SPCA Kids Kind Matters

News

Term 4 2026

Welcome to the Term 4 issue Kind Matters!

Before we jump into our Term 4 issue we are delighted to reveal the winning photographs for our Term 3 Kind Matters Photography Competition!

We were amazed by the fantastic entries in this year's Animals Loving Life photography competition! It was wonderful to see so many animals captured enjoying the things they love most, whether that was relaxing, exploring and playing or spending time with their whānau. Every photo told a unique story and showcased the special bond between animals and the people who care for them.

Choosing our winners was no easy task. We carefully reviewed all the incredible photographs and were impressed by the creativity, skill, and animal-focused moments captured in each entry. We are excited to share the winning photos below. Tino pai to everyone who entered, and congratulations to all of our winners!

OUR 2026 OVERALL WINNER

EUGY by Dodoland

PBTECH

SOFIA, AGED 8



A huge thanks to our head judge, Jo Moore. Jo is a Wellington-based photographer for the last 15 years!

Jo has taken loads of photos of animals for SPCA Wellington and has got some great tips for you. If you want to see some more of Jo's amazing animal photos, check them out here!

Congratulations to our pawesome special mentions, Indie Blok (8), Katie (9), Leonidas (9), Jett (9), Luana (11), Jaxson (11) and Ilse (13). Another huge thank you to our competition sponsors, PBTech and EUGY by Dodoland.

What's Inside



A Closer Look: Sheep (Hipi) - Learn about these baa-rilliant wooly animals!



Kind Conversation: What to do if you find a baby bird this spring time.



Craft Time: Build a self-watering planter and choose from a selection of native plants!

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

and much more...

2026 Photography Competition Winners!

UNDER 5 YEARS WINNER

1st



HENRY, AGED 3

5 - 7 YEARS WINNER

1st



LOLA, AGED 6

8 - 10 YEARS WINNER

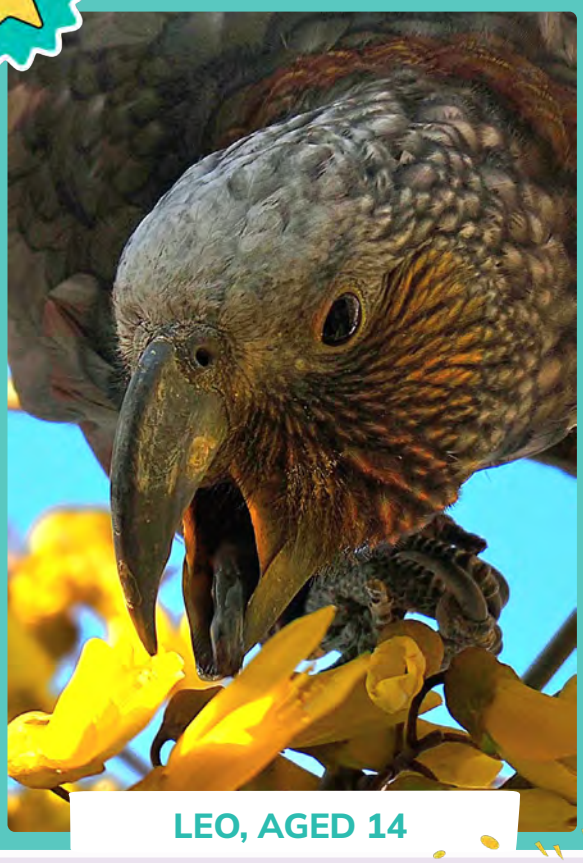
1st



RIDAAN, AGED 8

14 - 16 YEARS WINNER

1st



LEO, AGED 14

11 - 13 YEARS WINNER

1st



ZARA, AGED 12

Check out the Kids' Portal to see more of the photos and read the judge's comments!

A Closer Look at: Sheep - Hipi

Sheep are gentle, social animals that love company and a good patch of grass. They spend most of the day grazing, they stick close to their flock, and they're smarter than most people give them credit for. Read on to find out what sheep need to stay safe, happy, and healthy.



Grazing all day long!

Pasture is the main part of a sheep's diet - that's grass, clover, and other pasture plant species. Sheep love it so much they'll graze for up to nine hours a day! Sheep are herbivores, so they only eat plants.

Sheep are ruminants, which means they have four-chambered stomachs. A sheep swallows their food, brings it back up to chew again, then swallows it a second time so all four stomach compartments can break it down. Because pasture and hay don't always give sheep everything they need, a vet might recommend mineral licks which are hard blocks with salt, calcium, and other nutrients sheep need to stay healthy.

Sheep drink anywhere from 2 to 14 litres of water a day.
Their water trough should sit up off the ground, so it doesn't spill and turn the ground to mud.



A cozy place to call home!

A barn or a three-sided timber shelter works well for sheep. Metal shelters don't, they get too cold in winter and too hot in summer. Regular shearing also helps sheep manage their body temperature.

Staying healthy

Sheep are prey animals, so they hide signs of sickness or pain to stop predators from noticing they're weak. That means it's worth checking on your sheep closely and often.

A sheep's wool keeps growing, so it usually needs to be shorn before hot weather arrives. Some sheep shed their fleece naturally, but others grow thick wool that needs regular shearing. Shearing is the careful removal of wool to help sheep stay healthy and comfortable. If sheep aren't shorn when needed, they can become too hot, struggle to move, develop skin infections, or be at greater risk of flystrike. Regular shearing helps keep sheep cool, comfortable, and healthy.

Sheep's hooves need regular checking and trimming to prevent them from becoming overgrown and causing discomfort or difficulty walking. Because sheep are farm animals, vets usually visit them on the farm rather than the sheep travelling to a clinic.

Better in a bunch!

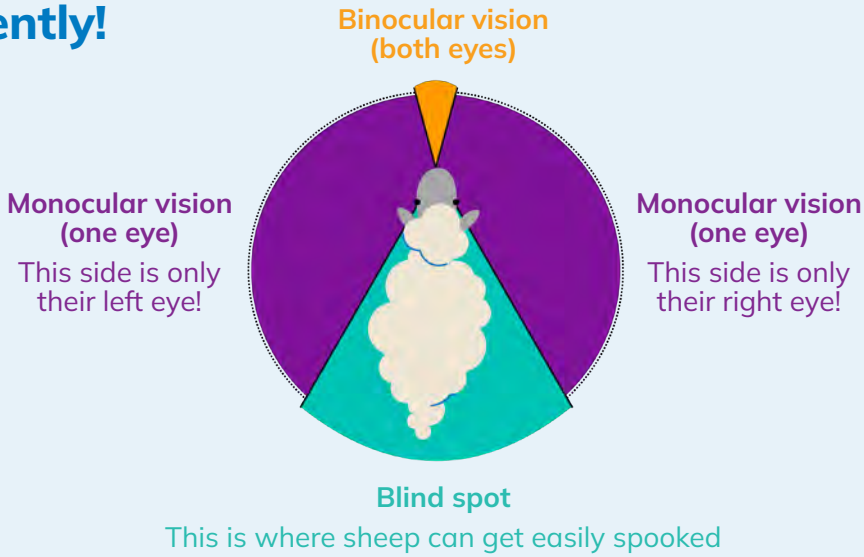
Sheep need other sheep. Being alone is genuinely stressful for a sheep. A lone sheep can become depressed, panic, and even injure themselves trying to reach the rest of the flock. Around four or five sheep is a good number for a small lifestyle flock, as long as there's enough space, time, and money to look after them properly.

Sheep stick together because it makes them feel safe, and they have a strong instinct to follow one another. They're also smarter than people expect, they can be trained to come for food, run mazes, and even respond to clicker training. Sheep can recognise different sheep faces in their flock, and they can recognise goats too!



Seeing the world differently!

A sheep's eyes sit on the sides of their head, far apart, which gives them a nearly all-around view. Most of what a sheep sees comes from **monocular** vision which is seeing with one eye at a time. They have just a small patch at the front where both eyes overlap for **binocular** vision, seeing with both eyes together. If you want a sheep to trust you, approach from the front where they can see you, and move slowly and calmly. Sheep also have excellent hearing, so sudden loud noises can frighten and stress them.



Kind Care: Jigglypuff's Story



Jigglypuff the sheep spent a whole year living alone in a paddock. Her wool grew longer and longer, she put on extra weight, and a kind neighbour was the only one keeping an eye on her. Eventually that neighbour called SPCA, worried about her health.

At SPCA's Māngere Centre, the farm team gave Jigglypuff a much-needed haircut and started her on a weight-loss plan. At first, Jigglypuff wanted nothing to do with people as she'd lived alone for so long that she wasn't used to company.

Then one day, everything changed. A farm attendant named Brandi stepped back to think, and Jigglypuff copied her one step at a time! From that moment on, Jigglypuff decided she loved being around people.



She followed the team everywhere, and running after them helped her lose 10kg!

Jigglypuff wasn't so sure about other sheep, but she surprised everyone by making friends with a chicken instead. The two of them were soon inseparable. Once Jigglypuff reached a healthy weight, she was adopted by a family along with two goats and a chicken she'd already made friends with at SPCA!



Today, Jigglypuff is happy, healthy, and never alone.

Sheep Scramble

Unscramble these jumbled-up words - they're all to do with sheep! Use the hints to help you!

Example: HECW = CHEW

1. OWLO _____

Hint: The fluffy coat a sheep grows

2. KLOFC _____

Hint: A group of sheep

3. NSAHRIGE _____

Hint: Cutting a sheep's wool

4. RUEPTSA _____

Hint: Plants sheep love to eat

5. MBAL _____

Hint: A baby sheep

6. EEW _____

Hint: A female sheep

7. NRTMNAIU _____

Hint: A sheep's four-chambered stomach

Answers on page 11

Fun Sheep Facts!



1. Sheep don't have any upper front teeth!
2. A sheep can remember at least 50 other sheep and humans, for years.
3. If a sheep falls onto its back, it can't get up on its own.
4. There are over 900 breeds of sheep in the world!
5. A sheep was the first animal in the world to be cloned.
6. Uncastrated male sheep are called rams, castrated males are wethers, females are ewes, and babies are lambs.

HINT:
Answers to the quiz can be found in this issue of Kind Matters. Good luck!

Competition Time!



To celebrate this issue of Kind Matters, we've created a fun quiz to test your knowledge on everything you've learned.



Enter the quiz to win:

1. Have a good read through this newsletter issue.
2. Next, head to the quiz here or by copying the link: https://forms.gle/6FRtogDhcJDuaZ6k7
3. Answer the quiz questions to be in with a chance to win.





Kind Conservation: Nestlings and Fledglings

Spring means new life all around us, in backyards, parks, school fields, and sports grounds. It's also when we're most likely to spot young birds finding their feet and wings! We share these spaces with wildlife, so young birds deserve our respect, our kindness, and a bit of space.

What is a fledgling?

A fledgling is a young bird that has grown their feathers and left the nest on purpose, even though they can't fly properly yet. It's normal for a fledgling to spend a day or two on the ground while their flight feathers finish growing. Their parents are usually close by, feeding them and keeping watch, even when you can't see them.

One exception: swallows, swifts, and martins can fly as soon as they leave the nest, so they should never be found sitting on the ground.



If the bird is covered in feathers, they likely a fledgling and should be left alone.

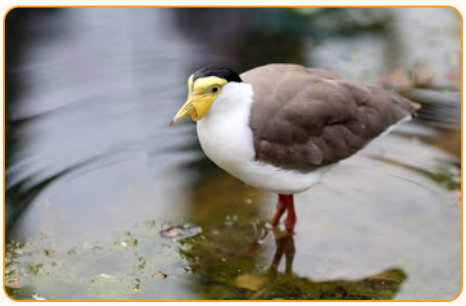
If a bird has few or no feathers, they are a nestling that has likely fallen from their nest.



Meet the spur-winged plover

You've probably spotted a spur-winged plover (also called a masked lapwing) on a school field, sports ground, or park without realising it. Unlike birds that nest in trees, plovers nest right on the ground, and their chicks are up and walking with their parents soon after hatching.

So it's completely normal to see a plover chick wandering around on their own two feet.



Not every bird on the ground needs rescuing

Every spring, vets, SPCA, and bird rescue groups like BirdCare Aotearoa see huge numbers of healthy young birds that kind people have picked up, thinking they needed saving. Most of the time, that young bird wasn't lost or abandoned at all actually their parents were watching from nearby the whole time.

If you find a young bird that looks safe, alert, and has feathers, the kindest thing to do is leave them alone. Back away quietly, keep dogs and cats away from the area, and let the parents carry on looking after their chick.

Sometimes a bird genuinely is in trouble.

Some signs to look for are:



The bird is bleeding, has an obvious injury or can't stand



The bird has no feathers or is out of their nest with no nest in sight



The bird is in immediate danger, near a road or a busy path or another animal

If you see any of these signs, tell a trusted adult right away!

They can contact SPCA or Department of Conservation for advice.



What to do if you find a baby bird

1. Stop and look. Do not touch.
   Is the bird injured or in immediate danger?
   → Yes → 2. Get a trusted adult right away.
   → No
2. Watch from a distance for a few minutes.
   Can you see the parents or a nest nearby?
   → Yes → 3. Leave the bird alone and give them space
   → No or not sure?
3. Get a trusted adult right away to help check.

If you need more information or want to learn more about what to do when you find a baby bird check out the Kids' Portal here!

Animals and Fireworks

Around this time of year, people across Aotearoa celebrate events like Diwali and Guy Fawkes – and that often means fireworks!

Fireworks might look exciting to us, but for animals, they can be scary and even dangerous. Every year, SPCA Centres hear about animals getting hurt or going missing because of fireworks.

Animals are sentient, which means they can feel emotions like fear, stress and anxiety – just like us.

Help keep animals safe:

- Keep pets inside and calm.
- Don't leave animals alone.
- Make sure they have ID tags and are microchipped.
- Close windows and curtains to block out noise and light.

Learn more about keeping animals safe around fireworks here!

Who Knows Whose Nose?

Can you match each nose to the right animal? Take a guess!



1. Sheep
2. Goat
3. Cow
4. Horse
5. Pig
6. Rabbit
7. Cat
8. Guinea Pig
9. Dog

Write the number of each answer in the circle above the nose you think it matches.

Answers on page 11

Craft Time! Make your own Self-watering Planter



Materials needed:

> Clean recycled bottle

> Potting mix

> Stones

> Twine

> Native seedling or seed (We are using a NZ native Hebe)

> Scissors or craft knife

Decorating supplies:

> Non-toxic glue

> Other decorating items

(We used pipecleaners, pompoms and some googly eyes!)





1

Cut the bottle just above halfway using a craft knife or some scissors.

Get an adult to help you with this step!



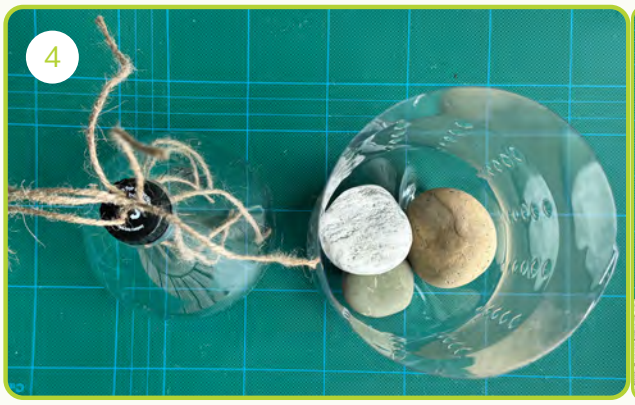
2

Take the bottle cap and using a craft knife or some scissors make three small holes.



3

Thread two or three 30 cm long pieces of twine into each hole. Make sure that there is an even amount of twine on either side, then tie a knot in each string on the inside of the cap to stop them from falling out.



4



Screw the lid back onto the bottle and place some stones in the bottom half.

Flip the top of the bottle upside down making sure the twine is long enough to reach the bottom of the bottle. Trim the top of the twine if needed.



5

Remove the top and fill the bottom with water.

Place the top back upside down and fill with potting mix and your seed or seedling of choice!

Check out the planting guide on the next page for some ideas!



6

Finally, decorate your new self-watering planter however you like!

Make sure to use non toxic glue and do not seal the bottle together so that you can add more water when needed!

Spring Planting Guide!

Have a look below at some native plants that you could plant!

Louis Hebe
(Hebe 'Louis')



Its flowers provide nectar for bees and other pollinators, helping support New Zealand's garden wildlife.

Photo by Jane Gosden, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
Changes made: cropped and resized.

Panakenake
(Pratia angulata)

A low-growing native plant with tiny white flowers that help feed pollinating insects.



Photo by Jeremy R. Rolfe, licensed under CC BY.
Changes made: cropped and resized.

Carex
(New Zealand Sedge)



Its grassy leaves provide shelter for small insects and help create healthy habitats for wildlife.

Photo by John Smith-Dodsworth, licensed under CC BY-NC.
Changes made: cropped and resized.

Native Violet
(Viola filicaulis)

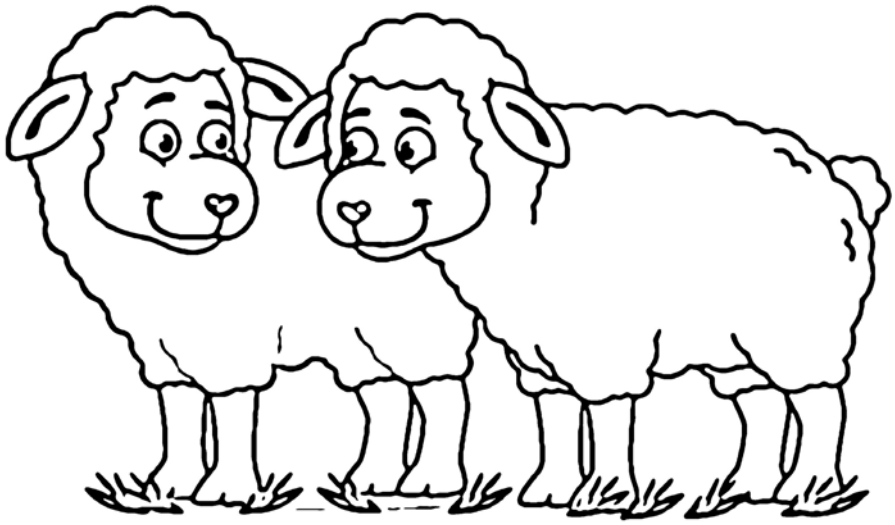
This small native plant produces pretty flowers that attract pollinators and fits well in small planters.



Photo by Jesse Bythell, licensed under CC BY-NC.
Changes made: cropped and resized.

Colouring

Get creative and colour in Winnie the sheep and her friend. You could add a background with some things that would make them happy and healthy like some pasture and fresh clean drinking water!



Myth Busting Station: Don't Toss the Crust!



Many people think they are doing a good thing by feeding birds human food like bread or bird seed.

Unfortunately, although birds will happily gobble up bread, it is actually very unhealthy for them. Bread fills up a bird's stomach, but it doesn't give them any of the nutrition they need to be healthy and strong and can lead to several problems, some of which include:

- If the wrong foods are fed to animals, they won't get the nutrients that provide them with energy and strength.
- Inappropriate food can cause deformation - this means their body parts don't grow the way they're supposed to.
- When birds are given food by humans, it makes them dependent and less able to survive without the provided food.
- Rotting bread also pollutes water which encourages bacterial growth and disease that harms animals.

Rather than feeding them bread or bird seed, which holds little to no nutritional value, it's best to plant a buffet of trees, bushes and shrubs for birds in your backyard to help them thrive. This will give birds areas to rest, feel safe, and of course eat.

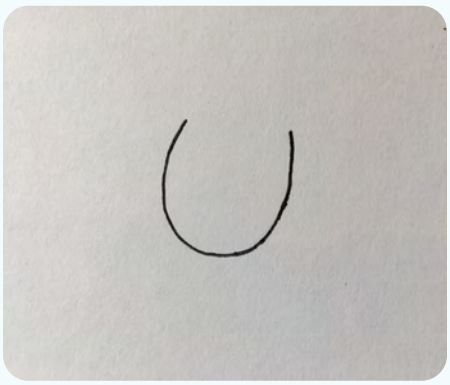
Help keep New Zealand's birds safe and healthy by keeping bread at home for your toast and sandwiches!

How to Draw a Sheep!

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 sheep. Once you've got the hang of it, get creative with your drawings!



For more cool drawing ideas and activites check out the Kids Portal here!



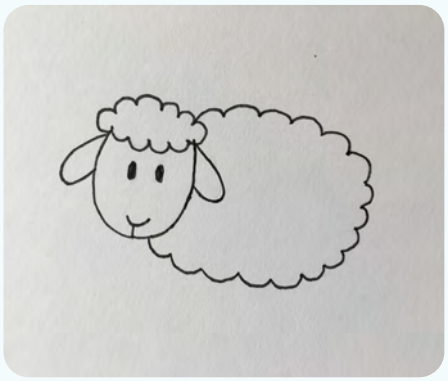
1 Start by drawing a u-shape. This will be the start of your sheep's head and face.



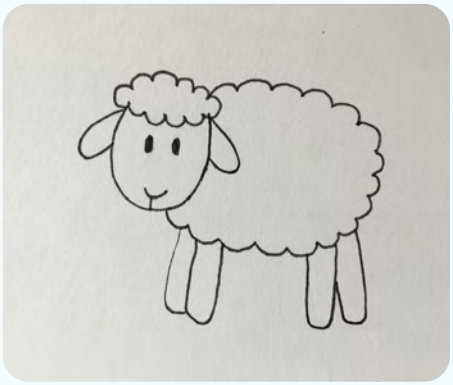
2 Next, draw connecting half circles on the top of the u-shape, similar to how you would draw a cloud.



3 Now add two longer u-shapes for ears, and features like a nose and eyes.



4 Draw another cloud shape, only this time bigger to create the sheep's body.



5 Next, draw your sheep's legs by making four long u-shapes that connect to the sheep's body.



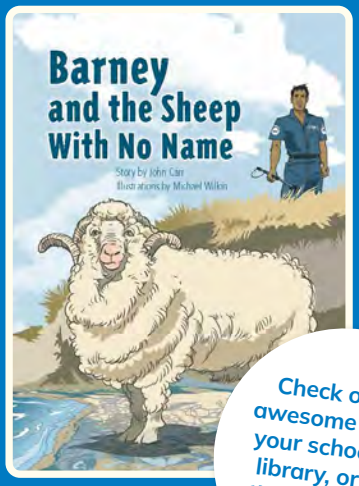
6 Finish your sheep by adding their hooves and their cute little tail!



7 Finally, get out your coloured pencils, pens, markers, etc. and decorate your awesome drawing!

Book Nook

Title: Barney and the Sheep With No Name
Author: John Carr
Illustrator: Jerry Hoare

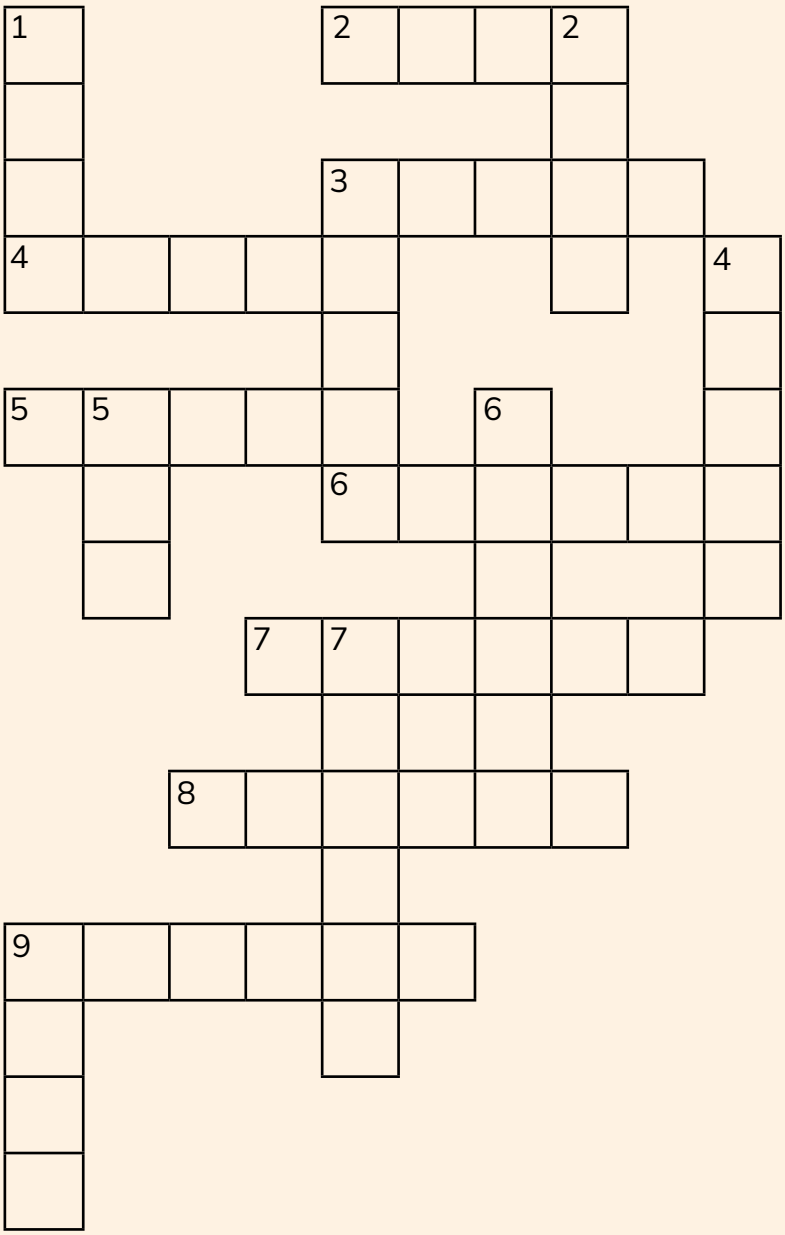


Check out this awesome story at your school, local library, or online through our Kids' Portal!

In Barney and the Sheep With No Name!, Barney from SPCA sets out to rescue a sheep trapped by a creek. But this is no ordinary rescue! The sheep keeps escaping, swimming away and leading Barney on a chase through rocky banks, long grass and even near a railway bridge.

Can Barney save the sheep and help him find a safe new home?

Crossword



ACROSS

2. A baby sheep
3. What happens to a sheep when their wool gets cut off
4. Sheep don't have any of these on the top of their mouth
5. What sheep do for up to nine hours a day
6. Kōwhai and harakeke are examples of these for the garden
7. The season when lots of young birds are learning to fly
8. A leafy plant sheep love to eat, alongside grass
9. The strong, weight-bearing parts of a sheep's feet

DOWN

1. Where baby birds usually hatch
2. What kind of animal a fledgling is
3. An animal covered in wool that loves to eat for nine hours a day
4. The main part of a sheep's diet, along with clover
5. The name for a male sheep that has not been desexed
6. Helps feed and shelter birds when planted in a garden
7. A ground-nesting bird often seen on school fields and sports grounds
9. Te reo Māori word for sheep

Answers on page 11

Spring Time Joke Corner!

Use the icons as a hint to see if you can work out the answers!



1. Why do bees have sticky hair?



2. What is a sheep's favourite place to shop?



3. What do you call a magical sheep?



4. What season is it best to go on a trampoline?



5. What does the letter A and a flower have in common?



6. What did the gardener say to the plant that flowered last?

Answers on page 11

Activity Answer Key:

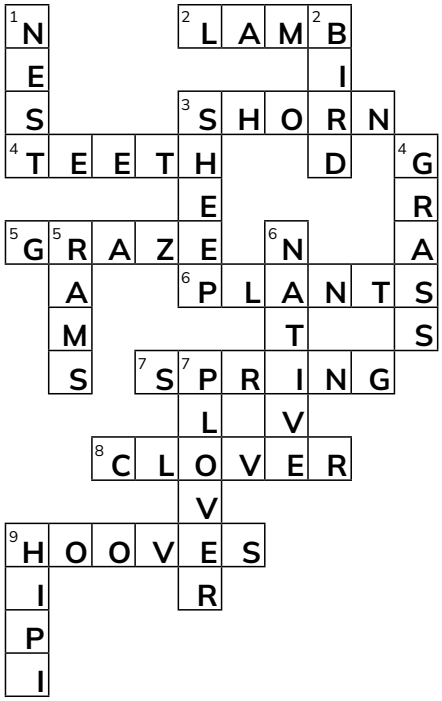
Sheep Scramble

1. WOOL
2. FLOCK
3. SHEARING
4. PASTURE
5. LAMB
6. EWE
7. RUMINANT

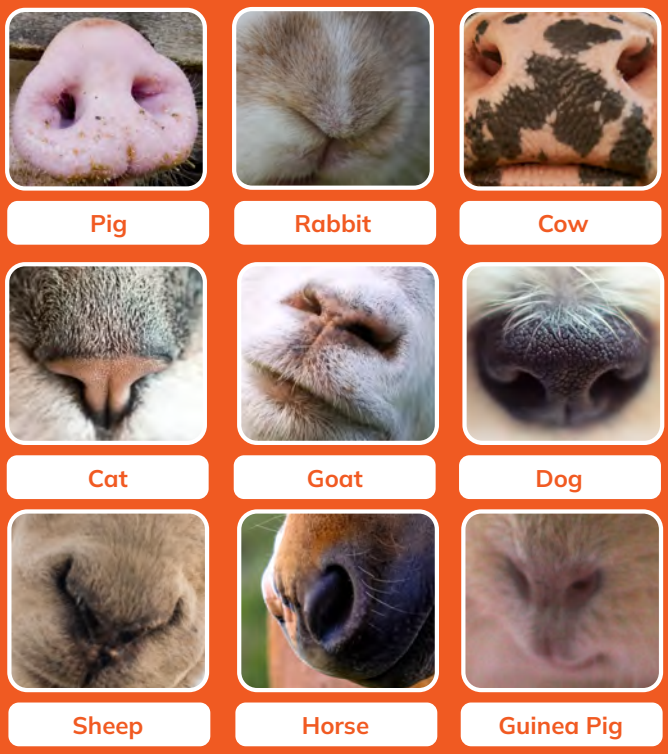
Spring Joke Corner

1. Because they use a honeycomb.
2. The baa-kery.
3. A ewenicorn.
4. Spring time!
5. A B comes after it!
6. Last bud not least.

Crossword



Who Knows Whose Nose?



Did you know New Zealand has 3 official languages. Te reo Māori, English and New Zealand Sign Language!

Have a go at learning the sign for 'sheep'!







Quiz Time!

Remember to have a go at the quiz all about Sheep to be in to win an awesome prize pack!

Check it out here!





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!

