to bring a bit of the outdoors inside by making your very own plant pet. These little creatures are great fun to make and care for! This is a creative way to repurpose some old materials from around your house as well. You can make guinea pigs like our example, or any other animal you wish!



### Materials needed:

- > Wheat grass (great for smoothies) or cress (yum in salads and sandwiches) seeds
- > Soil
- > Old stocking
- > Buttons
- > Small cup or jar (yoghurt cups work well!)
- > Felt or fleece
- > Hot glue gun
- > Scissors

### Instructions:

1. First, decorate your cup however you wish!
2. Put the opening of an old stocking around a cup - this makes it easier to fill. Add seeds.
3. Next, fill the stocking with soil.
4. Take the filled stocking out of the cup and tie a knot in the bottom.
5. Add buttons for eyes and use the scrap material to make ears, nose, and feet.
6. Cut the excess stocking, leaving enough to sit inside the cup.
7. Dampen the filled stocking so that it's wet. Place your plant pet on the cup with the extra material inside - the stocking will soak up water into the soil.

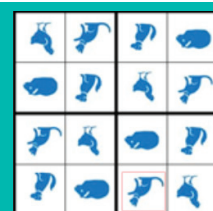
8. Place your little plant pet on the window sill and wait for the seeds to sprout and grow! Be sure to be a responsible guardian to your plant pet by making sure it does not dry out and is getting the right amount of sunlight.

*Note: If the toe of the stocking is at the top (like ours), you may need to cut small holes to allow seeds to grow through easily.*



## Share your ideas!

Is our newsletter missing something? Email [education@spca.nz](mailto:education@spca.nz) with ideas for what you'd like to see in our next issue of Kind Matters!



Solution to Sudoku

Matching  
Game  
1. d  
2. c  
3. e  
4. b  
5. a