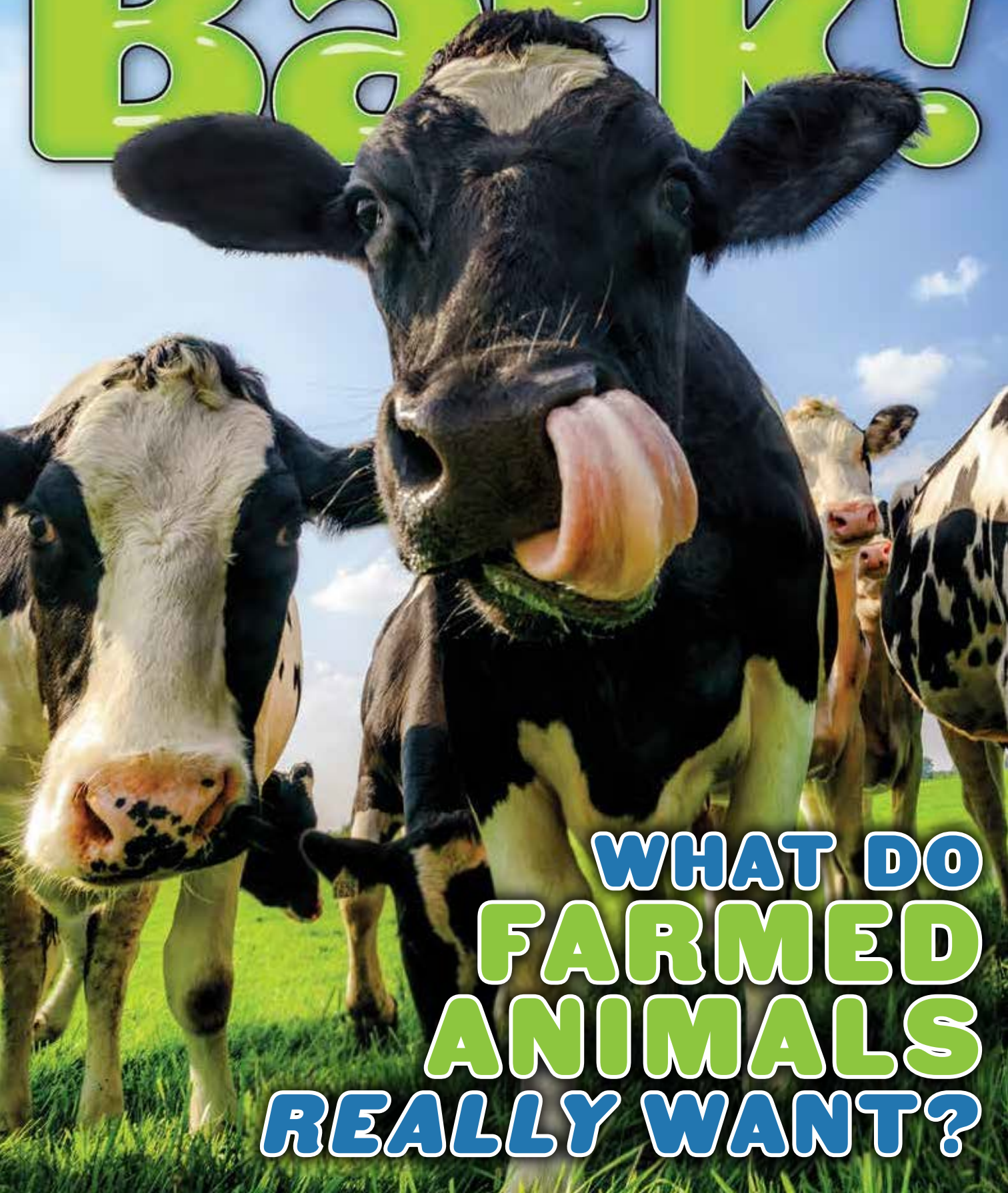


HELPING BIRDS  BC SPCA PUPPY RESCUES  RETHINKING EXOTIC PETS

kids speaking for animals Vol. 21 • No. 2

BCSPCA

# Bark!



**WHAT DO  
FARMED  
ANIMALS  
REALLY WANT?**



# High Paws

KIDS HELPING ANIMALS! ←



**Harlee** helps animals wherever she can! While living in Mexico with her family, Harlee took part in volunteer community spay and neuter clinics, and helped bottle-feed kittens in foster care. She rescued an abandoned five-week-old kitten, who her family later adopted and brought home to Canada. Now living in Nanaimo, Harlee regularly visits cats up for adoption to give them some love. Harlee's goal in life is to either become a veterinarian or run a rescue centre.



Bouchie Lake School hosted a bake sale to raise money for the Quesnel SPCA. The event, organized by the Nature Lovers Club, raised \$400. Two club members then added a total of \$100 more, from money they collected on their own. It feels - and tastes - good to be kind to animals!

TREAT-O TIME!

**Odette, 8**, is passionate about the BC SPCA's mission. She recently attended a special volunteer experience at her local SPCA. Duties included folding towels in the rabbit room, socializing kittens and making treats!



This grade 5 class from **École Robb Road in Comox** not only learned about animal issues through a BC SPCA **You Can Make a Difference** presentation series, but also took the opportunity to teach other students, too! Every student completed a project about a chosen animal issue in any way they liked; there were dioramas, videos, storybooks, posters and LEGO displays! They then invited three other classes to look at their projects as they explained why the issue is a problem and what change they hoped to make. By learning and sharing their knowledge, all of these kids made a difference for animals!

#HOP2ADOPT

BOOP!



The **4th Abbotsford Guides** wanted to do a service project for their community. They unanimously voted to make cat toys to donate to the Abbotsford SPCA - and produced these adorable felt mice! These dedicated Girl Guides then planned to collect blankets and towels to donate, as well.

FRIENDS FOR-EVER!



M3ROD SUPER!



For her 12th birthday, **Kylie** asked for donations of presents for instead of presents for herself. This thoughtful request raised \$100! Kylie and her family also foster animals for the BC SPCA. Pictured here is one of their foster pups, Wallace!





Marshall, 7, painted and glued dozens of "Cute Clips," which can be used to secure papers, photos and more. He then sold his creations at a craft fair to raise money for the Comox SPCA!



Ryleigh, 8, has not only attended BC SPCA summer programs and donated her birthday money, but she also visited her local SPCA for a volunteer workshop! Ryleigh helped in the centre for two hours, brushing cats, feeding small animals and even mopping!



Everyone in this grade 4/5 class at Seaview Elementary in Nanaimo worked hard on a project as part of their BC SPCA *Making the Right Choice* presentation. Each student researched an animal someone might want as a pet, learning what the animal needs and the cost of caring for the animal. Here they are pictured with their amazing posters!



PAW-SOME HOOMANS!



Melody turned seven, and made her birthday into a special day for animals, too! Melody raised \$105 for the Penticton SPCA, to help animals like Clawdette.

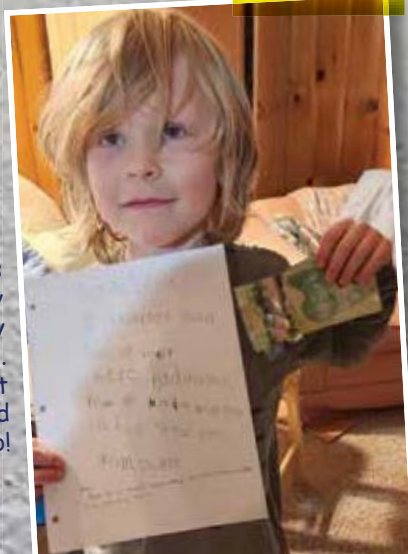


This grade 3 class at Queen of Angels Elementary in Duncan participated in the BC SPCA *Wildlife Wonders* presentation series. They learned why animals are important in the environment and what we can do to help them, and made these amazing dioramas displaying wild animals in their natural habitats!



LAP-LOVE:

Charlie brought a donation to the Castlegar SPCA, along with this note: "To the BC SPCA, I learned about you at school. Here is a donation of my birthday money to help stray cats. From Charlie." What a purrfectly kind thing to do!



These grade 3 students at Bert Edwards Science and Technology School planned a Love Your Pet dance after having several BC SPCA presentations in their class. They decorated and put out boxes, inviting everyone to bring donations for the Kamloops SPCA! Their teacher says, "They worked hard to promote and prepare for the dance, but they did it with ease because they were doing it with love and compassion for the animals they would be helping."



Lexton celebrated his seventh birthday by asking for donations to the Kelowna SPCA instead of gifts. He raised \$417!

SHARE YOUR LOVE OF ANIMALS!

EMAIL YOUR ART, LETTERS AND PHOTOS TO US! [KIDS@SPCA.BC.CA](mailto:KIDS@SPCA.BC.CA) WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO!



# Is that bird OK?

BC SPCA wildlife expert-approved answers to the most frequently asked questions about helping birds

BC SPCA Animal Helpline:  
**1-855-622-7722**

Find your local wildlife rehabilitator:  
**[wrnbc.org/contact/  
find-a-local-rehabilitator](http://wrnbc.org/contact/find-a-local-rehabilitator)**

## How can I tell if a bird needs help?

**First, observe the bird and ask yourself these questions:**

- Do they show signs of an injury, such as blood or a broken bone?
- Have they been hit by a car, caught by a cat or dog, or collided with a window?
- Do they seem sluggish and lifeless, rather than alert?

If 'yes,' contact your local wildlife rehabilitator or the BC SPCA Animal Helpline. Taking pictures or videos to email can help staff determine what needs to happen next!



## What do I do if I see a baby bird alone on the ground?

**This will depend on the type of baby.** A **hatchling** is a featherless, downy baby bird. A **nestling** is partly feathered. A **fledgling** is a slightly older bird with nearly all their feathers.

Neither **hatchlings** nor **nestlings** should be outside the nest. But sometimes they fall, are blown out by the wind, or even dropped after a predator tries to capture them. If the bird isn't hurt, and you can find and reach the nest, you may be able to return the bird to their nest.

Look for the nest in a nearby tree, shrub, or on the outside of a building. If you see the nest has fallen and you can't put it back in its original position, call your local wildlife rehabilitator or the BC SPCA Animal Helpline for advice.

Be sure you put the bird back in the right nest!





If you have to pass through an area where there is a fledgling crow, carry an open umbrella as an extra barrier.



## Can I care for injured or orphaned wildlife at home?

**No!** This is illegal (wildlife rehabilitators have a special permit) and can cause harm. If you can't transport the animal right away, ask a friend, relative or neighbour to help.

If you must keep an animal for a short time between capturing and transporting, keep them contained in the box. Place the box in a warm, quiet and dark place away from pets and other noises.

**DO NOT** try to treat the animal or give them food or water as this can do more harm.

Baby birds are less able than adults to maintain their body temperature. If they are cold or are going to be held for a few hours, tuck a heating pad set to 'LOW' under half the box (so they can

move away if they want). If the bird has hit a window, **DO NOT** use a heating pad at all as this can cause extra inflammation and be dangerous.



The other babies should look exactly like the one you found. Put on gloves and gently pick up the bird to place back in the nest. If you've heard the mother will reject the baby if you touch it, don't worry – birds have a poor sense of smell and are dedicated parents.

After you place the baby back in the nest, watch to make sure the parents come back to feed them within two hours.

**Fledglings**, on the other hand, are learning to fly and live outside the nest. They hop around on the ground to practise! Their parents watch and make sure they are fed.

If a fledgling is not in immediate danger, you don't need to do anything. In fact: steer clear so the parents don't get agitated. Crows are especially known for this, dive-bombing people who get too close to their young!

If a fledgling is in a dangerous place (for example, on or very close to a road), try gently herding them to a quieter area, such as nearby bushes, and observe to make sure their parents visit.

**With any type of baby bird, if the parents don't come back, contact your local wildlife rehabilitator or the BC SPCA Animal Helpline.**

## Who comes to pick up injured or orphaned birds?

**There is no wildlife ambulance that picks up injured or orphaned animals.** This is why it's helpful to know how to safely contain and transport a bird you know needs help. **Safety first – don't try to contain a wild animal if it risks your safety, or someone else's! Kids should always ask a trusted adult to follow these steps.**

1. Find a sturdy box with a lid and two towels. The box should be just big enough for the bird to stand and turn around (a shoebox can work well).
2. Poke air holes in the box with a pen or pencil.
3. Place a towel in the bottom of the box to absorb any mess and give the bird something to grip.
4. With the box ready, use the second towel to cover the bird (including their head and eyes). This protects you and calms the bird.
5. Gently pick up and place the bird in the box. As



you close the lid, remove the towel used to pick them up so they don't get too hot and can still move around.

6. Cover the box with a towel so the animal can't see out and people can't see in.
7. Head to your nearest wildlife rehabilitation centre or veterinarian as soon as possible.
8. During transport, stay quiet, don't peek and don't touch!

Keep these items in your family car in case of emergency. Girl Guide cookie boxes make great wildlife rescue boxes!



# Need for BC SPCA's services for B.C.'s most vulnerable animals grows



## 30 Dachshunds seized from terrible living conditions in the Okanagan

**T**his past year, the BC SPCA has seen a **BIG increase** in the number of animals brought in through animal cruelty and neglect investigations. Twenty per cent more animals have needed help from animal protection officers!

Part of this is due to **irresponsible breeders**. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, lots of us were staying home and thought it was a good time to get a pet. There was a big demand for puppies! Some people thought breeding and selling puppies would be an easy way to make money.

But over time, demand dropped. This has led some breeders to surrender the puppies and dogs they can't sell or use anymore to the BC SPCA. And in some cases, animal protection officers have seized animals when the breeder would not provide proper care. Hundreds of dogs and puppies have come to the BC SPCA these ways. **One news outlet even called it a pup-pocalypse.**

## 16 YORKSHIRE TERRIERS AND ONE POMERANIAN SEIZED FROM A BREEDER IN THE NORTH OKANAGAN



**From living in filth**

*to forever homes* ♡

**O**ne case of an irresponsible breeder involved 16 Yorkshire terriers and one Pomeranian. **These dogs were kept in a single room, in crates caked with their own waste.** They suffered from badly overgrown nails, severely matted coats and poor teeth. Animal protection officers rescued and brought them into BC SPCA care. There, they all received the medical care they badly needed.

Once the dogs were ready, the BC SPCA placed them for adoption. **One of the pups, Lulubelle, found a loving home with her new "dad," Bobby.** Lulubelle now lives in a house with a five-acre yard to explore. She settled in quickly at home and soon met Bobby's friends and their kids and pets. Bobby says, "She loves being held and when you

stop patting her, she taps you with her tiny paw to let you know you aren't finished yet. She is just the perfect dog and I love her to bits."

It's great news that Lulubelle and others from this case received the care they needed and found good homes. But the terrible experience they went through could have been avoided. By choosing **responsible breeders**, people looking to get a puppy can help prevent more situations like this.





## NUMBER OF PUPPIES IN BC SPCA CARE CONTINUES TO RISE



### 31 dogs rescued from Clearwater property



### Intake of more than 200 cats and kittens from single property



#### Signs of a responsible breeder:

- ✓ Lets you see around the whole home or facility
- ✓ Allows you to meet both the mother and puppies
- ✓ Their home or facility is clean and spacious
- ✓ Gives the animals regular exercise and socialization outside of their kennels
- ✓ Provides vet records
- ✓ Specializes in only one or two breeds
- ✓ Can give you lots of information, both positive and negative, about the breed
- ✓ Makes sure your family's lifestyle and experience will be a good match for the animal

Learn more signs of **good** and **bad** breeders and download the BC SPCA guide to finding a reputable breeder at [spca.bc.ca/faqs/how-find-good-breeder](https://spca.bc.ca/faqs/how-find-good-breeder).



#### The importance of spay and neuter

**N**ot all litters at the BC SPCA come from these types of irresponsible breeders. Some are the result of individual guardians whose pet had babies by accident. They can't care for a whole family of dogs or cats!

One person became overwhelmed when neighbours kept dropping unwanted cats on his property. At first he thought he could care for them. But they continued to have kittens, and eventually he needed to surrender more than 200 cats to the BC SPCA.

This is why it's so important have our pets spayed or neutered. This prevents them from having babies – so we don't end up with more animals than we can care for.





# Five Freedoms for farmed animals

Farmed animals have needs like those of people and our pets. We all need food, water and shelter. And, like us, animals have emotional needs, such as not living in fear, pain or discomfort. Farmed animals also need space to exercise and explore. Unfortunately, most farmed animals don't receive all these care needs—their five Freedoms.



## Freedom from hunger and thirst.

Farmed animals must be provided with nutritious food and fresh, clean water.

**Most farmers in Canada provide Freedom one.**

← Pastured animals, such as cattle and sheep, must be monitored even more closely because of climate change. Water supplies must not freeze in winter, and watering holes must not dry up in summer.



## Freedom from pain, injury, and disease.

Farmers must treat sick or injured animals as quickly as possible to reduce unnecessary suffering. They should also provide pain medication for painful procedures such as dehorning or branding cattle. Farmers usually treat sick animals, but some are not as good at relieving pain or treating injuries.

Dairy cows naturally grow horns, which are removed to prevent harm to other cows or workers. An acid paste is applied to where a calf's horns grow, which really hurts the calves. If pain relievers are given before and after applying the paste, suffering is greatly reduced. ↓



## Farmed vs farm animals

A farmed animal is any animal raised for food or other products. Many animals, such as chickens, cattle and pigs, are "farmed" for food. Likewise, many people have "farm" animals as companions, such as chickens, horses or pigs. They may happen to live on a farm, but they are not for food.





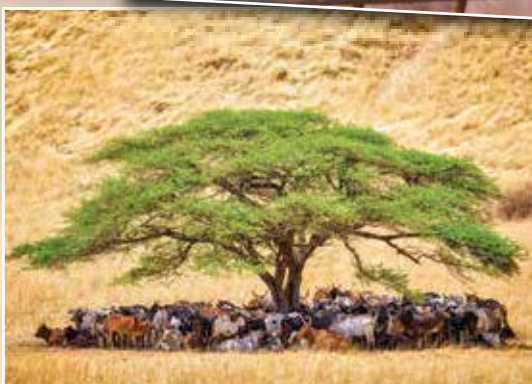
**3 Freedom from distress.** If animals are crowded into small pens or poked with electric shock prods, they suffer from distress — not only physically but emotionally, too. Animals can also experience frustration, fear or depression. **Unfortunately, many farmed animals live in some form of distress some or all of the time.**

Pregnant pigs (sows) are constantly frustrated when kept in gestation crates.

The crates are so small that sows can hardly move and can never turn around. →



**4 Freedom from discomfort.** Sometimes we experience discomfort, like sleeping on hard ground when camping. Freedom four focuses on ensuring animals don't suffer from discomfort all the time. This includes not being too cold or too hot and having a comfortable place to live. **Most intensively raised farmed animals suffer discomfort.**



↑ Cattle need shade in summer — even more so with continuing changes in climate. Large trees or built structures on the pasture can provide for this need.

## All animals need the Five Freedoms.

Scientists developed the **Five Freedoms** in the 1960s to reduce the suffering of farmed animals. **The Five Freedoms** can be applied to any situation where animals are in human care.

This includes zoos, aquariums, pet stores, rodeos, and anywhere animals are kept.



To learn more about the Five Freedoms, read Jacqueline Pearce's **What Animals Want: The Five Freedoms in Action**. You can get it from your school or public library, or local bookstore. You can also order it from the BC SPCA at [shop.sPCA.bc.ca](http://shop.sPCA.bc.ca).



↑ Beef cattle should have pain relievers before and after being branded. However, most cattle don't receive pain relief.

**Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.** Being able to do normal behaviours is a freedom often overlooked in intensive farming. Dairy cows want to graze on pasture. Chickens want to stretch their wings and scratch for food. Pigs want to root for food and build nests for their young. These behaviours allow animals to feel content and happy. **Yet, most farmed animals can't do any of these things.**



## What is intensive farming?

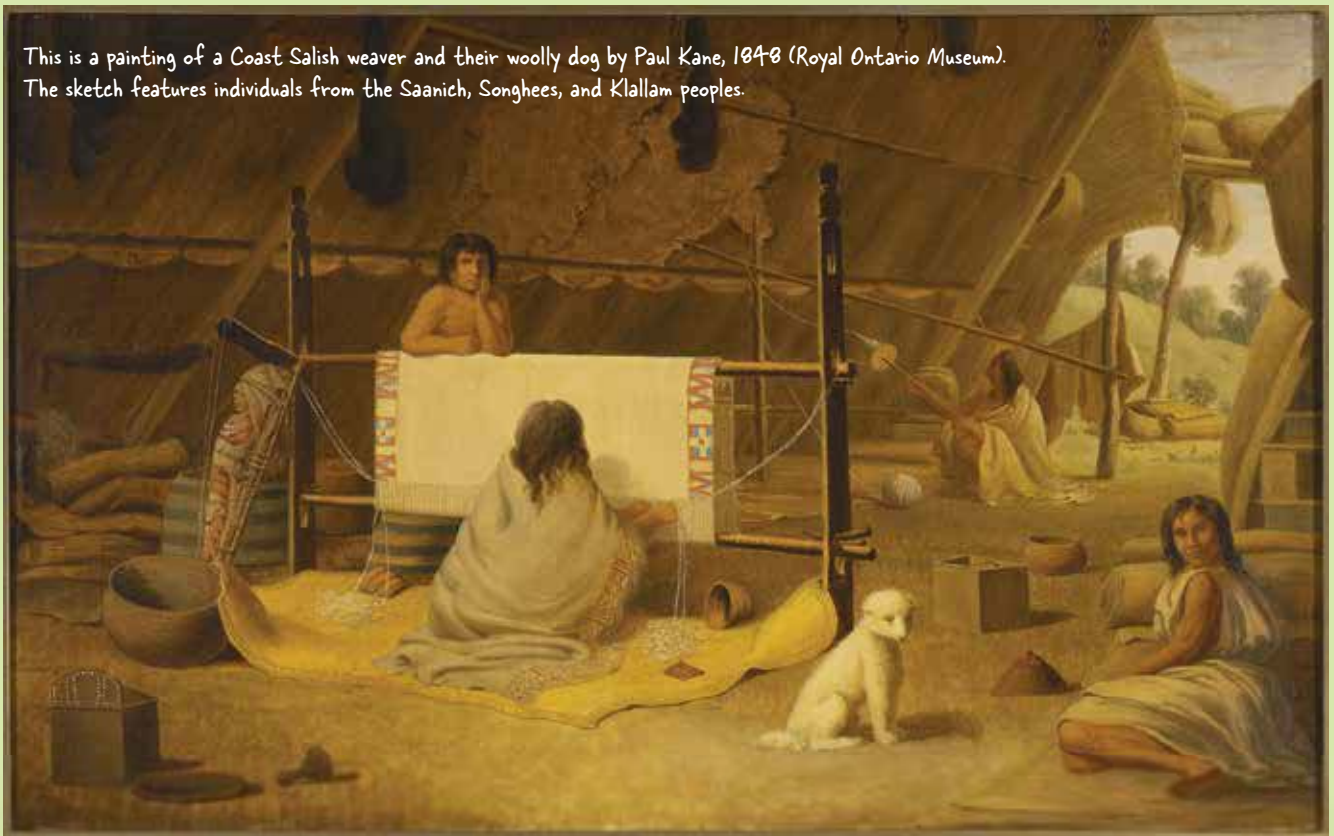
Intensive animal farming, also called **factory farming**, is a system for raising huge numbers of animals in barns. **The goal is to maximize production and reduce costs.** Pigs, meat chickens, egg-laying hens and turkeys are examples of intensively raised farmed animals.

## Hope for farmed animals

The BC SPCA works to improve the welfare of farmed animals by raising the standards that all farmers must follow. The goal is for all farmed animals to receive the **Five Freedoms**. Your family can support farmers who produce **higher-welfare** food items, such as **cage-free** eggs and **organic** products. Visit [sPCA.bc.ca/faqs/higher-welfare-food](http://sPCA.bc.ca/faqs/higher-welfare-food) to learn more.



This is a painting of a Coast Salish weaver and their woolly dog by Paul Kane, 1848 (Royal Ontario Museum). The sketch features individuals from the Saanich, Songhees, and Klallam peoples.



# Meet the woolly dog

Most people know that wool comes from sheep. But did you know that it can also come from dogs? Before European explorers and settlers came to what they later named British Columbia, the Coast Salish peoples bred a special dog with long woolly white hair.

These dogs were highly valued and considered part of the community. Women owned and took care of the dogs, feeding them the best salmon and other delicacies. Once a year, they sheered the dogs' fur, then used it to make yarn for weaving blankets.

Woolly dogs stood knee-high to an adult and looked similar to the Samoyed dog breed of today. They had sharp foxlike faces, pointed ears and a curled tail. Their fur could grow up to 15 centimetres long. It's been said that they didn't bark but howled. The pelt of a woolly dog named "Mutton," who died in 1859, was saved in the Smithsonian Institution, a museum in Washington, DC. A recent scientific study of Mutton's pelt suggests that woolly dogs were bred by the Coast Salish peoples as long as 5,000 years ago. This makes the woolly dog one of the most ancient breeds in the world.



The woolly dog looked somewhat similar to the Samoyed dog breed of today.

Studio photo of young women with their beloved woolly dog.



The Coast Salish peoples had other types of dogs, too, such as hunting dogs. But woolly dogs were the only dogs allowed to live in people's homes. The dogs were so valuable and loved that "if there was an emergency, a woman would only grab two things: her children and her woolly dog," says Senaqwila Wyss, cultural knowledge-holder from the Squamish Nation in West Vancouver. The dogs were also kept separate in pens or on small islands during the breeding season. This was so that they wouldn't interbreed with other dogs. This ensured the woolly dogs stayed white and woolly.





Blankets were very important in Coast Salish society. They symbolized wealth, were used in trade, given as gifts, and worn as robes for ceremonial events. In the past, blankets were woven from a mix of woolly dog hair, mountain goat wool, as well as plant fibres and goose down. Today, they are woven from sheep's wool and are still an important part of Coast Salish culture, connecting people with their ancestors and the community. Woolly dogs have been gone for more than 160 years, but they have not been forgotten.



Clockwise from above: A young Cowichan woman wearing a woven blanket in the early 1900s (photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1913/Wikimedia Commons); A delegation of Coast Salish chiefs who went to visit Prime Minister Laurier, 1908. (Museum of North Vancouver); The 160-year-old fur of a woolly dog named Mutton (Smithsonian Institution, New York).

**LIVE IT.**



The Senaqwila Wyss video tells about the importance of woolly dogs in Coast Salish culture.

## Discover more about dogs

The BC SPCA, in partnership with *Live It Earth*, has created the *Dogs* program. It is a series of videos and information about dogs.

You can explore how some Indigenous peoples view dogs. For example, Senaqwila Wyss, from the Squamish Nation, provides even more information about the importance of woolly dogs to Coast Salish peoples. Ancestral storyteller Jared Qwustenuxun Williams tells how the first dog came to be. Plus, Leah Arcand, founder of *Save Rez Dogs*, talks about how she helps other First Nations communities support dogs. There is even a list of books by Indigenous authors and illustrators to explore.

The *Dogs* program also includes videos on how dogs communicate and express emotions, how the BC SPCA helps animals, and much more. For a limited time, you can explore the *Dogs* materials for free by visiting [app.liveit.earth/register](https://app.liveit.earth/register). Enter the coupon code **DOGS-24**.



Jared Qwustenuxun Williams tells the ancient story of the first dog, Swuq'us.



# Want to be a humane educator when you grow up?

We talked to **Blaire Norbury**, a **BC SPCA regional humane educator**, about her career combining teaching kids with helping animals.

Did you always want to work to help animals?

As a kid, I always loved the idea of working with animals! That said, I also wanted to be a teacher and so I ended up going that route at first. However, that feeling of wanting to work with animals stayed with me.



Can you tell us about any special animals in your life, now or growing up?

I have been very lucky to have many special animals in my life. **One of my special animals was Magnum, who was my first foster fail!** I fell in love with him right when I brought him home in 2017 and officially adopted him a month later. He came with me to several school presentations! **Right now, I have a 7.5-year-old dog named Rextopher who loves to play fetch and swim.** I wish I could bring him to work but other dogs scare him (I have yet to tell him that he is also a dog!).

Can you share a little bit about your professional background?

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities and a Bachelor of Education degree from



Blaire and Magnum.

the University of Victoria. I started my career working as a classroom teacher teaching grades K-6.

How did you come to work with the BC SPCA?

My journey with the BC SPCA officially began in 2014 when **I started volunteering with dogs at the Victoria shelter.** A year later, I learned about the humane education department and all the great presentations





Above, left: Ms. Phillips' kindergarten class at Pleasant Valley Elementary fundraised for the animals and raised \$200!; Blaire gives a BC SPCA Kids Club presentation to the after-school care class. Previous page, bottom-left: leadership campers take action learning basic animal care.

and experiences they offer. I then began **volunteering with humane education**, delivering school presentations and helping with youth programs. I realized this is what I wanted to do with my life and then applied to be a regional humane educator in 2016!

**What does a typical work day look like for you?**

It depends on the time of year! If it is during the school year, I will usually start the day with a couple of school presentations and then the rest of the day would involve booking more presentations and creating new lessons and/or games about

animals. I also spend time learning more about animals when I can and sneaking a visit in with our centre animals! If it is during the school holidays, I **am usually all about preparing and delivering summer camp programs**. This can include booking guest speakers, creating camp schedules, being a counselor in camp with kids and/or introducing campers to our animals.

**What is your favourite part about your job?**

My absolute favourite part of my job is being able to combine my passion for animals with my love of teaching youth!

**Can you share a story from your work that has inspired you?**

Our campers and program participants inspire me. **One of my favourite things is hearing campers give their families a centre tour at the end of a camp week.** I can hear them reiterating what to look for in animal body language to see if the animal is happy to be petted or scared and then what to do from there.

**What is one piece of advice you would give to kids who want to make a difference for animals?**

I have two. The first is that you don't have to volunteer directly in an animal shelter to make a difference! You can learn **what animals need to be happy and healthy** and help them in other ways, like by making toys to donate. The second is that although it may not feel like it at times, **your voice is SO powerful and can make such a difference for animals.** Sharing your animal knowledge with as many people as you can will have a huge impact for all animals.

## BC SPCA summer camp

All year long, Blaire and the rest of the BC SPCA's humane educators provide school and community programs for youth around the province. In July and August, with the help of some amazing summer camp counselors, they hold camps at a number of BC SPCA locations. A variety of virtual camps are also offered to kids anywhere in B.C., and beyond! **Sign up at [sPCA.bc.ca/camp](https://sPCA.bc.ca/camp).**





# TRENDY or TROUBLE?

Trendy toys like fidget spinners or Squishmallows pop up all the time. So do new games, shoes and clothing. But what about animals? Do you think they become trendy? Unfortunately, they do. When a living creature is considered a new fashion, problems begin.

Many animals have unique needs that make it nearly impossible to provide proper care – their Five Freedoms (see page 8). When exotic animals (a wild animal from another country) become a trend, people who capture or breed them do whatever it takes to sell more, even if animals suffer. Just because exotic animals are sold in pet stores or online doesn't mean they make good pets.

## THE TROUBLE WITH AXOLOTLS

One trendy species is the axolotl [AX-oh-lot-ul]. This fascinating-looking creature lives in only one place in the whole world: Lake Xochimilco [Zo-chee-mil-co] on the edge of Mexico City.

The axolotl is critically endangered in the wild due to habitat loss, pollution, invasive predators and the pet trade. Most axolotls found in pet stores descend from captive-bred animals used for scientific research. Scientists are especially interested in the axolotl's ability to regrow lost or damaged body parts.

As amazing as these amphibians are, they do not make good pets. It is very hard to meet their dietary needs. They are also extremely sensitive to water quality and have delicate skin. In B.C., axolotls are protected as wildlife, and you can't keep them without a special permit.

**Fun Fact: Axolotls are named after the Aztec god of fire and lightning, who could take on the form of a salamander. Amazing!**

Scientists and the local community are working to save the axolotl by preserving their shrinking habitat. Local farmers are encouraged to farm with traditional "floating gardens." These are constructed with aquatic plants and mud from the lake to create sanctuaries for the axolotl. That's hopeful news for axolotls and for the environment!





# The Dragon Dilemma



**T**his year is the Year of the Dragon, a symbol of good fortune and power in the Chinese Zodiac. However, don't confuse these mythical fire-breathing creatures with the bearded dragon reptile. **Native to Australia, the bearded dragon is a protected species. There you need a special licence to keep one.** Bearded dragons were introduced to North America through the pet trade about 30 years ago. Almost all "beardies" are now bred in captivity, but their care needs haven't changed.

While very easygoing and gentle, bearded dragons need a special diet and habitat to thrive. Bearded dragons are desert animals who like it hot. They need two different kinds of lamps, one with **ultraviolet** (UV) light and one with **heat**. Imagine coming from a warm, wild environment where you can swim or bask on a warm rock in the sun. Now imagine living in a tank with some plastic plants and a lamp to bask under. Which would you like better?



In the wild, bearded dragons live in a complex ecosystem compared to life in an enclosure.

Reptile keepers must also pay close attention to their animals' health. Poor diet or not enough heat and light will cause suffering and death in beardies. Like most wild animals in captivity, bearded dragons won't show signs of poor health until they are very sick. This is why you need to take your reptile to the vet for annual check-ups.

**Exotic animals are wild by nature, and most do not like being handled.** Enclosures should duplicate their natural environment as much as possible to allow them to engage in natural behaviours. Even with our best intentions, any enclosure cannot replace their natural environment, which is why we should let wild animals remain in their natural habitat.

**Fun Fact:** Bearded dragons get their name from their puffy black beards. But did you know that if dragons puff their beards out, that means they feel stressed or threatened?

Providing good welfare for exotic animals is hard and expensive, but don't be tempted to release them into the wild. Sadly, non-native species usually die soon after release. But some will thrive and multiply in their new environment.

We can learn so much about these remarkable animals in their native habitat – so let's keep them wild and in their native habitats!



**NOTE:** The BC SPCA does not support keeping wild or exotic animals as pets. One important reason for this is because it is so difficult to provide these animals with the **Five Freedoms**.





## DOES YOUR PET HAVE ID?

Ask at the vet clinic to have your microchip registered in the BC SPCA's **BC Pet Registry**. This way if your lost pet is brought to any shelter or vet clinic, they can quickly arrange a reunion. Learn more at [bcpetregistry.ca](https://bcpetregistry.ca).



**T**he BC SPCA wants to see every lost cat or dog returned home as quickly as possible. The best way to do that? Make sure your pets have identification!

A **collar with an ID tag** is a good start because if someone finds your pet, they can see your phone number and call to get your pet back to you.

A **microchip along with the ID tag** is **even better** because a microchip is permanent! Unlike a collar, a microchip can't slip off. This rice-sized implant is inserted under your pet's skin by your veterinarian. Then it goes everywhere they go. Lost pets are scanned to retrieve your family's contact information.



**If you're not already a BC SPCA Kids Club member, what are you waiting for?**

The Kids Club unites youth (13 and under) who **LOVE ANIMALS**. Sign up today! [spca.bc.ca/kidsclub](https://spca.bc.ca/kidsclub).

You'll get *Bark!* magazine delivered to your door four times a year, monthly e-Kids Mews/letters, a welcome package and more.



# BCSPCA

## WHO IS 'MAKING A RUN' FOR IT!:

**Bark! • KIDS SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS** SPRING 2024 / VOLUME 21, NUMBER 2  
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