

**PLUS: THE BC SPCA ANNUAL REPORT**

# AnimalSense

sPCA.bc.ca Spring/Summer 2022 \$2.95

## **INSIDE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Supporting  
survivors of  
domestic abuse,  
and their pets

## **OUR EVOLVING MISSION**

As the needs of B.C. animals  
change, so too does the  
SPCA's approach





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Arnie, BC SPCA 2019 rescue

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As needs evolve, the BC SPCA is finding new ways to support our province's animals.



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## BCSPCA

is a not-for-profit reliant on support from animal lovers like you.  
To explore ways to show you care, visit [spca.bc.ca](https://spca.bc.ca). **THANK YOU!**



# AnimalSense

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



## Dear Friends,

As this pandemic has dragged on longer than most of us ever anticipated, I've often thought how much Zoey, Thor and Johnny (my four-legged friends) have helped my family and I get through this difficult time. Simply put, animals bring joy to our lives and help improve our mental health. The BC SPCA believes that everyone benefits when they have animals in their lives and this is one of the reasons why we are ramping up our programming in areas that support the human-animal bond. Programs such as compassionate boarding, pet food banks and emergency response, coupled with efforts to eliminate barriers to pet-friendly housing, are all critical to allowing more people to experience the love and devotion of animals.

This edition of *AnimalSense* also includes our Annual Report for 2021. I remain eternally thankful to the more than 100,000 individuals across British Columbia who support the work of the BC SPCA and make it possible for us to continue and expand the work described above. That said, there are still significant hurdles to overcome – not the least of which is securing a much stronger commitment from our provincial government to improving animal welfare in B.C. This is an investment that will not only benefit animals but people, as we all emerge from this challenging period.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Craig Daniell  
Chief Executive Officer  
BC SPCA



# BETTY WHITE

## INSPIRES B.C. ANIMAL LOVERS

**BETTY WHITE WORKED TIRELESSLY** to advocate for animals throughout her life. The legendary actress – who at one time reportedly had as many as 26 dogs – supported the work of countless animal welfare endeavours. Simply put, Betty created a better world for all living creatures and inspired others to do the same – a tremendous gift that has continued to bring about change even after her passing.

Betty would have turned 100 years old on January 17, 2022. In honour of her amazing legacy, fans harnessed the power of social media using *#bettywhitechallenge* to encourage people to pay tribute to the late actress and donate to the animal charity of their choice in her memory. And on January 17, B.C. residents showed up



Betty White at home with her dogs, Bandy, Stormy and Danny, in 1954.

with an incredible outpouring of support for the cause. In total, the province raised more than \$400,000, all in honour of Betty.

Betty once said, “Animals are near and dear to my heart, and I’ve devoted my life to trying to improve their lives.” Thank you to everyone who continues to carry on this Golden Girl’s legacy of giving. □

## CARING IN A CRISIS



**BORN OUT OF A LOVE OF ANIMALS,** humanity and nature, Eric and Dana Margolis created The Eric S. Margolis Family Foundation to support and nurture the causes closest to their heart. A veteran journalist and author, Eric

has covered conflicts around the world, witnessing the suffering of humans and animals alike with an empathetic eye. When wildfires ravaged British Columbia, Eric shared online, “My heart is filled with sorrow for the beautiful animals and trees of B.C. I wish we could do more.”

Turning that sorrow into action, Eric and Dana made an incredible \$100,000 gift to help ensure the BC SPCA can continue to respond to the needs of animals and their humans impacted by wildfires – animals like Tonnerre (left), who received emergency treatments for burns after flames tore through the area where he and his guardian were living. In response to the pandemic, Eric and Dana supported the expansion of our food bank services to help meet the growing needs of people and their pets – keeping families together, bellies full and tails wagging.

Thank you to Eric, Dana and their foundation for an unwavering commitment to this worthy cause. □

## BECOME A MEMBER!



**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT** for animals by becoming a Member of the BC SPCA. Members help direct the vision and mission of the BC SPCA, and under our amended Bylaws have been accorded enhanced rights and privileges, including the right to directly elect the Board of Directors. Visit our website at [spca.bc.ca/membership](https://spca.bc.ca/membership) for more information or to apply for/renew your membership. □



# CORPORATE DONORS GIVE BIG

THE BC SPCA IS THANKFUL for our remarkable supporters who reached out to help animals in 2021, as our province experienced a heat dome, wildfires and floods, all the while navigating an ongoing pandemic. As demanding as it was, 2021 reminded us that we can count on our community to be there in times of the greatest need.

Last year, the BC SPCA received a record number of calls and emails from people and businesses wanting to help. Hill's Pet Nutrition offered pallets of food; longtime supporters TELUS, Teck and BMO Bank of Montreal donated significant funding; and



An SPCA volunteer poses with a large donation from Hill's.

many more businesses, individuals and foundations made generous contributions to ensure the BC SPCA could help animals affected by these unprecedented natural disasters.

Scientists are predicting more extreme weather to come and,

with the support of our compassionate community, we will continue to respond with emergency shelter, supplies and other aid. Thank you for supporting animals year-round, and for being there with life-saving help when disaster strikes. □



## STAY CONNECTED

GET THE LATEST BC SPCA NEWS delivered right to your mailbox when you subscribe. Through *Anim@ls* e-news and our breaking news alerts, we make sure you are the first to know what's happening with animal issues in B.C. and how you can make a difference for companion, farm and wild animals who need your help.

*Anim@ls* also offers valuable health tips for your pet, the latest research on animal behaviour, as well as heartwarming tales about animals who have been rescued thanks to your generous support. Sign up today at [spca.bc.ca/get-updates](https://spca.bc.ca/get-updates). You can also visit [spca.bc.ca/newsletters](https://spca.bc.ca/newsletters) to sign up for BC SPCA updates specifically for kids, teachers and those interested in learning more about wildlife and farm animals. Or, if you're feeling social, follow the BC SPCA on TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter! □



# WORDS OF WISDOM

**FOR 25 YEARS, DR. DAVID FRASER** has headed up the Animal Welfare Program at UBC – an initiative that the BC SPCA helped to establish in 1997. As well as mentoring hundreds of students in career paths in animal welfare, David has played a key role advancing animal welfare nationally and internationally, including being appointed a Member of the Order of Canada in 2005 as a pioneer of animal welfare science. Since 2000, he has contributed to *AnimalSense* magazine with his “Applied Knowledge” column. David is retiring now. His 44th and final column (page 31) focuses on six animal welfare challenges for the future. □



## THE RIGHT KIND OF TRAINER?

**ANY COMPANY** can call themselves “humane.” BC SPCA’s AnimalKind initiative helps you make sure. AnimalKind is an accreditation and referral program for animal-related businesses. The BC SPCA ensures that companies bearing the AnimalKind logo follow a strict set of standards and use the kindest, most humane methods possible. To date, the BC SPCA has launched AnimalKind accreditation programs for pest control companies and dog trainers. There are currently 29 accredited dog trainers; to find one near you, visit [animalkind.ca](http://animalkind.ca). □



## SUMMER LEARNIN’

**IN-PERSON YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS** are returning to select BC SPCA community centre locations (provided COVID restrictions allow). “Summer camps offer youth an immersive animal-focused experience that is fun and educational,” says Craig Naherniak, general manager of humane education for the BC SPCA. “We are also offering a virtual camp experience for those in locations outside of the eight in-person communities of Kelowna, Kamloops, Castlegar, Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver, Surrey and Maple Ridge.” For more details, visit [spca.bc.ca/camp](http://spca.bc.ca/camp). ■





BC SPCA officers rescue animals during the 2021 wildfires. (Inset) Distributing supplies to displaced families. (Opposite) Pet food banks are a key part of the SPCA's outreach efforts.





# CHANGING

WITH THE NEEDS The role of the BC SPCA is evolving

**E**mma\*, a loving guardian to cats Sandy, Dolce and Henry, never expected to need help caring for her feline family. But the senior, who works part-time to supplement her small pension, was among the British Columbians hit hard financially during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Stretching my budget to cover my own food and expenses didn’t leave much money for pet supplies,” she says. “Being able to access the BC SPCA pet food bank in my area was a godsend in helping me care for my own three cats and the other community cats I support.”

Emma was one of thousands of B.C. guardians who were offered a helping hand through BC SPCA pet food banks last year. In 2021, the Society provided food and

other supplies to more than 34,000 pets through its own facilities and via partnerships with nearly 100 local food banks, homeless shelters, non-profit organizations, as well as drop-offs to remote and Indigenous communities.

Craig Daniell, chief executive officer of the BC SPCA, says the significant growth in SPCA food banks is just one of the shifts the Society is making to meet the evolving needs of animals in B.C.

“Through our sheltering program and animal protection services, we will continue to be that safety net for B.C.’s most at-risk animals,” he explains. “But with the success of our ongoing spay/neuter initiatives, we’re seeing fewer homeless and abandoned animals across the province. This means we are now able to redirect

some of our resources to other animal issues that urgently need attention.” One of these key areas is providing support for marginalized or struggling pet guardians.

## CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

“Throughout the pandemic, rescue organizations around the world saw a spike in the number of people seeking animal companions,” Daniell says. “The isolation so many people experienced due to COVID highlighted how valuable pets are for our mental well-being.” But the pandemic also brought to light the growing number of guardians who care deeply about their pets, yet struggle to provide for them. “People shouldn’t be denied the companionship and love of their

\*Name has been changed



**The Seabird Island Band's spay/neuter day. (Below) BC SPCA staff help keep families and pets together – come wildfires or high water.**

pet because they've lost their job, or are challenged or marginalized in some other way. By expanding our community support programs, we can help these animals stay in loving homes."

In addition to provincial outreach initiatives, individual SPCA locations are forming unique partnerships within their own communities. One such relationship began in March 2021 between the BC SPCA in Chilliwack and the Seabird Island Band, a Stó:lō community located three kilometres northeast of Agassiz in the Upper Fraser Valley.

"We recognized there was a need for spay/neuter support in our community and began reaching out to see if there were any programs available to help," says Stephanie Thomas, lands assistant for the Seabird Island Band. "The BC SPCA helped us access a Spay It Forward grant and we were able to sterilize 32 animals during three dedicated spay/neuter days in May, June and July of last year."

Building on that relationship, the Seabird Island Band created an emergency food bank with SPCA assistance. "With the food we received from the SPCA, we were able to deliver pet care packages to 21 elders through our SIB elder coordinator, and an additional 27 families came to pick up food for their furry friends," says Thomas. She notes that the need grew even more crucial when the region was hit by devastating floods last fall. "Even if people were able to get to a store, the shelves were often bare, so the SPCA donations really helped."

The band also organized an event to share vital information on pet health and care for its members. "Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we decided to hold the event virtually, with presentations by a registered veterinary technician, an animal protection officer, the Seabird Island housing manager and a trainer from the BC SPCA's AnimalKind accreditation program," says Thomas. "There was a great turnout and the community really

benefited from the information that was shared."

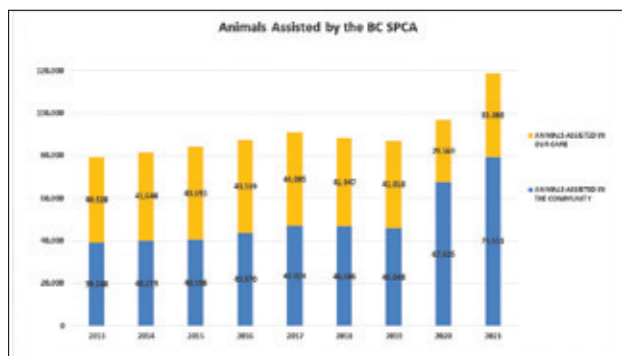
At the BC SPCA's Sea to Sky location in Squamish, outreach initiatives are also growing rapidly. "During the past two years, we have given out more than three tons of pet food and have gone from providing supplies directly to pet guardians in two communities in the region to helping in seven communities as well as to two local food banks," says manager Krista Larson. She notes that her team has also helped with emergency boarding, access to spay/neuter programs and assistance during last year's fires and floods. "Recently, we were able to reach out to help tenants who lost everything in a local apartment fire, with pet food, bowls, toys and other supplies for their pets."

## KEEPING PETS AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

Providing practical support for guardians is also a key focus for SPCA special constables, who are often the first ones on the scene when an animal needs help. "We investigate nearly 10,000 complaints of animal neglect and abuse each year, and there are definitely times when the best option for an animal is to remove them from the situation for their safety and protection," says Shawn Eccles, senior







manager of investigations for the BC SPCA. “But, increasingly, we’re seeing situations where an animal’s needs are not being met, but the person loves their pet and just doesn’t have the knowledge or resources to do what’s right.” Eccles says that by sharing information on proper pet care and offering practical help – from access to veterinary care to providing building materials for a shelter – the situation can be resolved without seizing the animal. “We’d love to have more funding to expand this type of community assistance,” Eccles explains. “We’re still here to enforce animal cruelty laws and ensure that animals are seized when necessary, but if someone just needs a helping hand to make things right, we’d rather offer whatever support we can to keep pets and their families together.”

## RESPONDING TO NATURAL DISASTERS

Another growing need is emergency relief from heat domes, wildfires, flooding and other natural disasters that have devastated the province in recent years. “With SPCA community animal centres already operating in many communities, we are uniquely positioned to assist during a natural disaster,” says BC SPCA chief operations officer

Parm Takhar. “We also have a provincial network of staff and volunteers who can be quickly mobilized to do everything from rescuing animals from behind evacuation lines and providing

veterinary care, to distributing supplies at emergency support centres and offering temporary boarding for displaced pets.”

**However we grow, we will always be there for animals who need us.**

Takhar notes that as weather patterns become more severe, increased support for animals and their guardians will be needed. “We are already seeing this shift,” he says. “This past year, we provided nearly 12,000 nights of free emergency boarding for pets displaced by wildfires and floods, and our special constables were very busy behind evacuation lines ensuring that animals made it out safely.” Furthermore, Takhar says, the BC SPCA is building partnerships with other emergency relief agencies and strengthening its infrastructure to ensure the Society can continue to respond quickly when disaster strikes.

## FEWER ANIMALS, GREATER NEEDS

Decades ago, the BC SPCA was overwhelmed with the number of homeless and abandoned animals being brought to our facilities.

While cat overpopulation continues to be an issue in many B.C. communities, the SPCA – like many animal welfare organizations – is now seeing fewer incoming animals. “This is a good thing, because it means our spay/neuter programs are working and that we have addressed that level of animal suffering in the community,” says Daniell. But while intake is going down, SPCA staff are dealing with animals who have more complex behavioural issues that need care and attention. “The truth is that, in the past, these animals might never have even made it to a shelter,” Daniell explains. “So we are now reaching this group of animals who need specialized care and we’re able to help them.”

Daniell says the Society’s increased expertise in behaviour modification for anxiety, fearfulness and other issues means animals who might not have found homes in the past are being adopted and going on to live full, happy lives. “We are spending more time on each animal, but the outcome is definitely worth it.” He adds that the Society has future plans for specialized behaviour centres to offer increased support for animals with special needs.

Daniell says this evolution of programming within SPCA facilities and in the community is necessary to stay relevant to the Society’s mission. “I think our responsibility as an animal welfare organization is to be responsive to change, and to the changing needs of the animals we serve. However we grow, we will always be there for animals who need us.” ■



# A PLACE TO BE SAFE

A new SPCA program ensures that victims escaping domestic violence don't have to leave their pets behind

**T**he BC SPCA is increasing our support for women and families fleeing domestic violence through a pilot project that provides foster homes for pets while their guardians are living in transitional housing.

"We know that many women will delay leaving an unsafe situation rather than leave their pets behind," says Louise Lathey, BC SPCA's outreach specialist, violence prevention. "Unfortunately, not all transition houses are able to accommodate animals."

SAGE Transition House, one of the referral partners in the SPCA's new foster program, is among the few first-stage homes that regularly allows pets. But the facility's program coordinator, Frances Robinson, says keeping up with the demand is challenging. "Right now, we have four pets in our home, which is two more than we would normally take on. We won't be able to accommodate the next pet that a woman or family brings with them,

which means we need to find a place to take care of them."

This is a need the BC SPCA's violence prevention foster program was designed to address, and the pilot project in West Vancouver and North Vancouver is already making an impact.

"BC SPCA shelters across the province regularly provide compassionate boarding for pets of individuals leaving unsafe situations," says Lathey. "Typically, a shelter can house an animal for emergency boarding for a maximum of two weeks, which can be extended depending on space and the situation. Because the violence prevention foster program uses a network of specially trained foster homes, we can offer a minimum stay of one month that can be extended as long as necessary for survivors to find pet-friendly accommodations."

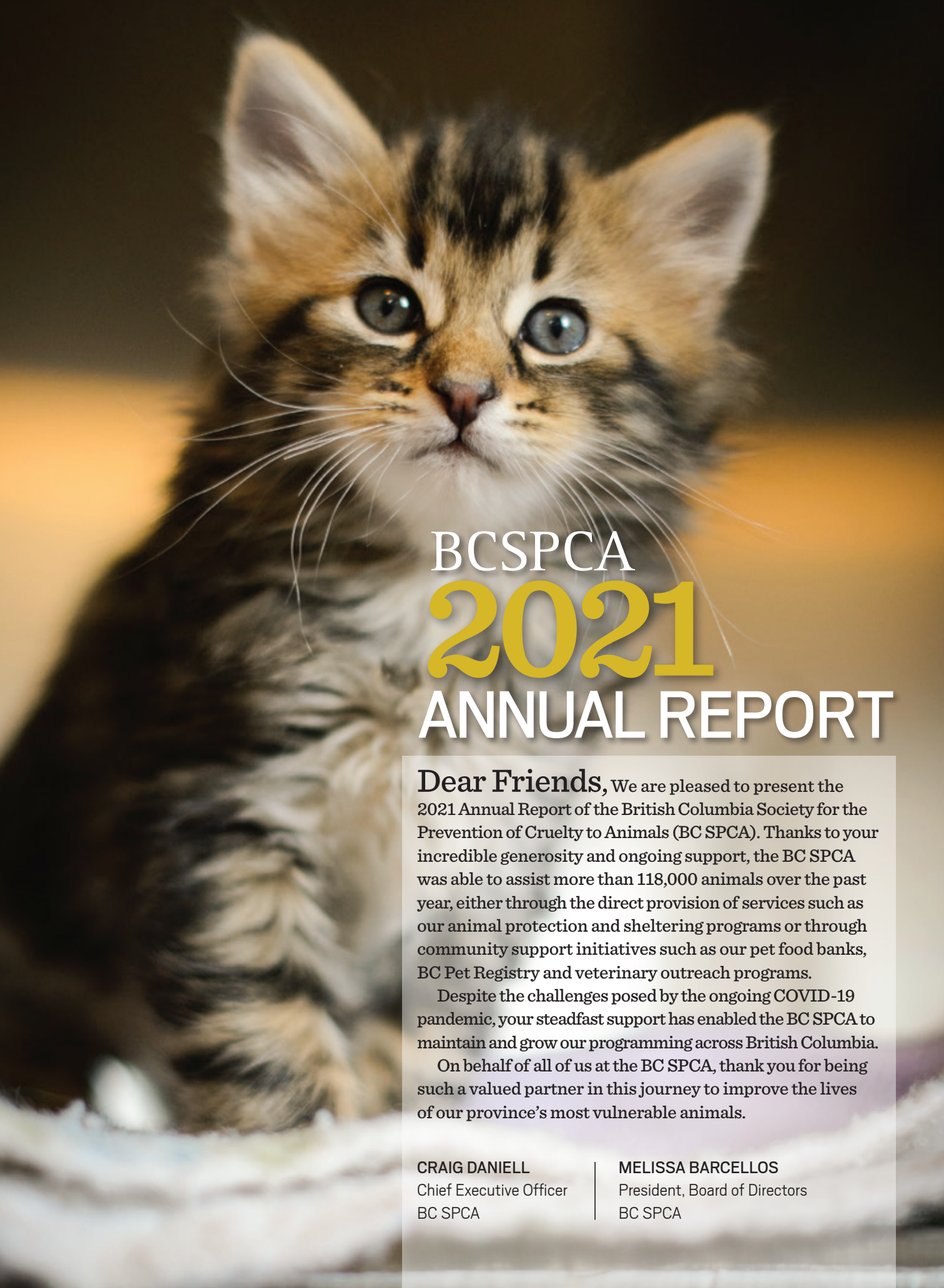
Lathey says fosters in the violence prevention initiative will complete training specifically designed for the program. It

includes detailed information on domestic violence and safety/security protocols, as well as training created by BC SPCA's AnimalKind trainer SmartDog to help identify and deal with behaviour issues a pet may have from witnessing trauma.

Says Robinson: "I can't thank the BC SPCA enough for this program. In the last quarter of 2021, we had situations where we were able to accommodate families but could not take in 24 pets. In addition to protecting families seeking help, it's so important to ensure that animals are not left in situations where they are at risk of being targeted by the abuser."

Preliminary research and fact-finding work for the violence prevention foster program was made possible through a generous donation from Marietta Kozak and her husband Peter Hall and will be rolled out in other parts of B.C. over the next three years through a Systems Change grant from the Vancouver Foundation. ■





# BCSPCA 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

**Dear Friends,** We are pleased to present the 2021 Annual Report of the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA). Thanks to your incredible generosity and ongoing support, the BC SPCA was able to assist more than 118,000 animals over the past year, either through the direct provision of services such as our animal protection and sheltering programs or through community support initiatives such as our pet food banks, BC Pet Registry and veterinary outreach programs.

Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, your steadfast support has enabled the BC SPCA to maintain and grow our programming across British Columbia.

On behalf of all of us at the BC SPCA, thank you for being such a valued partner in this journey to improve the lives of our province's most vulnerable animals.

**CRAIG DANIELL**  
Chief Executive Officer  
BC SPCA

**MELISSA BARCELLOS**  
President, Board of Directors  
BC SPCA

# inspire

Below: Young entrepreneurs Maliya and Maya generously donated a portion of the proceeds from their jewelry business to help animals impacted by the B.C. wildfires.

**CREATING A MORE HUMANE WORLD** for animals through advocacy and education is at the core of the BC SPCA's mission. Last year, with the help of our supporters, we empowered animal lovers of all ages to take action in their communities through our youth programs, website resources, social media campaigns and advocacy with all levels of government. In 2021, our work included successfully petitioning for an end to mink farming in British Columbia and advocating on issues such as live horse export, the exotic wildlife trade, the wolf cull, fireworks bans, rodenticides, wildlife poisoning and input into the Codes of Practice for farm animals in Canada. □



## Kids take the lead!

**E**very year, thousands of kids of all ages choose to take a stand against animal abuse and neglect. Some create posters or make class presentations to raise awareness about animal issues that matter to them. Others organize SPCA school clubs or collect money and supplies to donate to their local shelter. “We’re constantly amazed by the generosity and thoughtfulness of the youth in our province,” says BC SPCA humane education coordinator Gillian Ickert Plett. “The compassion we see in the younger generation is so encouraging.”

That compassion often extends beyond animals. “Many kids split their donations between animal and human causes like poverty,

homelessness and anti-bullying,” says Ickert Plett. “Just imagine the humane future these kids will help create!”

Last year, the BC SPCA’s summer camps, school presentations, Kids Club, workshops and clubs reached more than 12,000 young British Columbians. “It’s important for young people who care about animals to see that there are like-minded kids out there so they know they’re part of a bigger movement,” says Craig Naherniak, general manager of humane education for the BC SPCA. “The goal of our programs is to inspire empathy and compassion for all living things and to encourage young people to take action in their communities. All it takes is a few kids leading by example to really make a difference.” □

**12,260**

KIDS ENGAGED IN OUR SUMMER CAMPS, WORKSHOPS, KIDS CLUB, SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS AND CLUBS

**276,722**

VISITS TO OUR “TAKE ACTION” ADVOCACY WEBPAGE

**10**

MAJOR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS LAUNCHED AND 20 POLICY SUBMISSIONS CREATED TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF ANIMALS

**214,378**

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS HELPING US SPREAD THE WORD

**8.4 Million**

WEBSITE VISITS FOR NEWS AND EDUCATION ON ANIMAL ISSUES



## Shutting down mink farms in B.C.

**A**fter actively campaigning for more than two years to stop the practice of farmed mink in British Columbia, the SPCA was elated when, on November 5, 2021, the provincial government announced a ban on live mink on farms after April 2023, with a full shutdown of the industry in B.C. by 2025. “We are grateful to the tens of thousands of animal

lovers who joined our campaign, making it clear to government through your letters, emails and petition signatures that you will not tolerate an unnecessary and inhumane industry in B.C.,” says Dr. Sara Dubois, the Society’s chief scientific officer.

Farmed mink are raised and killed solely for pelts sold to support luxury fashion industries overseas.



Dr. Dubois notes that the BC SPCA and other concerned groups began warning the government in the summer of 2020 about the risks of COVID-19 transmission between animals and humans on mink farms. “It was just another reason to put an

end to an industry that no longer aligns with the values of British Columbians.”

In advocating against mink farms, the BC SPCA worked in partnership with the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), concerned infectious disease specialists, The Fur-Bearers and Humane Society International/Canada. □

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## Riding to the rescue of homegrown horses

**I**n 2021, the BC SPCA joined with other groups calling on the federal government to ban the shipping of horses overseas for slaughter. More than 77,000 Canadians, including thousands of SPCA supporters, signed a federal petition voicing their concern over this practice. “Many Canadians aren’t aware that we are one of the only countries in the world that breeds, raises and transports horses overseas to be slaughtered,” says Melissa Speirs, the BC SPCA’s manager of farm animal welfare. “These gentle draft horses are bred and raised in feedlots in Canada and then exported on long journeys to their international destinations. Since 2013, more than 40,000 horses have been exported out of Canada.”

Speirs says horses are loaded



onto trucks and driven to airports in Calgary, Edmonton or Winnipeg, where they often sit on the tarmac for hours. “Before being loaded onto a plane, three to four horses are put into a single shipping crate smaller than the average horse stall. For international export, the typical time without feed, water

and rest for these horses is 20 to 22 hours.”

The BC SPCA will continue its work with the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition in 2022 to campaign for an end to the live export of horses for slaughter. For updates, visit [spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/take-action](https://spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/take-action). ■

# care

**LAST YEAR**, staff and volunteers in our 36 animal care facilities provided direct emergency care and shelter for nearly 18,000 companion, farm and wild animals, as well as 12,418 nights of free emergency pet boarding for individuals fleeing violent domestic situations and natural disasters. Together, we also ensured that more than 11,000 homeless and community animals were spayed and neutered to reduce the suffering of surplus animals, and assisted thousands of vulnerable pet guardians through charitable veterinary services, pet food banks and other outreach programs. As an evidence-based organization, the BC SPCA maintains close partnerships with academic institutions to ensure our veterinary, sheltering and rehabilitation services are informed by leading-edge animal science knowledge and research. □

## Christmas miracle



**D**uring this past holiday season, the BC SPCA was contacted about an emaciated dog and her five puppies who had been abandoned by their guardian. “She was living outdoors and starving, but she was obviously doing everything she could to try to feed her puppies and keep them

safe,” says Bonnie Pequin of the SPCA in Nanaimo. “She was such a sweet, loving dog and a very good mother.”

Because of her low body weight, Celeste was kept on a strict “refeeding” program to slowly reintroduce nutrients to her system. She and the puppies were placed in an SPCA foster home, where they immediately won the hearts of the family. “I would lay on the floor and Celeste would come over and put her head on me and look at me with the most loving and kind eyes,” recalls Celeste’s foster mom.



Following weeks of devoted care, the pooch and her pups regained their health and were all adopted into wonderful, loving homes. “We are so thankful to our supporters for making sure that animals like Celeste and her puppies are warm and safe and get the care that they need,” says Pequin. “No animal should be left out in the cold without food or shelter.” □

## A tail of courage

**A**t just seven weeks old, Ivy was cruelly thrown from a moving vehicle. Thankfully,



CARING  
FOR WILD  
ANIMALS



a Good Samaritan was able to retrieve the little black kitten and brought her to the BC SPCA in Kelowna for help.

The impact of her harrowing ordeal was so severe that her tail skin was almost completely removed and one of her femurs was fractured. Upon examination, it was determined that her tail was beyond repair and would need amputation.

Following treatment of her hip and femur issues, Ivy was given the all-clear and has begun life anew with a loving family. Ivy

was just one of nearly 18,000 abused, injured and abandoned animals helped in our facilities by generous SPCA donors last year. ■



**118,917**ANIMALS ASSISTED  
ACROSS B.C.**17,966**HOMELESS ANIMALS  
PROVIDED WITH  
EMERGENCY CARE AND  
SHELTER**34,141**ANIMALS HELPED  
THROUGH BC SPCA PET  
FOOD BANKS**25,102**ANIMALS TREATED  
THROUGH BC SPCA  
VETERINARY SERVICES**8,704**ANIMALS ADOPTED INTO  
NEW LOVING HOMES**2,485**LOST ANIMALS  
REUNITED WITH  
GUARDIANS**4,021**INJURED AND  
ORPHANED WILDLIFE  
REHABILITATED**4,320**ANIMALS TRANSPORTED  
THROUGH THE  
BC SPCA DRIVE FOR  
LIVES PROGRAM**12,418**NIGHTS OF  
FREE EMERGENCY  
PET BOARDING**11,329**SPAY/NEUTER  
SURGERIES FOR  
HOMELESS AND  
COMMUNITY ANIMALS**150,000**REGISTRANTS IN THE  
BC PET REGISTRY TO  
REUNITE LOST ANIMALS  
WITH GUARDIANS**29**DOG TRAINERS AND  
**3** PEST CONTROL  
COMPANIES  
ACCREDITED THROUGH  
THE BC SPCA  
ANIMALKIND PROGRAM

**IN 2021**, BC SPCA special constables rescued thousands of animals from cruel, dangerous and neglectful situations. From starving farm animals, puppy mills and large-scale hoarding cases to those put at risk during natural disasters, your support means our constables are there to protect animals, support guardians who need help caring for their pets and ensure that those who inflict suffering on animals are held accountable through the justice system. □



# protect

## SPCA rescues 119 dogs from single hoarder



PUPPIES (BEFORE)



PUPPIES (AFTER)

**W**hen the SPCA was called to Fort Nelson in March 2021 to help animals living in a hoarding environment, we were told to expect “about 22 dogs.” Yet as protection officers arrived, they found 119 badly neglected small-breed canines.

“The owner was very overwhelmed and did the right thing in asking for assistance,” says Marcie Moriarty, chief prevention and

enforcement officer for the BC SPCA. The 103 adult dogs and 16 puppies were brought to SPCA facilities in Fort St. John and Dawson Creek for initial intake, assessment and triage, then moved to other SPCA locations, where medical treatment and behavioural support continued. “Many of the dogs were extremely matted and were suffering from dental issues, hernias, nose abrasions, eye issues and lack of proper nutrition,”

Moriarty explains. “They were also fearful of human handling.”

The dogs, which included shih tzus, terriers, papillons and other small breeds, were nursed back to health and have all since been adopted. Thank you to our supporters, who funded nearly 10,000 animal cruelty investigations across B.C. last year. ■

**9,077**ANIMAL CRUELTY  
INVESTIGATIONS**35,832**ANIMALS ASSISTED BY BC SPCA  
PROTECTION OFFICERS**1,913**ANIMALS REMOVED FROM  
DANGEROUS OR NEGLECTFUL  
GUARDIANS**78,134**CALLS TO THE BC SPCA  
PROVINCIAL CALL CENTRE  
HELPLINE

**FINANCIAL STRENGTH**, effective governance, new technologies, state-of-the-art facilities and robust employee and volunteer development programs are key to fulfilling our mission to end animal suffering. Since 2013, the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been among the elite group of Canadian organizations accredited by Imagine Canada, the national umbrella for charities and non-profits. Imagine Canada accredits organizations using a nationwide set of shared standards designed to demonstrate compliance in five fundamental areas: financial accountability and transparency; board governance; fundraising; staff management; and volunteer involvement. In 2021, the Society continued to develop and strengthen its Board and Regional Council governance structures to incorporate best practices in non-profit leadership. □



## Equity, diversity and reconciliation

**T**he BC SPCA is committed to a future where diversity, equity and reconciliation are meaningfully embedded in all aspects of our work and within the communities we serve. In our efforts to foster an environment of kindness, compassion and respect, we have a responsibility to stand up

# grow

Right: Mother-son duo Megan and Cody helped their local SPCA branch go solar.

## Walking the walk

**H**elping animals means ensuring that they have a safe, healthy world in which to live. The BC SPCA's guiding principle of sustainability and care of the environment is regularly incorporated into our programs and activities. Ten-year-old Cody Kelso, a participant in the Society's youth program, took that message to heart and showed that he was willing to "walk the walk"

to make a difference.

In March 2021, Cody and his mom, Megan, set off on a four-day hike from Gibsons to Powell River, to raise \$20,000 for a new solar roof at the Sunshine Coast SPCA in Sechelt, and an additional \$10,000 for the British Columbia Sustainable Energy Association's "Cool It" program for kids.

"They ended up raising an incredible \$23,000 for our solar panels, making the Sunshine Coast SPCA the first solar-powered



animal shelter in B.C.," says BC SPCA facilities maintenance officer Rob Lindskog. "Not only are we able to be more environmentally responsible, but the money we are saving on energy costs can now be used to help more animals." An additional \$19,500 grant from the Sunshine Coast Community Forest Legacy Fund

enabled the SPCA to also install solar water heating in Sechelt, complementing the new solar array. The SPCA is hoping to add more solar-powered facilities across B.C.

Asked about his efforts, Cody points out: "If we don't take care of the Earth and the animals now, we won't have an Earth to live on." □



for all those who are facing injustice and cruelty. The humane community which we work towards and advocate for cannot come to pass while systemic racism and intolerance exist. As an organization, we are fully committed to systemic change within the animal welfare sector through our foundational principles of diversity and inclusion; equity and accessibility; reconciliation with Indigenous peoples; intersectionality; and justice. For further details, visit [spca.bc.ca/EDR-Foundational-Principles](https://spca.bc.ca/EDR-Foundational-Principles). □



Jennifer Gore hands out pet supplies during the 2021 wildfires.

## Our volunteer heroes!

When unprecedented wildfires and floods devastated communities across B.C. last year, the SPCA was on hand to help animals and their guardians affected by the disasters. That emergency response would not have been possible without the help of our incredible volunteers. They opened their homes to displaced animals, distributed pet food, crates, leashes, toys and other supplies through Emergency Support Services centres, and helped to care for animals who were offered free pet emergency boarding at SPCA shelters.

Jennifer Gore, a former SPCA manager, Board chair and longtime volun-

teer, worked alongside a dedicated team of volunteers providing pet food and other essentials to evacuated pet guardians in Kamloops. "Many of the people we met were tired, stressed, overwhelmed and grieving," says Gore. "Some had lost everything; others were still looking for their missing pets." She says offering practical help and information was key, but emotional support was just as valuable. "Sometimes the most important thing we could do was just listen and hear their stories so they knew that they were not alone."

Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers who donated their time and talents in 2021 to create a better world for animals. ■



## Leadership team

### BC SPCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Melissa Barcellos**  
*President*
- **Emmy Blouin**
- **Kurtis Bosecke**
- **Victoria Brydon**
- **Barbara Coe**
- **Lindsay Curry**
- **Mark Montemurro**
- **Diane Nguyen**
- **Catherine Ruby**
- **Jason Scultety**
- **Ashley Thandi**

### SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

- **Craig Daniell**  
*Chief Executive Officer*
- **Lorie Chortyk**  
*General Manager, Communications*
- **Shoni Field**  
*Chief Development Officer*
- **Marcie Moriarty**  
*Chief Prevention and Enforcement Officer*
- **Craig Naherniak**  
*General Manager, Humane Education*
- **Parm Takhar**  
*Chief Operations Officer*
- **Emily Thorner**  
*Chief Financial and Technology Officer*
- **Jolie Wist**  
*General Manager, Human Resources*

**574**

SKILLED AND CARING STAFF

**3,804**

DEDICATED  
VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP  
US EXPAND OUR SERVICES  
TO ANIMALS

**158,718**

VOLUNTEER  
HOURS PROVIDED

**43**

BC SPCA FACILITIES  
DEDICATED  
TO THE CARE AND  
PROTECTION  
OF ANIMALS

# Your generosity in action



**FOR EVERY DOLLAR YOU GAVE IN 2021,  
HERE IS HOW YOU HELPED THE ANIMALS**



**36¢** EMERGENCY SHELTER & COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Provided a temporary home for **17,966** abandoned, injured and abused animals, helped **4,021** injured and orphaned wildlife and assisted **79,551** animals in the community.

**20¢** CHECK-UPS & MEDICAL TREATMENT



Ensured animals get an initial health check and are spayed or neutered. Sick or injured animals receive further treatment.

**11¢** CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS



Conducted **9,077** new cruelty investigations. The BC SPCA is the only animal welfare organization in B.C. with the authority to enforce laws related to animal cruelty.

**6¢** PREVENTING FUTURE SUFFERING

Helped stop the cycle of violence and made our communities safer for animals through humane education and advocacy.

**11¢** SUPPORTING THE ANIMALS

Provided a team to care for the animals. Nothing fancy, but essential.

**15¢** MAKING FRIENDS FOR THE ANIMALS

Allowed more than 118,900 animals to be helped this year thanks to generous donors. Fundraising truly is friendraising! Thank you!

## REVENUES (IN \$000s)

Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021    Oct. 1, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2020

Donations & Fundraising	\$23,854	\$21,443
Legacy & Life Insurance*	\$7,548	\$5,602
Kenneling & Bylaw Enforcement	\$2,667	\$1,980
Sheltering, Medical, Clinical Services & Social Enterprise Services	\$7,093	\$7,205
Lotteries & Raffles	\$2,242	\$1,379
Government Grants & Subsidies	\$1,050	\$3,881
Other Grants	\$540	\$834
Investment Income	\$6,569	\$1,552
Capital Gains/Losses	\$1	\$(14)

**Total** **\$51,564** **\$43,862**

## EXPENDITURES (IN \$000s)

Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021    Oct. 1, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2020

Sheltering, Kenneling, Bylaw Enforcement & Social Enterprise	\$14,739	\$14,435
Veterinary Care & Spay/Neuter	\$2,916	\$2,689
Cruelty Investigations	\$4,623	\$3,873
Humane Education	\$1,390	\$886
Advocacy & Volunteer Development	\$1,093	\$1,183
Hospitals & Clinics	\$4,823	\$4,457
Animal Health & Welfare	\$922	\$775
Administration & Program Support	\$4,482	\$4,352
Revenue Development	\$6,025	\$5,865

**Total** **\$41,013** **\$38,515**

\*Cents per dollar includes only the above expenditures and does not include amortization.

## TOTALS (IN \$000s)

Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021    Oct. 1, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2020

<b>Operating Surplus Before the Undernoted</b>	<b>\$10,551</b>	<b>\$5,347</b>
Amortization	\$2,420	\$2,361
Bank Charges and Interest	\$698	\$587
<b>Net Operating Surplus**</b>	<b>\$7,433</b>	<b>\$2,399</b>

\* A significant portion of Legacy gifts are designated. Designated gifts are not recognized as revenue in our financial statements until the terms of the designation are met, which may be in future years.

\*\* Revenues include government grants and wage subsidies. Reported surplus is primarily designated gifts for future facility development expenditures.

The BC SPCA is proud to be accredited by **Imagine Canada**. This accreditation means we've demonstrated excellence in financial accountability and transparency, board governance, fundraising, staff management and volunteer management.





# FOSTERING A BETTER WORLD

Neglected ducks, chickens and horses get a second chance thanks to dedicated farm fosters



Cremello stallion Benny, before and after.



Last year, the BC SPCA's animal protection team investigated nearly 10,000 complaints of neglect and abuse. "I think many people associate the SPCA with cats and dogs, but our investigations are just as likely to involve horses and farm animals," says Shawn Eccles, senior manager of investigations. "When these animals are brought into custody, we rely heavily on the compassionate care of our network of horse and farm fosters, who provide a safe environment for animals as they recover."

But the need, he explains, is far greater than the current number of fosters. "The biggest demand we have right now is for temporary housing for chickens, ducks, donkeys and horses, although we also take in sheep, goats and pigs. If we don't have horse and farm fosters available, our ability to remove animals to relieve their distress can be challenging."

Janice T. has been a BC SPCA horse foster for more than 10 years.

"Many of the horses we foster come to us with ribs showing, dull eyes, and medical and trust issues," she says. "I don't always know their history, so I have to be patient and give them space."

She tells the tale of one horse who stole her heart: a cremello stallion named Benny. "When he arrived, he had no energy and was depressed. He was severely underweight, had parasites and had started to lose hope." Janice began working to increase his weight, and to slowly earn his trust.

She realized Benny was starting to come around when he looked forward to his meals, his eyes got brighter and he began to "nicker" when he saw her; this guttural, low-pitched horse vocalization is an expression of love for both humans and other horses. "He would close his eyes and stand

there half-asleep with his head on my shoulder."

"Janice is an incredible foster – we couldn't do the work we do without experienced and dedicated volunteers like her," says Leiki Salumets, BC SPCA's manager, equine and farm animal care. "She gets some of our most complicated cases and has played a key role in finding them homes."

When asked what she would say to someone thinking about becoming a horse foster, Janice says the experience is extremely rewarding. "You aren't alone – the BC SPCA gives you so much support." What's more, she adds: "I am overwhelmed by the love the horses I foster give back. To watch their eyes brighten, to feel them start to trust you, the transformation is amazing."

If you are interested in being a horse or farm foster, please visit [spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/foster](https://spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/foster). ■



# THE Human Intrusion

Your guide to keeping wildlife safe from the devastation of urbanization

In 2021, the BC SPCA's Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre (Wild ARC) admitted a record 3,128 injured and orphaned critters. "The number of animals we take care of at Wild ARC increases each year," says BC SPCA research specialist Erin Ryan. "The expansion of human developments and increases in density are having an impact on wildlife."

The top three reasons animals end up at Wild ARC are directly linked to urbanization and the actions of people: collision with vehicles, capture by free-roaming outdoor cats or off-leash dogs, and collisions with windows. "Roughly 80 per cent of Wild ARC's patients are admitted because people have created a situation that either harmed the animals or caused them to become orphaned," Ryan explains.

The good news is there are many easy actions we can all take, on multiple fronts, to help reduce that risk.

## STREET SMARTS

Animals end up close to roadways and in danger of collision with vehicles for any number of reasons, including spring vegetation, the destruction of habitat by wildfires, and trash and recyclables on roadsides. "People throw apple cores out their car window thinking it won't cause any harm," Ryan explains. "But an apple core is an exciting find for a lot of animals and attracts rats, squirrels and raccoons." She furthermore

notes that owls who are drawn to the rodents gathering along roadways can be injured as well.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Pay attention to wildlife warning signs
- Dispose of garbage, recyclables and compost properly
- Stay within the recommended speed limit – reducing your speed in areas of limited visibility
- Scan road shoulders for animals – especially at dawn and dusk
- Look for shining eyes on roadsides







- Watch for flashing brake lights, possibly indicating wildlife near the road
- If you do spot an animal by the road, don't honk or flash your lights – this could cause them to panic and bolt

### PETS ON THE PROWL

Domestic felines kill hundreds of millions of wild birds and mammals each year. A strong natural instinct drives even a well-fed cat to hunt. What makes cats even more dangerous is the bacteria in their mouth – it kills birds. “Even a small scratch can transfer the bacteria,” Ryan cautions. “A bird captured by a cat who doesn’t look injured will still need to be treated with specialized antibiotics by wildlife rehabilitators.”

Domestic cats aren’t the only pets who harm wild animals. Off-leash domestic dogs can seriously injure squirrels, seal pups, fawns and other wild species. “During spring, animals with ground nests, like mallards and cottontail rabbits, are particularly at risk,” says Ryan.

Dogs can also scare mothers from their babies. “I remember a river otter pup who was admitted to Wild ARC because an off-leash dog frightened the mom and she never came back,” Ryan notes. If your pet brings you a baby animal, they have likely found a nest. Guardians should keep pets inside

or away from the area to prevent injury to the remaining babies and immediately contact a wildlife rehabilitator.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Keep your cat indoors, especially at night when they are most likely to hunt (which also protects the cat from nocturnal predators)
- Use outdoor enclosures or leashes for cats with a strong desire for outdoor access
- Make sure bird feeders are cat- and wildlife-proof, and keep that bird seed off the ground
- Try a CatBib (available at [shop.sPCA.bc.ca](http://shop.sPCA.bc.ca))
- Respect leash regulations in parks, especially in areas where you may encounter wildlife

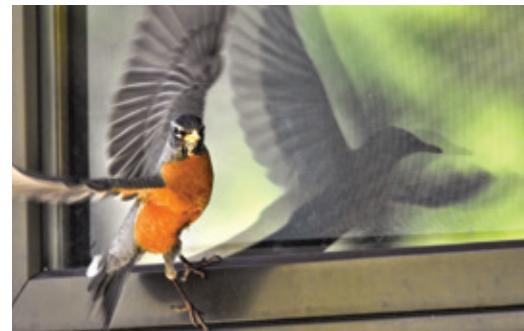


### FLIGHT RISK

In Canada, as many as 16 to 42 million birds are injured or killed by collisions with

windows every year. Birds as tiny as hummingbirds and as large as eagles are at risk. That number is on the rise because of urbanization, as well as climate change, which is causing changes to migration patterns. “Birds are more at risk of window strikes than ever,” says Ryan.

Unfortunately, there is no time of year or day when birds are safe. “Birds collide with windows because they just can’t see the glass, or light at night attracts them,” Ryan continues.



If a bird hits your window and is injured, place them in a cardboard box with air holes and a secure lid, and contact the BC SPCA animal helpline. Don’t attempt to give water, food or other care. ■

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Use WindowAlert™ decals or Feather Friendly® tape on your windows
- Hang mylar strips or well-secured strings of beads on windows
- Use window markers or draw on your windows with a bar of soap
- Relax your cleaning schedule – a dirty window is a safer window

*For all wildlife concerns, contact the BC SPCA animal helpline at 1.855.622.7722. Keep the number in your phone for easy access.*



# HAPPY ENDINGS



Golden Labrador Daisy and her new forever family.

## DAISY IN BLOOM

**W**hen Daisy, a sweet golden Lab, arrived at our shelter in Chilliwack this past January, she was suffering from lacerations on her hind leg, a swollen face and a severe injury to her paw after being run over by a car. “She even had blood and tire tread marks across her face,” recalls Chloe MacBeth, manager of the SPCA in Chilliwack. Daisy was rushed for emergency veterinary care, where it was discovered she also had a number of small fractures in her skull and would need to have toes that had been crushed by the car amputated. “Despite all that she

had been through, she had such a great spirit and was so good with the veterinary staff and her foster family during her daily wound care,” says MacBeth.

After months of care and recovery, Daisy, who had been previously used as a breeding animal, was adopted into a loving home where she enjoys being the centre of attention with her new family.

### REUNITED ... AND IT FEELS SO GOOD!

Ralph, a striking orange tabby, was living the life of a stray when he was brought to the Kamloops SPCA in February by a woman who had been feeding him, but was



Ralph is feeling the love after finding his way back to guardian Crystal Maclean.

going away. Little did she know, Ralph had been missing since March of 2018 when he escaped while staying with a pet-sitter. His guardian, former Kamloops resident Crystal Maclean, was heartbroken when her kitty disappeared and had searched for months. Since then, she had relocated to Papua New Guinea for two years, before ultimately settling in Northern Ontario.

“When Ralph came in, we posted his photo on our shelter’s Facebook page in an effort to find his guardian,” says Sarah Gerow, animal care supervisor at the Kamloops SPCA. “In a stroke of luck, one of Crystal’s friends saw our post and contacted her in Ontario.”

Maclean says she felt shock, disbelief and sheer happiness when she found out Ralph was alive and safe.

A reunion was quickly organized and just like that Ralph was on a flight to Toronto. “Our first real reunion was in a hotel room because his flight came in so late,” Maclean explains. “He seemed to recognize me and his name right away.”



Maclean says Ralph settled right in when she got him home and loves sitting in front of the wood-burning stove, soaking up the heat. He bonded quickly with Maclean's dog Lucy and two-year-old cat Ernie, who were adopted after he went missing.

## HE'S OTTER HERE!

He was found in the back of a truck – scared, underweight and covered in puncture wounds, but this youthful otter was feisty enough to give staff from the BC SPCA's Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre (Wild ARC) some trouble getting him into a carrier.

"When he was examined, we discovered one of his back legs was badly injured, but fortunately, X-rays showed he had no broken bones," says Wild ARC manager Ginelle Smith. "However, the puncture wounds on his front legs were badly infected."

The young critter was treated with pain medication and antibiotics, and once he began to heal he spent time in one of the facility's specialized pool pens, building up his strength. It didn't take long for this tough little fellow to be ready for a return to the wild.

"We took him to an area close to where he was found to release him," Smith explains. "It was a lovely day and the water was really calm. It was so rewarding to watch him eagerly leave his carrier, run towards the water and confidently swim away from us."

## SWINE & DANDY

Greta had overgrown hooves and tusks, and was suffering from a mite infestation and depression



Things are going swimmingly for this young otter after a stay at Wild ARC.

when she arrived at the BC SPCA. "Greta was very wary of humans when she first arrived, and did not want to have anything to do with them," says Leiki Salumets, manager, equine and farm animal care for the BC SPCA. "She was also depressed because her best friend was rehomed without her by the previous guardian."

After getting her hooves trimmed and being treated for the mites, SPCA staff and volunteers engaged Greta in daily positive reinforcement training and enrichment activities to boost her mental well-being. "She became a

completely different pig," Salumets reports. "She went from being fearful of everyone and everything to being a curious, expressive and brave pig who has learned that people can be friends . . . Greta is a tough survivor, but she also has a lovely, gentle personality that shines through despite the hardships she has faced."

Greta is currently awaiting her forever home with an experienced guardian who can become her person to trust and love. Given a safe and positive environment, Greta will only continue to flourish and thrive. ■



Greta engages in some clicker target training with an SPCA staff member.

# SOUND ADVICE

New research from UBC tells us that reducing noise levels improves the welfare of shelter cats

Cats are sensitive to environmental change. Entering a shelter exposes them to new smells, sights and sounds, and can be quite the stressful experience. This, in turn, has an impact on their health and behaviour.

Of particular concern in animal shelters is noise. Cats possess one of the broadest known hearing ranges among mammals, detecting very quiet sounds at both low and high frequencies beyond what humans can hear. This can become a particular problem in the shelter, where sound levels from barking dogs and clanging kennel doors regularly exceed 100 dB – a level at which even human hearing may be damaged.

To help address this concern, a recent study conducted by Bailey Eagan, a graduate student in the University of British Columbia's Animal Welfare Program, in partnership with the BC SPCA, investigated the effect of animal shelter sound on cat

behaviour and welfare. The study found that common sounds in shelters – including dogs barking, cleaning noises and human voices – elicited a fear response in cats. Felines were more likely to display common fear-related behaviours such as hiding, startling and being alert when the shelter was loud compared to quiet. They displayed those fear behaviours as soon as these sounds began in the shelter.

“Through behavioural observations, we were able to ‘ask’ the cats how noise affected them and learn that sudden, loud sounds cause fear and stress in shelter cats,” says Dr. Emilia Gordon, senior manager of animal health for the BC SPCA, who helped facilitate the project. “This research confirms something we have long suspected – that noise levels matter to cats, just as they do to humans and other animals.”

From these results, it is clear that lowering sound levels in shelters has the potential to improve cat welfare. Fortunately,

there are many practical things that shelters can do to decrease noise, such as placing towels under metal dishes and using felt pads to soften the closing of doors and cupboards. Many of these simple solutions are inexpensive; some are even free.

The BC SPCA and UBC Animal Welfare Program are now working together to apply these research findings by implementing sound reduction strategies in their shelters province-wide to make a quieter environment for both humans and animals. Furthermore, these strategies will be shared in a publicly available instructional guide for other shelters and animal care facilities interested in making their environments more cat-friendly.

“We are excited to implement some of these fixes and to share this information with shelters, veterinary hospitals and other places that care for cats to help keep them healthier and happier during their stays,” says Dr. Gordon. ■



# FACING THE TRUTH

Flat-faced canines are uniquely adorable, but their inherent health issues should give guardians pause

**P**ugs, bulldogs, boxers, Boston terriers and other flat-faced (brachycephalic) dogs are wonderfully cute, with a loving personality and sociable temperament.

These breeds are appealing partly because of their resemblance to human baby faces. “Seeing a pug face triggers the release of oxytocin, a feel-good hormone associated with love and caring,” says Craig Naherniak, the BC SPCA’s general manager, humane education. “If you have a flat-faced dog, you likely experience this impulse to nurture and care for them – it’s a deep emotional attraction.”

Yet there are significant health and welfare downsides to flat-faced dogs. “The concerns are so profound, Norway has banned the breeding of Cavalier King Charles spaniels and English bulldogs, while other countries are calling for changes in the breed standard away from extremely flat-faced dogs,” Naherniak explains. In 2016, the British Veterinary Association issued a statement urging people not to get flat-faced breeds; other organizations are also voicing concern.

## BRACHYCEPHALIC SYNDROME

Pugs and other flat-faced dogs have smaller nostrils and shorter airways

than normal canines, which causes difficulty breathing. In particular, their laboured breath is accentuated when exercising, in hot weather and when sleeping. A survey by the Royal Veterinary College found that 58 per cent of short-nosed dog guardians didn’t recognize the signs that their brachycephalic canine was struggling just to breathe. Surgery is needed for many breeds to allow them to breathe properly.



## SKIN & EYE ISSUES

Flat-faced dogs have shallow eye sockets that cause their eyes to bulge out, which leads to a number of problems. Their eyelids often roll inwards, causing their lashes to rub against their sensitive eyeballs. If surgery isn’t done to correct this, the dog’s eyes become irritated and scratched. Related, their eyelids often don’t fully cover their eyeballs, resulting in “dry eye,” causing soreness and, in severe cases, blindness.

Flat-faced dogs also have pronounced facial skin folds. If you don’t clean between the folds, dead skin, moisture and debris can cause smelly skin infections.

## DENTAL CONCERNS

Flat-faced dogs have the same number of teeth as dogs with long snouts. “It’s remarkable that all 42 dog teeth can fit into such a compressed jaw,” says Naherniak. The result is crisscrossing, crooked and overlapping teeth. Many breeds are also more prone to gum disease, with some needing teeth removed to help them chew properly.

## RETHINKING OUR DESIRE FOR FLAT-FACED DOGS

“In general, flat-faced dogs face far more health and welfare issues than long-snouted dogs,” Naherniak continues. “It’s concerning that many of these breeds can’t even give birth without surgery because their puppies’ heads are so large.” That is in addition to the breathing, eye, ear, jaw, spinal and other health problems.

Their attractiveness and charming personalities aside, we need to think carefully before getting a flat-faced dog and, if you have one, be vigilant in addressing the health and welfare challenges these dogs face. ■

Even domesticated cats are born hunters, but you can curb that killer instinct with just a little bit of play each day.



# ASK THE SPCA

WE ANSWER  
YOUR QUESTIONS  
ABOUT COMPANION,  
FARM AND WILD  
ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR

**M**y cat keeps leaving me “gifts” of dead birds on the doorstep. Is there anything I can do to stop her from hunting when she goes outside?

Hunting comes naturally to cats, of course, because they’re predators. When roaming outdoors, they prey upon small wildlife like rodents and birds. While not every cat

has the same motivation to hunt, the fact remains that, collectively, cats are likely responsible for the deaths of millions of wild animals each year in Canada.

Given the significance of this impact, researchers have looked at aspects of care that may influence a feline’s desire to hunt.

For instance, in a recent study conducted in England with 355 cats, guardians were asked to spend just 10 minutes a day playing with their furry friends. Surprisingly, over the course of this 12-week experiment, they saw a 25 per cent drop in the total number of animals their cats brought home. These findings indicate that it may be possible to reduce hunting behaviour in cats through modest changes in human behaviour.

Ultimately, however, the most effective way to prevent felines from predating on wildlife is to keep them indoors. Indoor cats aren’t doomed to a life of monotony,



as long as guardians are willing to spend some quality time with them to keep them happy and healthy. There's a long-standing belief that, unlike dogs, cats are low-maintenance, independent pets. In fact, the opposite is true. In order to give indoor cats a satisfying, enriched life, they need many of the same things that dogs do.

One of these things is playtime with their guardians, which, as the research demonstrates, can be an excellent outlet for their natural hunting behaviour. In many ways, play mimics the hunting sequence in cats, including behaviours like stalking, chasing, pouncing and catching.

At the end of the day, cats hunt because of instinct. It's up to us as their guardians to provide them with an outlet for this behaviour that keeps both them and wildlife safe.

Find out more ways of keeping your cat stimulated indoors at [spca.bc.ca/i-need-help-with/pet-care-behaviour](http://spca.bc.ca/i-need-help-with/pet-care-behaviour).

## What can I do about raccoons in my yard?

Raccoons have a bad rap for making a mess in pursuit of the perfect meal. They are often labelled dumpster-divers, pond-raiders and garden-destroyers. However, raccoons play an important role in our ecosystem, eating otherwise wasted food and foraging for insects, fruits, nuts, clams, fish and snails. This behaviour makes them valuable scavengers, but sometimes gets them into trouble in our backyards.

Seeing a raccoon in your yard doesn't mean it's time to sound the alarm – they might just need a safe spot to rest before moving along. Raccoons will sometimes den in places like attics, chimneys and sheds, or may establish latrine (bathroom) sites near homes or yards. You can help prevent problems with raccoons through these simple actions:

“Feeding raccoons causes them to lose their healthy fear of humans, and increases their chance of being hit by a car or trapped and killed.”



■ **DON'T FEED RACCOONS:** Whether intentional or not, feeding raccoons causes them to lose their healthy fear of humans, and increases their chance of being hit by a car or trapped and killed. Make sure to secure garbage bins and compost and pick up fallen fruit. Don't let bird feeders overflow with seeds or leave pet food outside.

■ **SUPERVISE PETS OUTDOORS:** Keep pets indoors from dusk to dawn, and walk dogs on a leash at night. Keep cats indoors or provide a secure, enclosed outdoor area for them to hang out in.

■ **MAINTAIN YOUR HOME:** Prevent raccoons from moving in by properly maintaining sheds, garages and access to crawl spaces and attics.

Once a raccoon has moved in, trapping is not the solution. You can often encourage them to move along using mild humane harassment techniques such as placing a bright light or talk radio near the den site. Placing rags soaked with apple cider vinegar in a plastic container with holes in the top can also make the spot seem less welcoming. If you need to evict a raccoon, call an AnimalKind company

that uses exclusion techniques instead of trapping and relocating or killing animals.

Learn more at [spca.bc.ca/urban-wildlife](http://spca.bc.ca/urban-wildlife).

I adopted an older dog who appears to have training issues. Any hope I can help her learn some basic commands?

We've all heard the saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." Yet, in reality, you absolutely can. However, before any training, it is strongly advised you first consult your veterinarian to discuss any underlying health issues which might impact her behaviour.

Be extra patient in your training as you



**“ Sometimes we only focus on issues that we want to counter-condition . . . and we miss opportunities to treat and praise our dogs when they are just being quiet.**

focus on establishing trust and building your relationship. It's a good idea to focus on easy wins to keep her engaged, like walking beside you and the basics of “sit” and “stay.” Also, everyone in the family should be following the same training regimen to help her learn new expectations in a consistent manner.

Use a positive reinforcement method that employs praise coupled with high-value treats (e.g., small pieces of cheese, hot dog, cooked chicken or other yummy food). Remember to reward behaviours you are looking for whenever you see them. For example, when you see her go to her bed on her own, reward that behaviour. Sometimes we only focus on issues

that we want to counter-condition, such as barking at the letter carrier, and we miss opportunities to treat and praise our dogs when they are just being quiet, for example.

#### **BASIC TRAINING FOR ALL DOGS:**

- 1.** Keep treats in various locations in your home to reward positive behaviours when they occur.
- 2.** Begin your training in a

place with minimal distractions, away from other dogs, traffic or other interruptions.

**3.** As much as possible, stick to a similar daily schedule. (Same goes for feeding and bathroom breaks.)

**4.** Keep training sessions fun and short – three to five minutes.

**5.** Include a brief training aspect to every outing to keep her focused and build consistency – always bring treats!

**6.** Be sure your dog has had a chance to go to the bathroom before starting any training – can't learn if you've got to go!

**7.** Once she has grasped a behaviour, repeat it in different contexts, and with increased distractions. If she goofs up or seems distracted, end the training and come back to it later rather than “forcing” her to be compliant. Never force your dog to do something. Your impatient tone is enough to erode the bond and trust you are trying to establish.

All of the aforementioned information is focused on a general approach to teaching a dog of any age. To deal with more challenging behaviour issues such as resource guarding, separation anxiety or reactivity to other dogs, contact a BC SPCA-accredited AnimalKind trainer – [AnimalKind.ca](http://AnimalKind.ca). ■







APPLIED **KNOWLEDGE**  
by Dr. David Fraser

## Six Challenges for Animal Protection



THE EXPERTS



In my final column before handing the reins over to my wonderful colleague Dr. Sasha Protopopova, here are six challenges for animal protection.

**1 CAPTIVE WILDLIFE:** Canada's new restrictions on captive cetaceans address only a tiny tip on a vast iceberg. International trade in wildlife is a huge global business made worse by the Internet, which connects willing purchasers with people who capture and ship their local wildlife. We need more enforcement of trade and more bans on the ownership of animals whose capture, transport and captivity are incompatible with animal welfare.

**2 FISH:** We kill far more fish for food each year than all the farmed and hunted animals combined, and most of the killing methods are hugely inhumane. In farming, dragging an animal to exhaustion by a hook in its mouth would be a criminal act; in fishing, it is a standard practice. Humane killing methods can be used in aquaculture and might be

developed for wild capture. These could reduce vast amounts of suffering.

**3 HUMAN MENTAL ILLNESS:**

Hoarding and many other problems in animal welfare stem from human mental illness and related hardships. We now recognize that protection officers need to work closely with human social services to resolve these problems; next, we need to explore how best to create these linkages and use them effectively.

**4 CERTIFICATION:** Globally, we have made great progress in creating animal welfare standards, but certifying companies and professionals who follow those standards is a harder task. The BC SPCA, which years ago created humane certification for farm animals, now accredits dog trainers and pest control companies. These world-leading innovations need to be extended to other sectors and replicated in other countries.

**5 FREE-LIVING WILDLIFE:** Billions of birds are injured or killed every year by windows, some in office towers and some in houses.

This carnage can be greatly reduced by applying existing knowledge in building design, glass production and lighting. This is one of many examples where conservation problems and animal welfare problems coincide. The two movements need close cooperation to confront the vast, unintended harm we cause to free-living wildlife.

**6 PHILOSOPHY:** Contemporary philosophers have been proposing new ethics for animals, often by applying abstract Western concepts like rights and liberation. However, Indigenous cultures evolved philosophies that allowed them to live sustainably with other species for millennia even as Europeans sought to harness or dominate nature. Settler culture needs to explore what can be learned from Indigenous culture about living in harmony with animals and with the processes of nature that sustain us all. ■

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*Dr. David Fraser is a professor in the UBC Animal Welfare Program. The program, initiated in 1997 by the BC SPCA and other partners, works to improve the lives of all animals through research, education and public outreach.*



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