

Spring is in the air!

This time of the year is particularly exciting because of all of the new life – new plants, new flowers, and baby animals. This issue of Kind Matters takes a closer look at an amazing animal that can be seen waddling around with their babies in tow - the duck!

But before you dive into this exciting issue, take a look at the winners of our recent Writing Competition! Well done to these wonderful writers. Their pieces truly captured the importance of responsible animal guardianship! It was a tough decision, but the winners are...

Junior Winners

1st place – Help the SPCA, by Isabel

2nd place – Responsible Animal Guardianship, by Payeton

Senior Winners

1st place – SPCA Story, by Charlotte

2nd place – We have freedom, so why can't they?, by Caitlin

We also had a special “Staff Choice” prize that went out to 12-year-old Phree for her hilarious and heart-warming poem, “My Pet and Me.”

Congratulations to all of the Kind Matters winners and thank you all for your pawesome entries! Check out page 5 for a sneak peek at the winners’ work. To read their full work, visit the [Writers’ Collection section of the Kids’ Portal!](#)

SPCA Competition: Caption this photo!

What do you think this adorable puppy’s thinking? Use your imagination to come up with a funny caption for this super cute photo!



Junior and Senior Category winners will have their creative caption and photo featured in our next Kind Matters issue and will also win a super cool prize!

Email your caption suggestion to education@spca.nz with the subject “Education Caption Competition” by 17 Jan 2020.

Please provide your name, age, school, and contact details!

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

What’s Inside



A Closer Look at: Wild Ducks

Awesome information about ducks.



Kind Conservation: Blue Duck – Whio

Learn about these native birds.



Craft Time: Nature Bingo

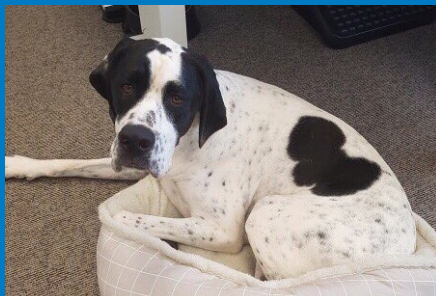
Have some fun outdoors!

and much
more...



Animal Profiles

Did you know that all animals are individuals with their own unique personalities, likes and dislikes? Part of being a responsible animal guardian is knowing what your animal likes and does not like, and respecting that. Take a look at some of the awesome animals below to find out what they like and dislike!



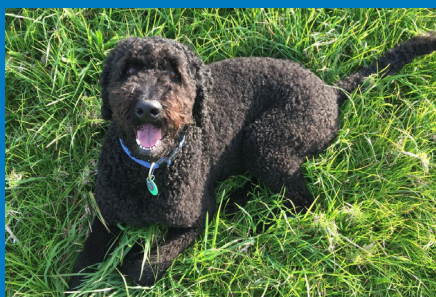
COOPER

LIKES: Baby animals, DISLIKES: Rain



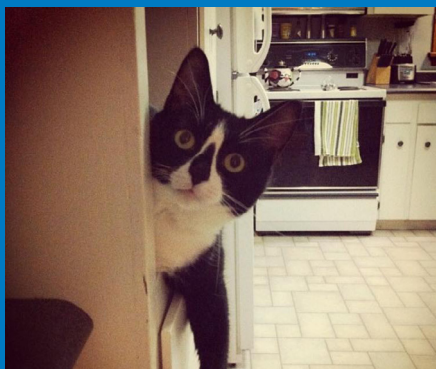
HUGH

LIKES: Food, DISLIKES: Loud noises



TROUBLE

LIKES: The beach, DISLIKES: Feathers



MICAH

LIKES: Cuddles, DISLIKES: Belly rubs



A Closer Look at: Wild Ducks and Ducklings

This issue, instead of a companion animal, we're taking a closer look at a wild animal that we share many rural, coastal, wetland and even urban areas with, a bird well recognised by their flat bill and webbed feet... ducks!

New Zealand is home to many different species of ducks. Each species has their own diet and way of eating. For example, some ducks eat on both dry land and wetland while others dive for their food, some ducks are nocturnal eaters, and some ducks only eat certain foods at certain times of the year.

A lot of wild ducks are largely herbivores. This means they eat mostly plant-based foods such as seeds, plants, and grasses, while balancing their diet with a small amount of things like insects, larvae, snails, and worms. This, however,

varies from species to species.

With lots of little ducklings being born during spring, it's a busy time for mother ducks! Ducklings form a group called a "brood," and they rely on their mothers to ensure they're safe, getting the correct diet, and growing up healthy and strong. In fact, when ducklings are born, they imprint on their mothers. This means they form a strong bond and will follow them everywhere.

With more ducklings being brought into the world, SPCA receives a lot of calls about sick, injured, and orphaned ducks and ducklings. SPCA is committed to helping New Zealand's wildlife, so the best thing to do if you find a duck or ducklings in need of assistance, is to call your local SPCA Centre and they can advise you the best course of action to take depending on the situation!

Fun Fact:

There are several species of native, endemic, and introduced ducks in New Zealand. Two of these duck species look very similar and are hard to tell apart – the female mallard and the grey duck. However, upon closer inspection, you can see their subtle differences.

The first is the colour of the feathers on the outside of each birds' wings. Grey ducks have green feathers, while female mallards have blue. Second, grey ducks' legs are brown and female mallards have bright orange legs. Another difference is that mallards are the most commonly found duck in NZ, while grey ducks are critically endangered. While it's trickier to tell the female mallard and grey ducks apart, male mallards have a green head, making their species more obvious.



Female Mallard Duck



New Zealand Grey Duck

World Kindness Day

World Kindness Day takes place each year on the 13th of November. Kindness is all about showing your care and concern for others, and World Kindness Day is all about celebrating kindness through good deeds!



Not only do people deserve kindness, but our animal friends deserve kindness as well! This World Kindness Day, how can we show kindness to animals? As we learned from the Kind Matters Animal Profiles, all animals are individuals with their own unique personalities, likes and dislikes. Therefore, it's important that we think of all animals and how we can give them the kindness they deserve.

When it comes to wild animals, we can show them kindness by keeping their habitats clean and rubbish free, respecting their homes by giving them space, and by planting native trees and flowers.

In regards to companion animals, it helps to think about what your animal likes – do they enjoy long walks, lots of pats, the occasional treat, or being

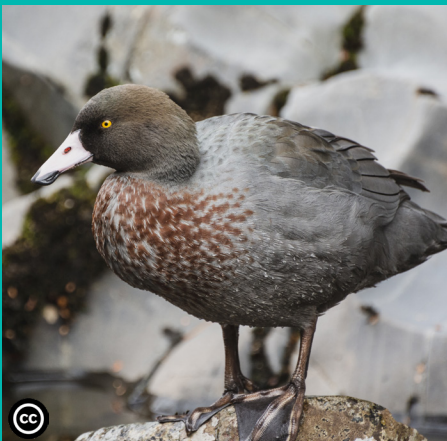
groomed? We can show kindness to our companion animals by respecting what they like and dislike and providing them with a happy, healthy lifestyle each and every day!

One of the things we can do to show kindness to our companion animals is by making them their very own enrichment toys! Toys are so important for animals because they allow them to express their normal behaviours – an important part of their wellbeing. Normal behaviours can include chewing, digging, foraging, running, etc. Check out the Things to Make or Do section on the Kids' Portal for heaps of instructions.

This World Kindness day, why not extend the kindness by making toys for SPCA animals as well as your own companion animals!

Kind Conservation: Blue Duck – Whio

Blue ducks, one of New Zealand's incredible endemic (found only in New Zealand) ducks, are fascinating for a number of different reasons – their Maori name comes from the sound of the male ducks' "fee-o" call, their photo can be found on the New Zealand \$10 note, they are born with green bills, and they are less common than some kiwi species – but that's not all...



Blue ducks have adapted to live their whole lives around clean, fast-flowing water. In fact, they are one of the very few ducks around the world to do so. Blue ducks live in pairs, nesting along the river's edge, often living their entire life with the same partner. They are very territorial and when their babies are born, both parents will care for them.

Whio are blue-grey ducks with scattered brown feathers and are very special to Aotearoa, but sadly they are endangered. Their current population sits at around 2,000-3,000 individuals, though that number is decreasing. A huge reason for this is the disturbance and destruction of their habitats.

Human recreational activities, changes with the land, dams, poor water quality, the use of water, floods, and the clearing of plants around rivers have all contributed negatively to the blue ducks' survival.

To help these endangered ducks, individuals and groups have taken some awesome kind conservation initiatives with the aim to increase the blue duck population, as well as ensure that existing blue ducks are protected. These include projects such as breeding programmes, monitoring,

and securing breeding sites.

There are ways that you can help blue ducks too! For example:

- > Keep your dogs on lead and only walk them in permitted areas.
- > If you ever see the blue ducks, give them lots of space and report any sighting to the Department of Conservation (DOC).
- > Never litter. Blue ducks rely on clean, healthy water – keep the environment and waterways litter free.
- > If your cat is not contained on your property, ensure they wear a safety release collar with a bell, that they are well fed, and kept safely indoors at night.



Responsible Guardianship Tip:

Please don't feed wild ducks!

Being a responsible guardian is not only important for our companion animals, but we have to ensure that we are responsible when it comes to our wildlife as well!

As we learned in the "A Closer Look at" section, wild ducks have their own special diets. As such, they don't need our help when it comes to food – they're experts at finding the food with the nutrients they need to be healthy.

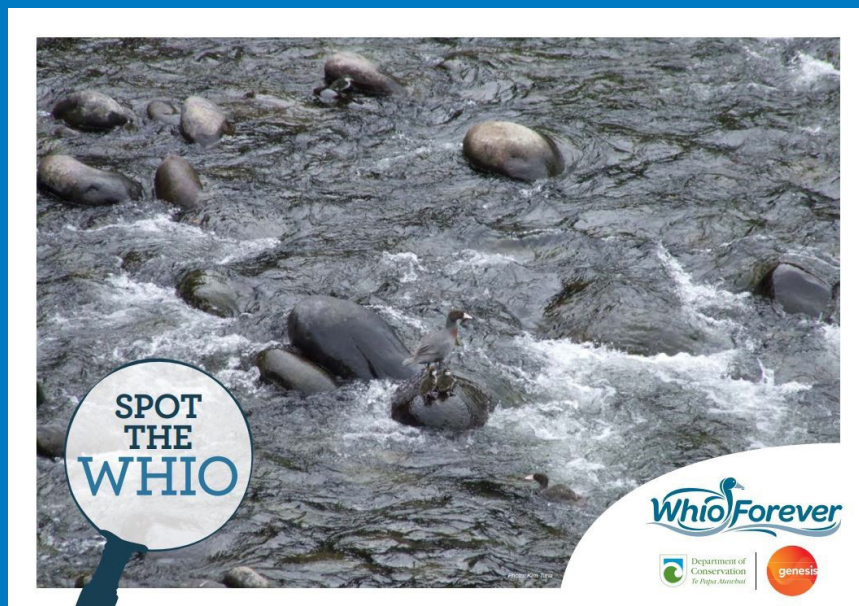
In fact, feeding ducks and other wild

birds may do more harm than good. Though birds may seem like they enjoy foods like bread, it is actually very unhealthy for them, just like if people were to only eat junk food.

Bread will fill a bird's tummy, but it does not provide them with the right nutrients. Not only can the lack of nutrients from bread lead to malnourishment and deformation, but rotting bread also pollutes water which causes bacteria and can spread disease.

Spot the Whio

Whio camouflage perfectly into their habitats. How many whio can you find in the photo below?



Thank you to our friends at the Department of Conservation (DOC) for this awesome "Spot the Whio" photo!

Book Nook

Title: Sam and Charlie Love Pudding

Author: John Carr

Illustrator: Mike Wilkin

When the abandoned cat who lives under the sports shed at their school gets into trouble, Sam and Charlie have to act.

You can find these storybooks at your school or local library, or you can buy your own sets online at: <https://shop.rnzspca.org.nz/spca-learn-to-read-story-books>



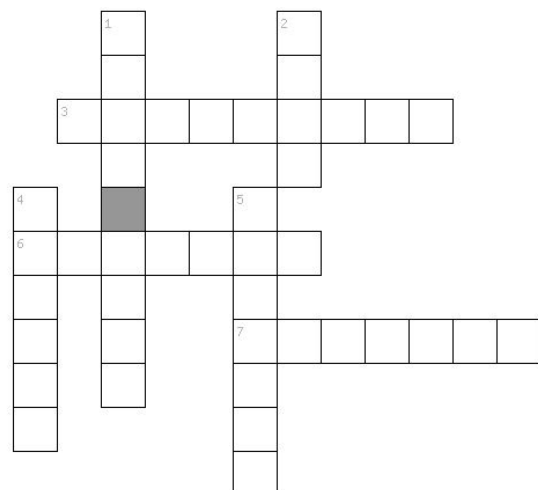
Kind Matters Crossword

Across:

- The name for baby ducks.
- SPCA Storybook titled "Sam and Charlie love ____"
- The species of duck that resembles the grey duck.

Down:

- This animal can be found on the NZ \$10 note.
- The Maori name for blue ducks.
- The time of the year when lots of baby animals are born.
- What the "A" stands for in SPCA



Did you get them all? Check page 5 for the answers!

Writing Competition Winners

Check out the summaries below of the Writing Competition winners' amazing work. Remember to head to the Writers' Collection section of SPCA's Kids' Portal to read them in full!

1st place – Help the SPCA, by Isabel

- > Isabel wrote a super cool poem about the needs of dogs, cats, and birds, and how humans need to help them. It was even written in the shape of the letters "SPCA"!

2nd place – Responsible Animal Guardianship, by Payeton

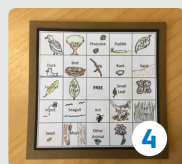
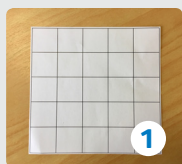
- > Payeton wrote an awesome speech that highlights animals' unconditional love and why it's so important for people to be a voice for animals and protect them.

1st place – SPCA Story, by Charlotte

- > Charlotte wrote a beautiful story about her and her family's experience of preparing for and adopting a kitten from SPCA.

2nd place – We have freedom, so why can't they?, by Caitlin

- > Caitlin wrote a wonderful poem for the competition that covered the five freedoms and why animals need love, food, happiness, health, and a good life.



Craft Time: Nature Bingo

Following the instructions below, create your very own Nature Bingo cards and then grab your friends, classmates, and a guardian/teacher and head outside to play Nature Bingo!

Note: It's important that when you go out to find these amazing things in nature, that you look and not touch – be sure to respect nature and wildlife!

Materials needed:

- > Paper
- > Something to write/colour with
- > Scissors
- > Glue
- > Plastic sleeve
- > White board marker

Instructions:

1. Start by creating a 5 x 5 square bingo card. You can print it or draw it yourself!
2. Label the center square as "FREE" and then add nature related words in the squares until you
3. have filled all of the blanks.
3. Get creative and decorate your bingo card!
4. Glue your bingo card to a piece of thick card paper.
5. Make a title for your bingo card and glue on a piece of thick card paper.
6. Next, glue your bingo card and title on another piece of A4 card paper.
7. Place the card paper into a reusable clear, plastic sleeve. Using a plastic sleeve will allow you to cross off your items on the sleeve cover with a whiteboard



marker, without writing on your actual bingo card. This way, it can be erased and used over and over again!

8. Now you're ready to head outside to play bingo!



Photo Credit: *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus* (Blue Duck, Whio) by Jake Osborne. No changes made: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/theylooklikeus/26728877177/>
Grey Duck by Sid Mosdell. No changes made: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sidm/8165135503/>
Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus (Blue Duck, Whio) by Jake Osborne. No changes made: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/theylooklikeus/27727858118/>

Send us your pawesome photos!

Email your animal photos to education@spca.nz so we can share them on our Kids' Portal for everyone to see!

Answers:
 Across – 3. Ducklings,
 6. Pudding, 7. Mallard
 Down – 1. Blue duck,
 2. Whio, 4. Spring, 5.
 Animals