

PLUS: THE BC SPCA 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

AnimalSense

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INSIDE:

**DOG PARK
DOs &
DON'Ts**

How to keep things
from getting ruff

THE KINDNESS OF **FOSTERS**

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while they await
adoption

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On the cover

Our skilled, loving, patient fosters provide an essential halfway house for animals who come into BC SPCA care. But finding foster homes for farm animals like horses can be a challenge.



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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. **THANK YOU!**

AnimalSense

BC SPCA SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

Spring/Summer 2023

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BC SPCA EDITORS

Lorie Chortyk

Craig Naherniak

ART DIRECTOR

Rick Thibert

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR

Matt Currie

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Meghann Cant

Brianne Hogan

Dr. Alexandra Protopopova

Erin Ryan

Melissa Speirs

Debra Walley

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Bigstock/iStock/Shutterstock

Viktoria Haack

Tania Simpson

ELECTRONIC IMAGING

Bernhard Holzmann

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BCSPCA

We welcome your comments on *AnimalSense* magazine. Please write to us:

BC SPCA, 1245 East 7th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C., V5T 1R1, or email:

info@spca.bc.ca

Website: spca.bc.ca

Telephone: 604-681-7271

Fax: 604-681-7022

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Dear Friends,

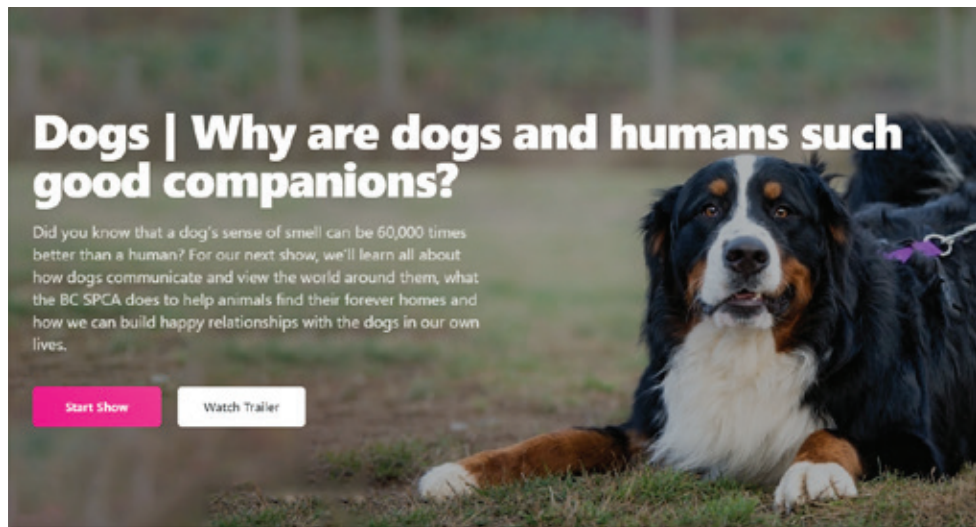
In this edition of *AnimalSense*, we include a feature on the life-saving work of animal fosters in the BC SPCA. Thanks to the dedication and skill of these amazing individuals, thousands of vulnerable animals were able to receive the care and attention they needed during the COVID-19 pandemic when our facilities were closed to the public. With facilities now fully re-opened, our foster program remains as critical as ever, given the increased animal intake the BC SPCA is experiencing in a post-pandemic world. We also have a story about euthanasia, an issue that is difficult to write and talk about. I am immensely proud that the BC SPCA has one of the lowest euthanasia rates among shelters across North America. We make every effort to ensure that each animal who comes into our care can be rehomed, but sometimes that is simply not possible due to extreme illness, injury or untreated behavioural issues. We believe it is important to initiate a positive dialogue on this sensitive topic. The 2022 Annual Report of the BC SPCA has also been included in this edition, which provides an overview of the programs and services offered by the Society during the past year. While significant challenges remain in the animal welfare sector, the Annual Report speaks very clearly to the advances made in protecting the welfare of all animals during 2022.

Our sincere thanks for your continued support.

Craig Daniell
Chief Executive Officer
BC SPCA

KIDS & CANINES

THE BC SPCA has a long history of visiting classrooms to talk to children about dogs and a host of other animal-related topics. Now, they're inviting kids on virtual field trips, partnering with Live It Earth to create "Dogs," a curriculum for elementary-age students. Live It Earth develops engaging multimedia programs, bringing scientific, environmental and social issues content (English and French) into the classroom. The Dogs unit celebrates our unique relationship with canines, while also providing information on how to care for dogs, how to use reward-based dog training and much more. In the first three weeks of launching, more than 250 classrooms participated in the Dogs unit. Learn more at liveit.earth. □



The virtual "Dogs" program offers elementary schools a fun, engaging lesson plan on humanity's best friend.

STAY CONNECTED



HELP US CREATE A BETTER world for animals – 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 first to know what's happening with animals 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. You can also visit 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 Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok! □



NEW CODE IMPROVES LIVES OF DAIRY CATTLE

AN UPDATE to the 2009 Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle will improve the lives of the more than 1.4 million dairy cows on farms in Canada. The changes include new requirements for housing, handling, pain control and health, among others. The BC SPCA, along with more than 5,800 people and organizations, suggested changes to a draft code released in late 2021. These comments led to improvements for cows in the final code. □

A Helping PAW

CARING DONORS Mark and Myra always find time to share their love with the animals, even when life is hectic. Sam, the couple's 11-year-old Boston terrier, helps remind them of this. "At the end of a busy or rough day at work, the 'Welcome Home Doggie Dance' must be performed, thanks to him. Animals have such a special way of making us pause and live in the moment," says Myra.

Mark and Myra find many ways to support the animals. In addition to being monthly PAW Plan donors, they play their luck in the BC SPCA lottery and sponsor a kennel, a dog activity space and even a wildlife space with Wild ARC.

But one way that they know their care can be consistent is through monthly giving. For Mark and Myra,



PAW Plan donors Myra and Mark with their beloved Boston terrier, Sam.

being a PAW Plan donor is among the most effective means of making a difference. "Monthly giving allows the BC SPCA to budget ahead and ensure the organization has the financial resources to meet its goals," says Myra. "For us, life is busy, so the PAW Plan is convenient and makes us accountable; we have the satisfaction of knowing our automatic contribution is being made to help support a greater cause."

Thank you so much, Mark and Myra, for your kind, consistent devotion! □



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 for more information or to apply for/renew your membership. □

GIVING LEGACY



SUMMER LEARNIN'

BC SPCA summer camps are back for 2023. “The camps are a place for animal-loving kids to play, learn and become empowered to make a difference for animals,” says Gillian Ickert Plett, BC SPCA manager of community programs. There are camp experiences for a variety of age ranges, from Junior Animal Camp (ages 6-7) all the way up to Teen Animal Activist Camp (ages 13-15), depending on location. Camps are offered in nine locations: Vancouver, Victoria, Castlegar, Kamloops, Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo, Tri-Cities and Surrey – plus virtual camps available anywhere. Register at spca.bc.ca/camps. ■

THE RIGHT *KIND* OF TRAINER

ANY COMPANY CAN CALL ITSELF “HUMANE,” but how can you be sure? The BC SPCA's AnimalKind program helps you make the right choice. AnimalKind is an animal welfare 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 wildlife and rodent (“pest”) control companies and dog trainers. There are currently 37 dog training and three pest control companies accredited. To find one near you, just visit animalkind.ca. □

A VERY GENEROUS DONATION from the Zirpke family will offer ongoing support for BC SPCA animal protection investigations across the province, as well as the treatment and rehabilitation of the animals who are seized or surrendered into our care. The endowed Renate Zirpke Memorial Fund will help ensure our animal protection officers will be there to help vulnerable animals and their humans.

“A humane breeder of Dobermans, my late wife Renate was an animal lover at heart,” explains Peter Zirpke. “She had such an adventurous spirit and curious mind. She read every book she could get her hands on about dog breeds and their diverse personalities. Renate loved watching dog shows and dreamt of being a dog show judge. Our family dog, Lord of Leipzig, won Best Puppy at a dog show in New Westminster, in fact!”

Thank you, Zirpke family, for setting up this endowment. It truly is the perfect way to celebrate Renate's life and deep love of animals. □

GETTING CREATIVE



Lisa Mortimore with her adopted kitty, Riley.

LISA MORTIMORE IS A DEVOTED, animal-loving friend who has taken extra steps and found creative ways to gather more support.

“As long as I can remember, animals have been an important part of my life,” says Lisa. “It’s really part of my family culture to love and care for animals, to invite them into our family.”

Lisa and her partner Stacey are caring donors and adopters of a sweet cat named Riley. They have also gone above and beyond to help raise funds for animals. Lisa asked people to donate for a talk she gave on her doctoral research, and she also runs a small pottery business called Big Mouth Pottery (@bigmouthpottery on Instagram), donating proceeds to the BC SPCA.

“I started giving pottery to the BC SPCA (and other like-minded groups) for auctions and events, such as the Victoria Offleashed Gala, and then we started having sales. It’s really fun, and feels good – and best of all, all of the money goes to the animals.”

When asked what advice she has for others, Lisa says not to wait and to start with what you love. “Whether that is caring for animals, pottery, painting, woodwork, knitting, or meeting people and organizing events, giving presentations – there is always a way to translate your passions into activism for the animals.” ■



A HOME Before Forever



BC SPCA fosters lend a healing hand
to animals awaiting adoption



Aging Arabian mare Monisa came galloping back from death's door thanks to the loving support of her foster mom, Janice.



When Monisa, a 25-year-old Arabian mare, came into Janice's care last fall, she was on the brink of death. She had a body condition score of one, was seriously dehydrated and was suffering from ulcers.

"It was really touch and go when she arrived," says Janice. "She collapsed when she got into her stall." Janice and the

Imagine being in the hospital and having the doctor give you the option of staying in the hospital to recover or going home... A home environment is more comfortable and less stressful for humans and it is the same for animals.

veterinarian who was caring for Monisa were concerned she wouldn't make it through the night. "She was given intravenous fluids to rehydrate her. That first night she was here, I didn't get any sleep. I stayed up with her all night to make sure she was OK."

Luckily, Monisa survived that first night in foster care, and over time got stronger and stronger. To get her back to a healthy weight, she was put on a veterinarian-prescribed refeeding plan of mushy, soaked alfalfa cubes and hay. "The vet had a very specific number of pounds of food she was to get every day. It had to be precise or she wouldn't survive," Janice explains. "You really have to be on the ball and ready to be up in the middle of the night if that's what it takes." Monisa miraculously made a full recovery and is now available for adoption.

Janice has been fostering horses for the BC SPCA for more

than 15 years. Monisa is just one of the many she has transformed. The SPCA's amazing foster families provide a temporary, supportive and often life-saving environment for a wide variety of animals who come into SPCA care each year. Janice is also currently fostering two goats and their kids, and until recently was caring for two pigs who have since found their forever home.

In 2022, the BC SPCA placed 6,289 animals in foster care and the need keeps growing. "In the first few months of 2023, we had a large number of dogs and puppies come into our care," says Adrienne McBride, the BC SPCA's senior director, community animal centres. "In one case alone, 63 dogs with a wide variety of untreated medical issues and serious behavioural disorders came into our care. They needed to be quickly placed with fosters to help them heal."

Many of the animals who come to the SPCA require medical treatment. Kim Monteith, the BC SPCA's manager of animal welfare, says it is important for animals to recover in a home setting, away from the bustle and activity of an animal centre. "Imagine being in the hospital and having the doctor give you the option of staying in the hospital to recover or going home," Monteith explains. "Which would you prefer? A home environment is more comfortable and less stressful for humans and it is the same for animals." Animals who are just not coping well psychologically in an animal centre also do better in



Phil the maltipoo has been chalked up as a “foster fail” – but in a good way. His foster mom simply couldn’t let go and decided to adopt.

a foster environment, and some animals who may be fearful or unsocialized need help learning to live in a home situation before they can be adopted. “Fostering gives them the opportunity to begin to trust people again and learn that the world isn’t a scary place.”

Lindsay Baker had a particularly unique point of view for her first foster experience. She is usually the one helping to find fosters for the SPCA as the senior manager of volunteer resources. “We have many volunteer opportunities at the BC SPCA; being a foster is one of the most impactful for the animals who come into our care,” says Baker. She decided to become a foster herself so she

could speak to volunteers about the experience in more detail.

Baker is currently taking care of Phil, a one-and-a-half-year-old maltipoo who came to the SPCA as part of a large seizure. “It has definitely been interesting,” she reflects. “I didn’t realize how much it would feel like having a newborn in the beginning. Those first few days, you feel like you are finding your way. You are focused on getting to know each other, getting a routine established.”

Baker emphasizes how supported she felt. “I would be the first to tell you I have never been responsible for a dog before I fostered Phil. I have done pet-sitting, spent time with my friends’ dogs, but this is the first time I

was going to be a dog’s guardian. Thankfully, there is so much support for fosters. The BC SPCA animal centre staff answered all my questions and gave me everything I would need to get my home ready for Phil’s arrival.”

Baker understands just how important it is for the BC SPCA to have a large roster of fosters to call on. “We particularly need more people who can do specialized care fostering animals who are in quarantine or have substantial medical care needs.” Veterinarians, vet techs and animal health students are perfect candidates, Baker notes, “but any foster can grow into the role of more specialized care. They just need some time to build up their experience.”

Baker’s first experience turned out to be a “foster fail” – the informal term used when someone falls in love with their foster animal and applies to adopt them permanently. Indeed, Phil’s foster home became his forever home.

Obviously not all foster situations end with an adoption. Many fosters have said goodbye to hundreds of animals over the years. “Animals are social and, I feel, adapt to the change easier than we do,” says Monteith. “When a foster animal moves on to a forever home, you have to try to remember there are so many more animals waiting for help, so you have to let this one go. It is exciting to think about how much a new family will love and enjoy the foster animal and how happy they will be in their new forever home.”

Alexandria has gotten used to bidding farewell to her foster animals. But she recalls one dog

who especially touched her heart. Loki was a Pomeranian-Chihuahua mix who arrived at the SPCA with a broken leg. “She was afraid of everything and everyone when I first met her, but she quickly came out of her shell when she got to my home,” says Alexandria. She became particularly bonded to one of Alexandria’s cats. “She followed her around everywhere and always wanted to know what she was doing. We took care of Loki before she went into surgery and then afterwards to make sure she was healing properly. She just needed a warm, safe place to heal and feel good about people again.” Once she was well enough to leave, Loki went on to a foster-to-adopt home. “It was sad to see her go, but I knew she was going to be very happy in her new home,” says Alexandria. “I get updates from the animal centre staff, who get pictures of her in her new home from her family.”

Although most animals move through the BC SPCA’s system

quickly, some do end up staying for quite a while – our long-term residents. If you have ever wondered about a long-term resident you see on the SPCA’s adoption page and how long they have had to stay at an animal centre, don’t worry. “Those animals are all in foster care,” says McBride. “It often takes longer for some of our senior dogs and cats to get adopted. They are placed in foster care until we find their forever homes and it’s another very important role fosters play for the animals in the BC SPCA’s care.” ■

Are you interested in becoming a BC SPCA foster volunteer? Fostering assignments are flexible and tailored to an individual’s schedule and availability. The duration of a foster stay can range from one to eight weeks depending on the animal’s situation, and even as long as six months for animals with special circumstances.



Finding foster matches for farm-dwellers like goats and pigs can be a bit trickier than with companion animals.



Loki healed both emotionally and physically with her foster mom Alexandria (with a big assist going to Alexandria’s cat!).



REQUIREMENTS FOR FOSTERING:

- Must be 19+ years of age
- Must have landlord approval if you are renting
- A room with a closing door and windows where you can provide a quiet, designated space for your foster animal
- Access to transportation to bring your foster animal to appointments, treatments and weigh-ins at the local BC SPCA or veterinary clinic
- Ability to spend time with your foster animal and monitor their health and well-being

WHAT THE BC SPCA PROVIDES:

- Guidance and support in offering the best care for your foster animal
- Food, treats and feeding supplies
- Toys, blankets, kennels, brushes and any other supplies needed
- Medical care and expenses are provided at the discretion of the local BC SPCA manager

For more information on the fostering experience, please visit spca.bc.ca/foster.

EARLY BIRDS

TO HELP OR NOT TO HELP?

Seeing a helpless baby bird outside the nest naturally inspires Good Samaritans to step in, but you could be doing more harm than good.



During spring and early summer, baby animals of all shapes and sizes are being welcomed into the world, including birds, who are in their nesting season. While our feathered friends are busy caring for their young, it's important for us to help keep them safe.

Every year, wildlife rehabilitators receive healthy fledgling birds from people who have unknowingly kidnapped these youngsters from their parents. A fledgling outside the nest may be OK, but a nestling outside the nest means trouble.

HATCHLING, NESTLING OR FLEDGLING?

A hatchling is a featherless, downy baby bird, whereas a nestling is an incompletely feathered bird. Hatchlings and nestlings shouldn't be outside the nest. If you find them on the ground, you can try


to return the bird back to his nest, which could be in a nearby tree or shrub or on the outside of a building. Rest assured, your scent won't cause the baby to be rejected, but be sure you're putting them back in the right nest! It should be nearby, and the other babies should look exactly the same. Putting baby birds into a nest that isn't their own can lead to injuries, or even the parents rejecting the entire nest.

Fledglings are older, nearly fully feathered birds who are learning to fly and live out of the nest. When encountering these youngsters, it's important to be certain whether they truly require assistance. Fledglings are often clumsy and can appear to be hurt or unable to fly, when they're really just practising their flying skills. When they are first out of the nest, the parents still keep track of them

and feed them for several days. Unless they are in immediate danger from predation or traffic, it's best to leave them alone.

That said, the fledgling stage is when baby birds are most vulnerable. Make your backyard safer by keeping cats indoors and dogs leashed and out of the area to help protect them during this stage. Another important factor in keeping baby birds safe is to never attempt to care for or raise them yourself. Their best chance for survival is with their parents, but if they can't stay, then they will need professional help.

If you have any doubts about a bird's safety, contact the BC SPCA Animal Helpline at 1.855.622.7722 or your nearest wildlife rehabilitation centre for advice. They can help you determine if the bird needs help, and what you can do for them. ■



BCSPCA 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends: We are pleased to present the 2022 Annual Report of the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA). Your ongoing support and generosity have enabled the BC SPCA to assist 120,336 animals during 2022, 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. Thanks to your incredible commitment, the BC SPCA can continue to serve as the safety net for animals in need in B.C., especially at a time when the animal welfare sector is experiencing increased intake at shelters, a chronic lack of available veterinary care throughout the province and growing pet food insecurity concerns for animal guardians. 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

VICTORIA BRYDON
Chair
BC SPCA Board of Directors

inspire

WITH THE HELP OF OUR GENEROUS

supporters, the BC SPCA works to create a safer and kinder world for companion, farm and wild animals through our education and advocacy programs. In 2022, we empowered animal lovers of all ages to take action on behalf of animals in their communities through our youth programs, media campaigns, website resources, social media channels and advocacy with all levels of government. Last year, we advocated on issues such as live horse export, fur farming, “debarking” dogs, the poisoning of large mammals across Canada, fireworks, the need for video surveillance in slaughterhouses, new national welfare standards for dairy cows and banning rodenticides in B.C. ■



#SCRAP THE SCALPEL

15,968

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

245,175

VISITS TO OUR “TAKE ACTION”
ADVOCACY WEB PAGE

11

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

232,452

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS HELPING
US SPREAD THE WORD

6.8 Million

WEBSITE VISITS FOR NEWS AND
EDUCATION ON ANIMAL ISSUES

Who says a small group of caring individuals can’t create widespread change? Inspired by classroom presentations by the SPCA and the Society for Humane Science, a small group of animal-loving Grade 9 students from Okanagan Mission Secondary in Kelowna set out to make a difference for animals. They formed a group called Our Voice for Change, with a goal to end the use of animals in dissection.

“The group not only shares a passion for animals and their rights, but they also share a dream of a more sustainable education system,” says Keigan Hollefriend, BC SPCA humane educator.

These student activists created a website and mounted an influential social media campaign with slogans including “ditch dissection” and “scrap the scalpel.” A persuasive Youth TedX Talk in front of peers, parents and teachers earned them a \$5,000 grant to help make their vision a reality, and the group successfully implemented a student choice policy in their school. The grant allowed them to equip the school with dissection software and other resources so teachers could meet the science learning outcomes without using real animals. Furthermore, Our Voice for Change went on to get the policy implemented in all District 23 schools. ■

Goat welfare: Raising the barn

There are approximately 230,000 goats in Canada, most of whom are farmed commercially for milk, meat, wool or mohair. Up until recently, however, these animals were being raised to welfare standards that had gone unchanged for nearly two decades.

In November 2022, the long-awaited update to the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Goats was released. “This latest version includes significant changes that will improve the

welfare of goats on farms across Canada,” says Melissa Speirs, BC SPCA manager of farm animal welfare. Speirs, an animal welfare scientist with goat welfare experience, represented Humane Canada, the national umbrella organization for SPCAs and humane societies, on the code development committee.

A draft version of the code was released to the public in 2021, and Canadians had the opportunity to review it and suggest changes. British Columbians



once again showed how much they care about animal welfare, providing nearly three-quarters of the feedback received across the country. The code development committee reviewed all comments and made extensive changes to the final version.

“The code now

includes new welfare standards around enrichment, space allowance, veterinary care and pain control,” says Speirs. “While more research is needed, the update reflects important scientific evidence developed in the last 20 years and has definitely raised the bar for goat welfare.” ■

Phasing out the poison

Thanks to public pressure from animal lovers across the province, there have been positive – and permanent – changes to rodenticide use practices in B.C.

In October 2022, the provincial government announced that a temporary ban on the widespread sale and use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) would now become permanent. SGARs are among the most commonly used rodenticides. They act by thinning the blood and preventing it from clotting, which causes internal bleeding that results in a slow and painful death



for rodents. Because SGARs were designed to be extremely potent, rodents can die after eating only a single dose of bait. “Unfortunately, this also means they are much more toxic to animals who eat poisoned rodents,” says Erin Ryan, BC SPCA wild animal welfare

specialist. “They have been harming wild animals like owls, eagles, raccoons and cougars, as well as pets like cats or even dogs who sometimes directly consume the bait.” Ryan notes that SGARs also cause more widespread harm, becoming toxins in soil and water systems.

BC SPCA experts, including Ryan, were integral to the government’s decision to make the ban permanent, having been invited to participate in a scientific review of SGARs earlier in the year. “This is a big step forward for animal welfare,” says Ryan. “The ban protects wild animals from exposure to the most dangerous rodenticides, while promoting more effective and humane methods of rodent control.” ■

care

LAST YEAR, staff and volunteers in our animal care facilities provided direct emergency care and shelter for nearly 16,000 companion, farm and wild animals, as well as 7,000 nights of free emergency pet boarding for individuals fleeing violent domestic situations and natural disasters. Together, we also ensured that 12,566 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. ■



LAST YEAR, WILD ARC, THE BC SPCA'S WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE, HELPED MORE THAN 3,300 WILD ANIMALS IN NEED.

Love, care & fresh air!



A little dog who tested positive for opioids, cocaine and amphetamines after being rescued by BC SPCA animal protection officers from a Vancouver residence is now living her best life

with a new loving family.

Officers seized Bailey in December 2022, when the SPCA received a complaint that she was being repeatedly exposed to hard drugs in her owner's unit. Neighbours reported seeing the six-year-old Havanese-cross

exhibiting troubling symptoms, ranging from whimpering and shaking to lethargy and an inability to stand upright. The SPCA discovered that Bailey may have been exposed to drugs on an almost-daily basis. After being rescued, she was immediately rushed to a veterinarian, where tests showed that she had several illicit substances in her system. Once she was cleared medically, Bailey was placed in foster care the same day with an SPCA staff member.

"I saw her when she was first brought in and I could not stop thinking about her sweet face and sad eyes," says foster mom Stephanie.

"Even though I could only foster her for a couple of weeks because I was going away over Christmas, I wanted to take her home to show her what a safe, loving family was like."

Stephanie says Bailey slowly came out of her shell in foster care and was soon enjoying walks, playing with toys, snacking on treats and snuggling on the couch. At Christmas, Bailey was placed in a second, experienced SPCA foster home, where her confidence and health continued to flourish.

Meanwhile, Stephanie just couldn't stop thinking about the little dog who had stolen her heart. She stepped in

Warming embrace

When the BC SPCA responded

to a complaint at a North Okanagan home last December, they discovered a very pregnant Australian shepherd chained to a wall in a freezing basement. SPCA officers also found six golden retriever puppies, huddled together for warmth, as well as two adult retrievers. The

to foster Bailey once again, and following legal proceedings that awarded the SPCA permanent custody of the dog, Stephanie formally adopted her in April 2023. An avid hiker, Stephanie has introduced Bailey to the joys of the great outdoors. “Her past, scary life is well behind her,” the proud guardian says. “Bailey just loves running around, curling up in front of a campfire and keeping warm sleeping between us in the tent. There will be a lot of hikes and camping adventures in her future!” Thank you to our kind and generous supporters, who make happy endings for animals like Bailey possible. ■



THE PUPS OF AN AUSSIE SHEPHERD SEIZED FROM AN IRRESPONSIBLE BREEDER POSE WITH THEIR FOSTER PARENTS, MARTYN AND LINDA.

basement was strewn with injurious objects and was piled with feces, with strong ammonia levels from urine. “The basement had no heat or insulation, there was no bedding except for a little bit of alfalfa, and the only accessible water was filthy and in an unclean bowl,” says Eileen Drever, BC SPCA’s senior officer for protection and stakeholder relations.

The dogs were immediately taken into SPCA custody and provided with veterinary treatment and care in a warm, safe environment. “Our Aussie shepherd mom gave birth to seven healthy and rambunctious puppies at our Kelowna facility and one of our amazing volunteer foster couples, Martyn and Linda, stepped up to care for the new mom and all of the puppies until they were ready for adoption,” Drever explains. “She is such a sweet, loving dog

and took amazing care of her babies.” In fact, all of the dogs rescued from the property are now in loving homes.

Drever says this case was among the many complaints SPCA animal protection officers responded to last year involving individuals who began breeding animals when the market for pets surged amidst COVID-19. “Unfortunately, many of these breeders were not caring for their animals properly, and as the market for puppies declined post-COVID, the situation got worse.”

In addition to animals seized through cruelty investigations, the SPCA took in large numbers of puppies surrendered from individuals who no longer wanted to care for litters they couldn’t sell. “We could not provide this emergency care and sheltering without the incredible support of our caring donors,” says Drever. ■

120,336

ANIMALS ASSISTED
ACROSS B.C.

15,752

HOMELESS ANIMALS
PROVIDED WITH
EMERGENCY CARE AND
SHELTER

41,019

ANIMALS HELPED
THROUGH BC SPCA PET
FOOD BANKS

16,228

ANIMALS TREATED
THROUGH BC SPCA
VETERINARY SERVICES

9,773

ANIMALS ADOPTED
INTO NEW LOVING
HOMES

2,032

LOST ANIMALS
REUNITED WITH
GUARDIANS

3,315

INJURED AND
ORPHANED WILDLIFE
REHABILITATED

4,664

ANIMALS TRANSPORTED
THROUGH THE
BC SPCA DRIVE FOR
LIVES PROGRAM

7,000+

NIGHTS OF
FREE EMERGENCY
PET BOARDING

12,566

SPAY/NEUTER
SURGERIES FOR
HOMELESS AND
COMMUNITY ANIMALS

174,000

REGISTRANTS IN THE
BC PET REGISTRY TO
REUNITE LOST ANIMALS
WITH GUARDIANS

32

DOG TRAINERS AND
PEST CONTROL
COMPANIES
ACCREDITED THROUGH
THE BC SPCA
ANIMALKIND PROGRAM

IN 2022, 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



Essential Intervention

8,069

ANIMAL CRUELTY
INVESTIGATIONS

37,729

ANIMALS ASSISTED
BY BC SPCA PROTECTION
OFFICERS

2,751

ANIMALS REMOVED FROM
DANGEROUS OR NEGLECTFUL
SITUATIONS

72,293

CALLS TO THE BC SPCA
PROVINCIAL HELPLINE

In June 2022, BC SPCA animal protection officers were called to a trailer on a property in Fort St. James. Inside that trailer, they found 120 cats and three small dogs living in filthy and unsafe conditions. The animals were suffering from a range of medical conditions, including emaciation, upper respiratory infections, extreme flea infestations, urine scald, eye infections, dental issues, ear mites and wounds.

“The entryway and hallway to the bedrooms were covered in layers of feces and the entire trailer was very hot and filled with an overwhelming ammonia smell due to the build-up of urine,” says Shawn Eccles, the BC SPCA’s manager of animal protection services. “The majority of the cats were hiding in kitchen cupboards, under the fridge and under furniture in the sparsely decorated trailer. Many of them were having difficulty breathing, and there was no water present. The little bit of dry cat food that had been scattered on the floor was contaminated with urine and feces.” In addition to the 120 cats, three Chihuahuas found in the trailer were seized and treated for dental disease, hair loss and grooming issues.

“Any time we are dealing with situations of animal hoarding, it is devastating for both the animals and their guardians, who are often facing mental health challenges,” says Eccles. “Last year, our animal protection officers dealt with many large-scale investigations involving animal hoarders right across B.C. We are so grateful to our supporters, who make it possible to rescue these animals and get them the emergency care they urgently need.” ■

608

SKILLED AND CARING STAFF

3,304

DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS WHO
HELP US EXPAND OUR SERVICES
TO ANIMALS

198,792

VOLUNTEER HOURS PROVIDED

41

BC SPCA FACILITIES DEDICATED
TO THE CARE AND PROTECTION
OF ANIMALS

FINANCIAL STRENGTH, effective governance, efficient use of technology, 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 2022, the BC SPCA dedicated significant attention to the areas of cybersecurity, new technologies to streamline operational and business practices, and matters relating to mental health, equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation. ■



DEVOTED VOLUNTEER JOYCE MARHOFF HAS SPENT ALMOST 30 OF HER 100 YEARS ON THIS EARTH VOLUNTEERING WITH THE BC SPCA.

grow

Ode to Joyce

When asked about why she volunteered with the SPCA for nearly 30 years, 100-year-old Joyce Marhoff sums up her dedication in two words: “the animals.”

“I loved it because of the animals – animals come first with me, it’s always been that way.”

Until recently, Joyce volunteered at the Maple Ridge location as a greeter and a pet adoption counsellor, responsible for matching potential guardians with the animals in care. Moreover, she volunteered out in the community, helping to raise funds for the BC SPCA. “She’s always been a friendly face at the front desk and was

so wonderful with the animals,” says Krista Shaw, who previously worked alongside Joyce as manager of the Maple Ridge animal centre. Shaw says Joyce was so beloved by staff and other SPCA volunteers that when it became difficult for her to get to the centre, staff would pick her up on their way to work.

“BC SPCA volunteers like Joyce are compassionate animal lovers who play a key role in caring for and improving the lives of domestic, wild and farm animals across B.C.,” says Lindsay Baker, the BC SPCA’s senior manager, volunteer resources. “Our work would not be possible without the time, talent and passion they share with us.” ■

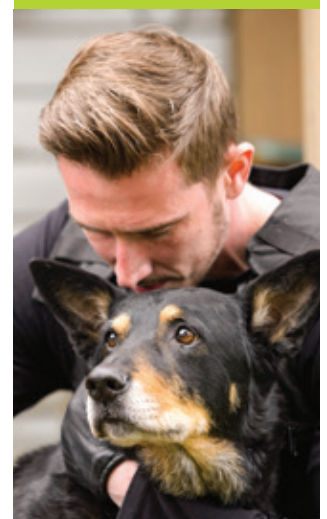
Leadership team

BC SPCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Victoria Brydon
Chair
- Jessie Adcock
- Kurtis Bosecke
- Harj Dhaliwal
- Mark Montemurro
- Catherine Ruby
- Rochelle Stevenson
- Ashley Thandi
- Rebecca Levi

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- Lorie Chortyk
Chief Communications Officer
- Shoni Field
Chief Development Officer
- Marcie Moriarty
Chief, Protection & Outreach Services
- Craig Naherniak
Chief, Social Change
- Parm Takhar
Chief, Animal Care Services
- Emily Thorner
*Chief Financial Officer/
Chief Technology Officer*
- Jolie Wist
Chief People Officer



Your Generosity in Action

FOR EVERY DOLLAR
YOU GAVE IN **2022**,
HERE IS HOW YOU
HELPED THE ANIMALS

36¢ EMERGENCY SHELTER & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Provided a temporary home for **15,762** abandoned, injured and abused animals, helped injured and orphaned wildlife and assisted **86,217** animals in the community.



10¢ CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS

Conducted **8,069** new animal protection investigations. The BC SPCA is the only animal welfare organization in B.C. with the authority to enforce laws related to animal cruelty.



19¢ CHECK-UPS & MEDICAL TREATMENT

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



12¢ SUPPORTING THE ANIMALS

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



6¢ PREVENTING FUTURE SUFFERING

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

17¢ MAKING FRIENDS FOR THE ANIMALS

Allowed more than **118,600** animals to be helped this year thanks to generous donors. Fundraising truly is friendraising! Thank you!

REVENUES (IN \$000s)	Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2022	Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021
Donations Et Fundraising	\$26,159	\$23,854
Legacy Et Life Insurance*	\$27,367	\$7,548
Kenneling Et Bylaw Enforcement	\$3,152	\$2,667
Sheltering, Medical, Clinical Services Et Social Enterprise Services	\$7,247	\$7,093
Lotteries Et Raffles	\$4,252	\$2,242
Government Grants Et Subsidies	-	\$1,050
Other Grants	\$1,250	\$540
Investment Income	\$(3,666)	\$6,569
Capital Gains/Losses	\$49	\$1
Total	\$65,810	\$51,564

EXPENDITURES (IN \$000s)	Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2022	Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021
Sheltering, Kenneling, Bylaw Enforcement Et Social Enterprise	\$16,655	\$14,739
Veterinary Care Et Spay/Neuter	\$3,382	\$2,916
Cruelty Investigations	\$4,577	\$4,623
Humane Education	\$1,187	\$1,390
Advocacy Et Volunteer Development	\$1,770	\$1,093
Hospitals Et Clinics	\$4,702	\$4,823
Animal Health Et Welfare	\$869	\$922
Administration Et Program Support	\$5,551	\$4,482
Revenue Development	\$7,889	\$6,025
Total	\$46,582	\$41,013

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

TOTALS (IN \$000s)	Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2022	Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021
Operating Surplus Before the Undernoted	\$19,228	\$10,551
Amortization	\$2,456	\$2,420
Bank Charges Et Interest	\$751	\$698
Net Operating Surplus**	\$16,021	\$7,433

* 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.

** Internally restricted by the Board of Directors for the creation of an Operating Reserve, funding of strategic initiatives and facilities maintenance and replacement.

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.



A KINDER SORT OF PET CARE

In addition to trainers and pest control companies, the BC SPCA's AnimalKind program now sets the standard for groomers, dog walkers and other companion animal services



“MANHANDLING” a pet to get a nail trim done faster. Leaving them under a hot cage dryer so long that they “collapse from the distress.” Spraying water repeatedly into the face of a fearful pet. These are just some of the horror stories described by guardians about visits to dog grooming salons in a survey conducted by the BC SPCA about companion animal services.

Pet care services are unregulated in B.C. It is difficult to know whom you can trust with your pet when you are looking for groomers, day-care, boarding or a dog walker. The BC SPCA wanted to do more to help guardians make an informed decision. The AnimalKind Companion Animal Services Standards are the result of those efforts.

“We value the essential care services that companion animal businesses provide,” says Nicole Fenwick, manager, research and standards for the BC SPCA, AnimalKind program. “These

voluntary standards will help guardians choose businesses that are committed to only using humane handling and rewards-based care.”

The journey towards pet services standards started in 2019 with a survey of dog daycares and kennels in B.C. to learn about their practices and challenges. “Next we consulted with pet service professionals and reviewed existing standards and research literature,” says Fenwick. “Draft standards were circulated for feedback to more than 30 external experts, including academics and pet professionals.” The last step was a public comment period, which gathered insight and experiences from over 2,500 individuals (both pet service providers and pet guardians).

Courtney Graham, a post-doctoral researcher in companion animal behaviour and welfare at

the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph, was one of the academics who reviewed the new BC SPCA standards. “The questions developed for pet guardians to ask animal service providers gives them the ability to make a more informed decision about how best to care for their pets,” says Graham. “Increased awareness and understanding of welfare issues in pet care will help prevent negative outcomes in animal services and at home.”

The BC SPCA has created a series of general as well as service-specific questions for guardians to ask, helping them select a company that truly prioritizes pet welfare. For example: Are animals handled humanely using treats and play? How and when is water provided? Are guardians required to provide vaccination and health information? For the complete list, visit animalkind.ca. ■



BARKS & RECREATION

Your guide to maintaining proper pet-iquette at the dog park

With the onset of warmer weather, many pet guardians are eagerly returning to outdoor routines, which may include regular trips to the local off-leash dog park. Dog parks are a great place to spend time with our pets, let them mix and mingle with other playful pooches and perhaps do a little socializing ourselves with fellow dog-lovers in the community. After a winter spent cooped up indoors, however, a little refresher on dog park etiquette may be required. That way, we can ensure that these parks continue to be places for everyone – humans and animals alike – to enjoy.

Here are some things to keep in mind the next time you and your pup visit your local dog park, according to a few of the BC SPCA's AnimalKind-accredited trainers.

SCENT-SATIONAL HELLOS

"You need to train and establish protocols well before you expose your dog to what could be a swarm of unknown other dogs," says Bernadette van Klaveren with DAWG Training Academy in Nanaimo. "Does your dog know how to meet-and-greet appropriately?"

Van Klaveren says the ideal greeting consists of dogs sniffing each other's hindquarters after they have approached each other calmly. "Dogs are not very good at recognizing things visually. They are, however, superstars when it comes to recognizing people and dogs by scent."

LEARN TO PLAY NICE

"The foundational skill that can save your dog from grief in the dog park is the ability for you to interrupt the play between two

or more dogs," says van Klaveren. "This does not have to be a formal recall, but rather is more like an intermission during a performance. Think of it as a short break, which often goes with refreshments – treats – for all parties, followed by a continuation of the performance."

Van Klaveren specifies that the rate of interruption should be between 15 seconds and two minutes of continuous play between the dogs. "The more we repeat this, the easier the dogs will de-escalate and turn away from a possible confrontation." If your pooch is already a pro at self-interrupting (for example, they sniff, lay down, turn away or check in with you), you do not need to be overly vigilant. However, it really helps to do this with every new dog-to-dog encounter, says van Klaveren.

PLAY WITH SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE

“Watch out for interactions between big and small dogs, especially chase games, as these can easily spill over from harmless fun into ‘predatory drift,’” says Kelsey Patterson from Victoria-based Authentic Canine Training, “meaning that the small dog suddenly turns from playmate to prey.”

If your park has separate areas for big and small dogs, Patterson recommends choosing the appropriate side that will keep your pooch and others safe.

SHARING IS NOT ALWAYS CARING

Playing fetch at the dog park with a ball or frisbee can be fun, and is a great way to exercise your pet. However, van Klaveren says, if there are other dogs around, make sure to check in with their parents before you toss or throw.

“Maybe another dog is also ball crazy and would like to race your dog for the toy and steal it. Suddenly it is not so much fun anymore for your dog and could be dangerous if one of the dogs has some resource-guarding tendencies.”

It’s also a good rule of thumb to leave any toys at home that your dog is likely to be possessive over, says Patterson. “These are best saved for your backyard or an empty space without other loose dogs.”

If you do plan on playing ball or frisbee, make sure to bring at least four items to toss so there is one for every dog. This will help to reduce any potential conflicts.

ARE WE STILL HAVING FUN?

“Once your dog is six to eight

months of age, spending time at the dog park can be a great way for him to have some quality dog-to-dog time,” says Sharon Labossiere of Hanging With Hounds, which provides online training services. “But don’t be surprised if one day he doesn’t look like he is having as much fun.”

That’s because, according to Labossiere, it’s common for dogs to outgrow the dog park at around three or four years of age.

“It just isn’t as much fun for them anymore. You might find they do a circuit of the park and then head towards the gate or would just prefer to sniff around the perimeter rather than mixing it up with the others. This is really normal.”

Instead, she suggests arranging a play date with a close doggie friend for some fun and socialization.

Some other etiquette tips to keep in mind:

- The park is a distracting place! Always bring high-value treats with you to help maintain a reliable recall cue.

- Watch your dog at all times in the park. This is your opportunity to set boundaries for them and ensure acceptable behaviour.

Intervene with a clear signal when they behave inappropriately and give them lots of praise when they are playing nicely. Be prepared to recall your dog at signs of trouble — baring teeth, low growls and offensive posturing, for instance.

- Practise “consent tests.” If one dog is pursuing and the other dog is running away, ask the guardian of the pursuing dog to hold their dog for a moment. Let the other dog have a chance to decide whether they want to continue to play.

- Spay/neuter status matters! Dogs who are spayed or neutered are less likely to incite or exhibit aggression.

- Remember that raincoats and other clothing on your dog inhibit their ability to communicate with other dogs. These should be left at home.

- Always pick up after your dog and dispose of poop bags according to park signage. It never hurts to bring extra bags with you just in case.

When in doubt, consider using the BC SPCA’s AnimalKind program to find a humane, knowledgeable trainer to help you and your pup prepare for the park. AnimalKind-accredited trainers are experts in fostering a positive relationship between you and your dog, and between your dog and other dogs. Visit animalkind.ca to find one near you. ■

DOG PARK SAFETY 101

A DOG PARK seems like the perfect place for dogs to socialize, exercise and have fun. But it is also a place where dogs share water and toys, get dirty, poop and mark their territory. All this can expose them to disease.

- Make sure your dog is up to date on all of their vaccines and parasite protection.
- Forgo a visit to the park if your dog is sick.
- Bring your own water and water bowl.
- Clean up your dog’s feces.
- Clean your dog’s paws when you come home from the park.
- Use positive-reinforcement training methods to teach your dog to drop things and come to you when you call them.
- Keep an eye on your dog so you notice if they eat something off the ground. □

HAPPY ENDINGS



BLIND, DEAF & LOVED

Clifford found a forever home
with a guardian uniquely
suited to his special needs.

Clifford, a stray, deaf and blind poodle-Australian shepherd mix, entered SPCA care after he became disoriented and fell into a ravine at the back of a property in Williams Lake. A Good Samaritan saw him fall, rescued him using a rope and brought him to the local SPCA branch.

"Clifford had clearly been neglected. He desperately needed grooming, had weeping eyes and infected ears," says Liz Dighton, manager of the Williams Lake BC SPCA. "His 'heaven' would be a cozy, warm home with the right guardian." But finding someone willing to take on a blind and deaf

dog would be a challenge.

Luckily for Clifford, an animal lover named Jolene saw a story about him on the news and made her way to Williams Lake on one of the coldest days of the year. "I knew I had to bring him home, and drove from Penticton to Williams Lake in minus-40-degree weather to meet him," says Jolene. She explains that her blind dog Ollie had passed away months earlier and she was ready to give another pooch with special needs a loving home. "Clifford figured out where everything was quickly. He is such a sweet boy. He follows me around everywhere and just loves to sit on my lap and get all the cuddles I can give him."

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Prancer was one of nine kittens found abandoned at a construction site dumpster in December 2022. The helpless felines were left in freezing temperatures inside two boxes taped shut. They might not have survived, but thankfully someone found them and brought them to the Vancouver BC SPCA. They were rushed to the vet to be examined, where it was determined that Prancer would need her right front leg amputated because of a weeks-old injury.

"Prancer had the sweetest disposition," says Jodi Dunlop, manager, Vancouver BC SPCA. "Even though she had been suffering for weeks, she was always happy to see people. She would knead biscuits with her good left paw."

This adorable kitten with the fighting spirit later found her perfect match. "When I decided to foster-to-adopt Prancer, I had a broken foot," says Tara. "We were both dealing with injuries."

Found in a dumpster in the dead of winter, Prancer has been brought in from the cold.



Tara says that Prancer did well post-surgery. “She is a little fighter. She was running and jumping the first day. She wanted to do everything a cat can do.”

Her favourite thing about Prancer? “She doesn’t let anything slow her down. I catch her climbing and hanging from everything around the house with her left front leg. She is a tiny cat with a big heart.”



Found smothered in vegetable oil, this gull underwent a complex cleaning and rehabilitation process at Wild ARC and WRA.

GULL SAVED FROM SLIPPERY SITUATION

In December, Wild ARC, the BC SPCA’s wildlife rehabilitation centre, cared for a gull who was absolutely soaked in vegetable oil after getting stuck in a dumpster outside a restaurant. Fortunately, the distressed bird was found by a Good Samaritan who brought it to Wildlife Rescue Association (WRA) for care. This was followed by a stay at Wild ARC to begin the challenging process of removing the oil.

“Rehabilitation centres often work together to ensure that wild animals get the care they need,” says Erin Ryan, BC SPCA specialist, wild animal welfare. “Even a little bit of oil can endanger a bird’s life. One bath requires several trained rehabilitators and lots of specialized equipment

to closely monitor the patient’s temperature and breathing.”

Multiple baths were needed to remove the oil. After those baths, the gull was put in a specialized drying chamber where the temperature can be closely monitored and adjusted when necessary.

All the hard work paid off. After a few weeks, the patient was ready to go home, looking handsome as



ever. Following a short trip back to WRA, the gull was successfully released near where it was found.

Mama and her litter find a slice of paradise on guardian Jane’s sprawling property.

FOUR LITTLE PIGS GET NEW DIGS

A close-knit family of pigs were surrendered to the BC SPCA in 2019 with a host of medical issues. Mama, Inky, Charles and Timbit were treated by a veterinarian and adopted out shortly after arrival. Unfortunately, they were returned to SPCA care when their guardian moved and couldn’t bring them along. Finding homes for farm animals, especially bonded farm animals, is not an easy task. This fabulous foursome hit the jackpot when their new guardian, Jane, who lives on an idyllic four-acre property, found them on the BC SPCA’s website. “I fell in love with them as soon as I saw them,” Jane says.

Moreover, she has had a great time getting to know them. “Timbit has the ears of a moth and alerts everyone when breakfast is coming,” Jane says. “Mama makes sure she is first out of the gate to eat and Charles is very funny – he tries to flip every bowl. Inky is my shy, gentle boy.” Indeed, the whole family adapted to their new digs quite quickly. “It was like they knew this was their forever home the minute they walked into the barn.” ■





A FINAL ACT OF CARE

How the BC SPCA makes the painful but necessary decision to euthanize an animal in terminal distress

It is, paradoxically, both the saddest and kindest decision an SPCA manager ever has to make: the decision to provide humane euthanasia to release an animal from his or her suffering.

“Each year, the BC SPCA rescues tens of thousands of animals, many of whom come to us with very serious injuries, medical conditions or psychological issues,” says Parm Takhar, the BC SPCA’s chief of animal care services. “Our goal is always to help those animals make a full

recovery and to find them a new loving home. But for a very small percentage of these animals, that is just not possible because of the extent of their suffering.”

Takhar notes that the SPCA does not euthanize animals for space reasons. Last year, no healthy, adoptable dogs or cats were euthanized, while the Society’s live release rate (the term used by animal welfare organizations to describe animals who leave a shelter through adoption or return-to-owner)

was 90 per cent – among the highest in North America. The BC SPCA follows guidelines set out in the Asilomar Accords, a document used by animal welfare organizations around the world to gauge treatability and adoptability. “By following consistent, scientific guidelines and posting our annual statistics on our website, we ensure that we are transparent in our reporting and that we are comparing statistics accurately with others participating in the Asilomar Accords,” says Takhar.

But even when a decision is made in the best interests of an animal, it doesn't mean it is easy for staff and volunteers. "Anyone who has ever had to make an end-of-life decision for their own pet knows how heartbreaking it is," Takhar reflects, "even when you know it is the most compassionate and caring thing you can do for them. Our animal care teams truly care for each and every animal who enters our facilities and they

I tried to be very clear from the beginning when there was a challenging case that a certain animal may be untreatable, medically or behaviourally. We had honest discussions about the fact that euthanasia might be necessary, but that we would exhaust every single avenue of treatment first. We also focused on the fact that euthanasia is a compassionate response – it can stop unbearable pain and

with a challenging medical or behavioural issue," says Davis. "If a euthanasia decision must be made, it is never taken lightly or done without proper consultation."

Davis recalls that his team in Nanaimo had a ritual when saying goodbye to an animal. "I think these rituals are as important for the staff and volunteers who care for an animal as they are for the animal. Every shelter has their own, but ours often included a final day of outdoor play for the animal if they were able. They would get feasts of all the delicious foods that wouldn't normally be part of a daily diet – sausages, burgers, salmon, no end of treats throughout the day. They would get lots of cuddles and praise, and of course we would make sure that they had someone they knew, who had cared for them, with them and surrounding them with love in their last moments."

Dr. Hannah Weitzenfeld, senior manager of animal health for the BC SPCA, sees the last goodbye as the final act of kindness. "As an animal welfare organization, the prevention of pain and suffering is of utmost importance to us. Because animals live in the moment, their ability to be happy and comfortable day-to-day is essential," she says. "In private practice, and in the shelter context, I have often been asked, 'Isn't it so difficult to have to euthanize animals?' But I find it more difficult to watch animals suffer." When an animal is experiencing a poor quality of life, she says, "I am grateful for the privilege of being able to release them from their suffering into peace." ■



I have often been asked, 'Isn't it so difficult to have to euthanize animals?' But I find it more difficult to watch animals suffer.

are emotionally invested in their welfare."

Leon Davis, a BC SPCA regional manager on Vancouver Island who previously served as manager of the SPCA's animal care centre in Nanaimo, says open discussion with his staff and volunteers was essential when it came to addressing the potential outcome for an animal.

"We all want to have the most positive outcome for every single animal in our care. The most difficult cases do require more time and energy invested with the animal, and of course that comes with even greater attachment," Davis explains. "As a manager,

suffering, whether that distress is physical or psychological, and it is sometimes necessary when an animal poses a serious risk of injury or worse to other pets or people in the community."

To assist with treatment and euthanasia decisions, SPCA managers use a wide range of resources – including medical histories, intake information, a variety of assessment tools, and discussions with veterinarians and animal behaviour experts. "Most people aren't aware of just how many people at all levels and departments within the BC SPCA come together to try to find a path to adoptability for an animal

“ Some cats are able to have their entire day’s worth of food provided in a puzzle feeder. For others, it’s best used as occasional enrichment.



ASK THE SPCA

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

What’s the best way to introduce a puzzle feeder to my cat?

As predators, cats have evolved to work for their food. Eating from a bowl, however, does not provide them with much opportunity for problem-solving. This is where puzzle feeders come in. Puzzle feeders can be a great way

to engage your cat’s mind and body, particularly if she happens to be highly food-motivated.

Yet despite their innate drive to hunt, it can take time for cats to learn how to use a puzzle feeder. The key is to go at your cat’s pace. This will help prevent her from becoming frustrated and giving up.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO SET YOUR KITTYPUP FOR SUCCESS:

- Continue to let her have a choice between the feeder and her food bowl. (Keep in mind that she will now be getting her meals from more than one source. Make sure she is not eating more kibble in a day than she normally would to maintain a healthy weight.)
- Start with a simple design. Transparent puzzle feeders with multiple openings will let your cat see, smell and hear the food inside more easily.



- Adjust the settings to make it as easy as possible for your cat to get food from the feeder (for instance, widen the openings).
- Sprinkle some kibble around the feeder. This will help your cat to make the connection between food and this strange new object in her environment.

As your cat becomes more proficient at using the puzzle feeder, and does not show signs of stress (such as increased yowling or restlessness), you can change the settings to make it more difficult. Over time, you can also put more kibble in the feeder and less in her bowl. Some cats are able to have their entire day's worth of food provided in a puzzle feeder. For others, it is best used as occasional enrichment.

Should your cat prove to be especially adept, you can introduce new, more challenging puzzle feeders down the

road. Just continue to monitor her use of them to ensure she finds the activity stimulating but not frustrating. Check out sPCA.bc.ca/i-need-help-with/pet-care-behaviour/ for more tips and inspiration.

How do I know if a wild animal needs help?

Alas, it's not always easy to tell. Every year, wildlife rehabilitators care for healthy animals mistakenly taken from their home by well-meaning rescuers. Unnecessary capture can cause stress, injury or even death, and can overwhelm the limited resources of rehabilitation centres. However, when a wild animal is truly in trouble, they do need assistance right away.

A WILD ANIMAL MIGHT NEED HELP IF THEY:

- Have obvious signs of injury (blood, wounds, etc.);
- Have been hit by a car, collided with a window or been caught by a cat or dog;
- Seem "sleepy" or don't respond when you approach;
- Seem dizzy or disoriented, or

stumble and fall when they move;

- Are a baby and have been crying for a long time, are covered in bugs, or are cold and not moving very much.

If you have found a wild animal in trouble, or suspect they need help, call the **BC SPCA's Animal Helpline for advice at 1.855.622.7722**. Taking pictures or videos is helpful for our staff in determining what needs to happen next.

There is no ambulance for wildlife – you are the animal's best hope to get to a wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian. Most centres have limited resources for transport and must deploy their volunteers where they are needed most.

Our Animal Helpline staff can help you find your nearest rehabilitator and walk you through how to safely contain the animal. **TIP:** Build a wildlife rescue kit to leave in your home or car in case of emergency. Read more at wildarc.com/rescue-wild-animal.

Why can't I let my dog run free on beaches when there are so few people around?





Park officials may choose to restrict dogs from beaches and surrounding grasslands for many reasons, including preserving the enjoyment of others sharing the space. But they may also do so to address far more serious concerns — as off-leash dogs can cause direct and indirect harm to wildlife.

B.C.'s West Coast is part of the Pacific Flyway for migrating birds. Flocks of plovers, sandpipers, dunlins and a host of other shorebirds stop over on shorelines and tidal flats to feast on insects, worms, clams and energy-rich slime on their annual migrations. There are only a few places migrating shorebirds can land along the coast to eat and rest.

Often, off-leash dogs will rouse the birds. While it's principally a game for the dogs, who rarely directly harm the birds, it can be life-threatening for the shorebirds. The circling birds use precious energy to avoid the dogs instead of eating and resting. If they don't build their energy reserves and rest before flying to their next feeding ground, they could perish in flight. This is a key reason

dogs are restricted from running free on most beaches, either year-round or during the peak migration periods. Other wildlife

“ While it's principally a game for the dogs, who rarely directly harm the birds, it can be life-threatening for the shorebirds. ”



like seal pups, left alone on beaches while their mothers search for food, are also at risk of harassment by dogs.

Since 1970, shorebird and grassland bird species have declined by 40 and 57 per cent, respectively. This is why guardians need to take extra precautions to ensure their dogs aren't accidentally harming birds when racing through the vegetation along shorelines, marshes and grasslands during peak bird-nesting season (March to the end of June). Dogs inadvertently scare off nesting birds, jeopardizing the clutches of eggs for ducks, geese and grassland birds such as killdeer, curlews and meadowlarks. Not only is it a kind act to not disturb these nests, but it is, in fact, against the law to injure or harm migratory birds.

Spring and summer are peak times when wildlife rehabilitation centres, like the BC SPCA's Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre (Wild ARC) on southern Vancouver Island, receive the most injured and orphaned wildlife, many because of encounters with off-leash dogs in sensitive habitats. ■

New training research is a treat for dogs!



How dogs are trained impacts their welfare and the quality of our relationship with them. This is why the BC SPCA collaborated with the University of British Columbia's Animal Welfare Program (AWP) to create the AnimalKind accreditation. AnimalKind incorporates the latest dog training research into its standards and accredits businesses committed to high levels of animal welfare.

An important reference guide used in AnimalKind, *Review of Dog Training Methods: Welfare, Learning Ability, and Current Standards*, has just been updated by dog scientist Dr. Camila Cavalli, a postdoctoral fellow in the UBC AWP. The update includes new studies conducted since 2018. This research confirms that reward-based methods are still the gold standard of training.

SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- 1 Two studies confirmed that dogs who are trained with aversive methods (shocks, jerks, etc.) evaluate their environment as more negative.
- 2 Three studies found a positive correlation between frequent use

of punishment and increased fear or problematic behaviour in dogs.

3 Among dogs who are subjected to aversive training, the higher the proportion of aversive methods used, the worse fear behaviour is shown by the dogs.

4 The use of shock collars may be even more detrimental to dog welfare than we previously thought and does not improve training success.

5 Metal chain collars, leather collars and rope collars are likely to cause the most injury to a dog's soft tissues when the leash is yanked or when the dog suddenly pulls forward.

AND THERE IS MORE GOOD NEWS REGARDING TRAINING METHODS:

- 1 Dogs trained with reward-based methods show secure attachment to their caregivers.
- 2 The more frequently the caregiver uses rewards, the closer the bond between guardian and dog.
- 3 There is a positive correlation between the use of rewards and the trainability of the dog.

All of these additions to the scientific literature are very welcome for those of us who are figuring out how to best manage

and live with the dogs in our lives. The new findings confirm the previous conclusion that the use of aversive methods is dangerous and may harm the human-animal bond as well as the mental health of our canine companions.

To that end, an increasing number of organizations, such as the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior, the Canadian Association of Professional Dog Trainers, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, and Professional Animal Care and Training Association of B.C., all have very strong statements rejecting the use of aversive methods to train dogs. ■



Dr. Alexandra Protopopova is the BC SPCA Chair in Companion Animal Welfare in the UBC Animal Welfare Program. The program, initiated in 1997 by the BC SPCA and other community partners, works to improve the welfare of animals through "research, education and public outreach."

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