

ANIMAL CLUB ACTIVITIES 🐾 MAKE A CATIO 🐾 DECODING EGG CARTONS

kids speaking for animals Vol. 21 • No. 4

BCSPCA

Bark!



DOG
TRICKS
AND TREATS

High Paws

KIDS HELPING ANIMALS!



When **Shan** noticed that his grandfather's tenants kept throwing their cans into the recycling bin, he decided to collect them to return for a refund. An animal lover who hopes to become a veterinarian one day, Shan returned recyclables for almost a year to save up \$140. He decided to use the money to buy food for the Vancouver SPCA. Shan started a trend in his family, too: For his parents' anniversary, they donated to the shelter instead of buying gifts!



Seven-year-old **Sam** showed incredible dedication and generosity, saving up for a year then donating \$72 to the Victoria SPCA.



Friends **Evie** and **Ellie** held two lemonade stands in support of the Squamish SPCA. They raised \$75! When dropping off their donation, they took some time to visit the cats and kittens. Evie and her family fell in love with one kitten in particular – and adopted him the next day!



Saya, a BC SPCA summer camper, saved up her allowance and made a \$15 donation to animals in need!



Maya held an iced tea stand and raised \$108.25 for the animals at the Kelowna SPCA.

Naomi designed, created and sold stickers to raise money for the BC SPCA Pet Food Bank. The initiative raised more than \$700 to help pets and their people in the community!



Marina held a bottle drive to fundraise for the Kamloops SPCA. Her efforts earned \$150 to help care for the animals!



Norah and **Fiona**, friends to each other AND to animals, held a toonie party for the Vancouver SPCA. They raised \$45!



Ten-year-old **Jacob** baked and sold pet treats, raising funds and awareness for the Coquitlam SPCA. This kind act raised \$12 for animals in need.



Wren and **River**, along with friends from their "Neighbourhood Gang," hosted a lemonade stand in support of the Powell River SPCA. Together they raised \$25. High Paws to the whole Neighbourhood Gang!



On a mission to help animals, **Annabella** has fundraised through lemonade stands, craft sales and garage sales (even selling her own toys!). She recently visited the animals at the Comox Valley SPCA, where she donated \$107.05, plus cute pet bandanas and a bag of dog treats. Wow!



Emilio generously donated \$35 of his own birthday money to the Coquitlam SPCA. **Pawsome!**



Letterbox

(letters to the editor)

Dear BC SPCA,

Hi there! My name is Maella and I am 11 years old and I just wanted to send you a letter because I am obsessed with animals! I have a dog named Kahlua (nickname: Ku-ku) and a hamster named Skittles! I appreciate how much the SPCA cares so much about animals! Next year for my birthday I want to go to the BC SPCA! I also just got the Kids Club package and I love all your *Bark!* magazines. Thank you so much! Bye!

Maella

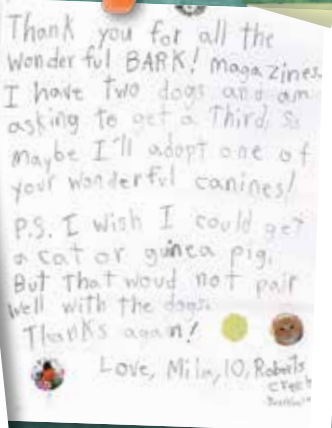


P



Cat lovers and hard workers. **Rowan** and **Raul** decided to donate their chore money of \$25 to the feline friends at the Kelowna SPCA.

Mila, age 10, Roberts Creek



Pet Pals

Isabelle Porter, Kamloops



Hey Kids! Send your letters, photos and artwork for Pet Pals, High Paws or Litterbox to:



BC SPCA Kids Club
1245 East 7th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5T 1R1
or email them to: kids@spca.bc.ca



For her sixth birthday, **Izzy** asked for donations for animals instead of presents for herself. This thoughtful request raised \$95 for the Kelowna SPCA!



Vy, Addison, Zaheen and Nurperi held a lemonade stand on the Coquitlam Crunch to raise money for their local SPCA. The Coquitlam Crunch Trail is a challenging 2.9 kilometre uphill climb, before walking back down! In short: It makes people THIRSTY! What a perfect spot for a lemonade stand. This awesome group of friends gave "Crunchers" some much-needed refreshment AND raised more than \$200 to help animals in need.



BOOM!

the FIRE KITTENS

Rescue, recovery and the road to adoption

Earlier this year, a wildfire broke out in a gully near the Port Alberni SPCA. Thankfully, fire crews put it out quickly. It was a relief that the animal centre building and animals in it were not affected.

But that wasn't the end of the story. When the firefighters did sweeps of the scene, they discovered a **litter of tiny, abandoned kittens**.

The kittens were rushed to the SPCA, then straight to an emergency animal hospital.

One kitten escaped with only singed fur. **Others had more serious burns.** After receiving care at the hospital, the kittens went into a foster home with an SPCA staff member.

The most injured kittens needed eye drops and ointment on their burns three times a day. They also needed pain medication at least twice a day. The healthiest of the kittens were able to play and act like kittens. The others mostly **sleep and cuddled on**

a plush blanket, to avoid the discomfort from their burns.

As time went on in foster care and the kittens healed, they became more playful and affectionate. Their foster carer, Natalie, said, **"They love to swat the ball around the wheel of their play circuit toy. They are also major fans of scratch posts."**

Natalie also got to know each kitten's special personality. She noticed:

Afi

Kai

Kenna

Egan



Afi, who had smoke inhalation damage to his lungs and burns on his toes, was slower than the rest. Still, he enjoyed romping around with his siblings in his own way.



Kai loved to climb Natalie's pants. She always wanted to be held.



Kenna was a real lap cat. She was always looking for one to sit on! That is, when she wasn't stalking her brothers and pouncing on them.



Egan was a total snugglebug. He loved to nestle under blankets next to Natalie.



Now, months since the fire, **Afi, Kai, Kenna and Egan** have all been adopted. There was no shortage of interest! Even the **firefighters**

and the **emergency animal hospital staff** reached out. We are so happy these kittens found loving forever homes.



Where goldfish don't belong

Goldfish are popular pets. With good care, they can live ten to 15 years.

But what if you can't keep your goldfish anymore? You might think releasing them into a pond, lake or river is

a kind thing to do. But think again! **Invasive goldfish are causing habitat damage** all around the world.

If they survive, released goldfish can introduce parasites or diseases to other

fish and aquatic creatures. Goldfish have big appetites. They eat snails, insects, fish eggs, small fish and vegetation. **The result is a loss of individual animals and habitat for native species.**



RELEASING PET RABBITS IS ILLEGAL

Like goldfish, if people can't keep their pet rabbit, they may think releasing them is good idea. But this isn't kind to the rabbit. Plus, it's against the law!

Sadly, the lifespan of released pet rabbits is short. They lack natural skills to avoid predators. **Owls, cats, coyotes, hawks and eagles, and others, prey on pet rabbits.** Rabbits also suffer from disease and malnutrition. Chances are the pet rabbits you see in some parks are newly released or the offspring of other rabbits.

Unspayed rabbits reproduce rapidly. Rabbits can have six to eight litters of six rabbits a year. Yikes! This adds up quickly and can rapidly destroy an ecosystem. Sadly, these rabbits aren't wild animals and also suffer greatly.

Pets are a lifetime commitment

Think very carefully before getting any pet. Pets are wonderful companions. But it's important to reflect on how long they live, the costs and the daily care through their entire lifetime.

If you can't keep your pet fish or rabbit, here are some rehoming tips:

1. **Ask friends or relatives if they'll take your pet.**
2. **Put notices at your school, library, pet store or other community bulletin boards.**
3. **Ask people from fish or rabbit hobby groups for advice.**
4. **Posting an advertisement online is another possibility. Most sites will not allow you to sell, only rehome.**



What about the SPCA or other animal rescues?

Unfortunately, most animal shelters are not able to take pet fish. Shelters also have very little space for rabbits. It is best if you rehome them yourself and – for the animals' sake – **don't release them to the wild.**



SURVEY SAYS ...



START A SCHOOL ANIMAL CLUB!

100

Do you wish your school had an animal club?
You could be the person to start one!



A school animal club is a group of like-minded kids working together to make a difference. Clubs do activities to raise awareness and help animals.

Download the free BC SPCA school club manual at spca.bc.ca/school-club-manual. Get tips on finding a teacher sponsor and hosting your first meeting. The manual also has club activity ideas to inspire you!



How many kids have pets at your school?

We were inspired by the kids at Walnut Road Elementary. After a presentation by the BC SPCA, the students chose to survey their fellow students. They wanted to see how animals shape student identity. They tallied the results then designed displays to share at a community event. **Check it out!** →

A survey can help your club learn what fellow students think about animals and animal issues. You'll also raise awareness about your club and the BC SPCA. Plus, what you discover can

help **decide your club's next activity**. Here are some survey question suggestions, with activities that could follow.





Survey question:

Did you know the BC SPCA has a pet food bank program?



The BC SPCA pet food bank program provides pet food and supplies for families in need. Share why the program is important while making a difference in your community.

Club activity ↓

HOLD A SCHOOL PET FOOD DRIVE TO HELP PETS AND PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

1. Choose a date (or dates) for your food drive.
2. Make posters advertising you are collecting pet food and supplies.
3. Decorate cardboard boxes to place in classrooms.
4. Write an announcement to read on the PA system.
5. Collect food, treats, toys and supplies (like dog leashes and cat litter).
6. After your food drive, one or more club members can bring the donations to your local BC SPCA community animal centre.
7. The items will then be distributed to people in need.



Learn more about the **BC SPCA Pet Food Bank program** at spca.bc.ca/food-bank. You will find facts to share through your club's posters and announcements!



Survey question:

If you have a pet, what kind of identification do they have?



SHRINKY DINK ID TAGS

← Club activity

Set up a pet ID station. Invite students with pets to make ID tags. Share the important information below at your display:

- Dogs and cats need two forms of identification in case they get lost:
- A microchip (or tattoo). Microchips are permanent and can't fall off. ID tags sometimes get lost. Microchipping is done by your veterinarian. You can register it with the BC SPCA's Pet Registry (spca.bc.ca/pet-ID). If your pet gets lost, any veterinarian or animal shelter can look up the ID number and contact you.
- An ID tag is also very important. If you find a stray pet, you can call the phone number on the tag to quickly return the pet.



Scan the QR code for instructions on making Shrinky Dink ID tags. You will need an oven for this project. You may be able to make them entirely at school, or club members can complete them at home.



MAKE "SNUFFLE MATS" FOR YOUR LOCAL ANIMAL SHELTER!

← Club activity

Play is a **MUST** for all pets. Dogs and cats – whether at home or in an animal shelter – can become bored and frustrated. Animals are naturally curious and need chances to play and use their brains.

Snuffle mats are shaggy blankets for hiding treats for your cat or dog to find. The mats engage their minds and bodies to sniff out treats! BC SPCA shelter staff give them to pets while at the shelter.



By making and donating snuffle mats, your club will make a difference for animals. Let your school community know what you're doing and share the importance of enrichment for all pets! If you don't have a shelter close by, you can also make and sell them at a craft fair. Donate the money to an animal rescue group near you.

Scan the QR code for snuffle mat instructions. Gather all the materials before holding your snuffle mat-making session!



Survey question:

Do you think pets NEED activities like toys and games?

Trick



This Halloween, teach your dog a trick, make them a treat – or both!

Teach your pooch to high-five with these steps:

1. Have your dog sit (they'll need to know how to do this first). Show them a "high value" treat. This is something irresistible and not their ordinary kibble. Try a piece of cheese or hot dog. Close your hand around the treat. They will know it's there but can't get it.
2. Wait as your dog sniffs and tries to open your hand. They will soon lift a paw to try to get the treat. Say "Good!" and give the treat.
3. Repeat this a few more times and then start to say, "High five!" when your dog lifts their paw to your hand. Remember, they only get the treat if they lift their paw.
4. After a few more times, when you say, "High five!" take your dog's paw in your open hand (the one not holding the treat).
5. **Keep practising.** It may take time for your dog to catch on. Limit the training to a few minutes a day so they don't get frustrated or bored. Eventually they will high five each time you ask, with or without a treat!



Frightening... or fascinating?

Spiders. Bats. Black cats. These animals are often seen as spooky. But they're no scarier than others in our communities. And they're just as interesting!

Nearly all **spiders** are harmless to humans. But they ARE important predators. Without spiders, the world would be overrun with insects. Spiders kill 400-800 million tons of insect prey every year! Spiders also provide food for other animals, making them a critical link in the food web.

Bats are responsible for more than 300 species of fruit! You can thank these nocturnal flying mammals for peaches, bananas and even CHOCOLATE. How do they do it? Pollination, seed dispersal and insect control.

Have you heard the superstition that **black cats** are "unlucky"? It turns out that the opposite may be true! Scientists discovered they may be more resistant to illness than other felines. The same gene that produces black fur also provides protection against certain diseases. Now that is lucky!

or treat!!!



These treats are Clover-approved!

While you enjoy your Halloween candy, your pup can munch these **frozen treats!**

Ingredients:

- 1 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup canned pure pumpkin purée
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
- Water as needed

Directions:

Put the first three ingredients in a large bowl. Combine them well with a big spoon or in a blender. Add a bit of water if the mixture is too thick to pour into an ice cube tray. Freeze for several hours.



Want to make your treats even more festive?

Try ice cube trays with Halloween-themed shapes like pumpkins, ghosts or witches' hats!



Halloween Hazards

Halloween is full of fun and tasty treats, but it can also be a **bit tricky** for our pets. Watch out for these dangers so that everyone has a good time.



COSTUMES. Many humans *love* wearing Halloween costumes. But for animals, they can be no fun at all. Humans in costumes – especially those with masks – can also confuse and scare pets.

Costumes FOR pets limit their ability to communicate using their bodies. Some dogs may tolerate costumes but most are stressed wearing clothing. Covering ears, tails and fur can lead to frustration, fear and even aggression.

CANDY. Keep those mini chocolate bars and sweets to yourself! Pets' stomachs can't handle all that sugar, and **chocolate is toxic to cats and dogs.** What if your furry friend accidentally eats a piece for your Halloween haul? Keep your eye on them and, if they get sick, call the vet.

FIREWORKS. The loud noises of fireworks can make pets, farm and wild animals panic on Halloween. Even the constant ringing of the doorbell can cause alarm. On October 31, keep your **pets inside in a quiet room** with the windows closed. Playing music or having a TV on can help drown out some of the scary sounds. If you have horses or other farm animals, keep them in a barn if possible.



Create a

wildlife haven



In the fall, before winter sets in, some animals migrate, while others hibernate. But what about the animals who need to withstand winter?

"Resident" animals still need food, water and shelter during the cold and snowy months. Over time these wild animals have adapted to the changing seasons to help them survive. But making it through winter is still a challenge. If you live in a home with a yard, there are things your family can **do** (and **NOT do**) to help wildlife over winter.

Food and water **DOs** and **DON'Ts**

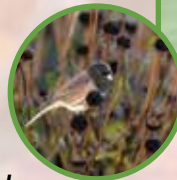
- **DON'T** pinch off dead flowers in the fall. Instead, allow plants to go to seed, and you will help feed hungry birds in the winter!
- **DO** remove fallen leaves from your pond, if you have one; decaying leaves can harm fish. Come winter, if

the pond freezes, keep a hole open in the ice to provide birds and mammals with drinking water.

- **DON'T** let your hummingbird feeder freeze or change the sugar-to-water ratio in your nectar. Hummingbird feeders are a big commitment. Some hummingbirds stay over the winter season. These non-migratory hummers often rely on this food source and will suffer if it is not consistent.
- **DO** put out a bird bath. In freezing temperatures, this extra water source can make a big difference. Keep your bird bath clean and change the water daily to prevent it from icing over.

AVOID A DECORATION DISASTER

Halloween and winter decorations can make a yard less of a safe haven for wildlife in the fall and winter. Animals can get tangled and injured in fake spider webs, fake snow and even strings of lights. Consider wildlife when decorating!





KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE

Stormy or very cold weather can force wildlife to look for shelter wherever possible. And raccoons, skunks and other animals may find it under decks, inside sheds or even in your house!

To prevent wildlife from moving in for the winter, seal up all possible entries. As well, clear up any hiding spots near the house like overgrown plants or stacks of boxes.

Finally, remove food attractants. This includes pet food, greasy barbecues, garbage and compost.

Come winter, your family can still give wildlife a "safe space." You might allow them to seek refuge in your yard and trees, just not in or right next to your house. Give them lots of space, keep pets away and leashed, and continue to keep the area clear of unnatural food attractants.



Shelter DOs and DON'Ts

- **DO** leave old plant stems and seed heads in the fall. These can make great homes for overwintering insects, including bees. Dead stalks can also be material for birds beginning to build their nests in the spring.
- **DON'T** rake up all the fall leaves! Piles of leaf litter can provide a place for animals, such as toads and tree frogs, to hibernate!
- **DO** leave or create brush piles. These can give dense cover to animals such as chipmunks, marmots and hares. Plus, they protect overwintering insects.
- **DON'T** cut the grass before winter. Long grass can shelter overwintering insects. Come spring, the bugs will be protein-rich food for baby birds.
- **DO** leave rock piles, especially near water. These can provide habitat for snakes, frogs and other reptiles and amphibians.
- **DON'T** remove old tree stumps. There are a variety of birds who can use the cavities of dead but still standing trees to nest. Pileated woodpeckers use them to forage for carpenter ants, their main food source.
- **DO** put up a birdhouse. Nesting season doesn't start until early spring, but many songbird species will take shelter in a birdhouse during the winter. Make sure to clean out birdhouses after nesting season to prevent disease spread. It might surprise you how many flock birds, like bushtits or wrens, can fit in one birdhouse!



NATURE WALK TIPS

When you head out on a nature walk, remember that when wild animals are disturbed, they go on alert. This uses up time and energy that they need for feeding and resting. If animals flee from you, they may end up in an area with more predators, fewer resources and more competition. Plus, the stress of repeatedly being disturbed by people, can cause them to become sick more easily. To help wildlife survive and stay safe, follow these guidelines:

- Stay on established trails.
- Obey all signs and area closures.
- Never approach or chase wildlife.
- Stay quiet. Loud voices scare wildlife long before you get close to them.
- Leave only tracks, not trash!
- Don't damage plants or eat wild berries. (Remember, they provide food and shelter for animals!)
- Keep dogs on leash and away from wildlife.



Leaping platform!
Shelves up high
for perching.

Cool-cat catios!

Big or small, a catio will satisfy your cat's urge to be outside. Catios are outdoor enclosures that keep cats safe yet fulfill your cat's desire to be outdoors.



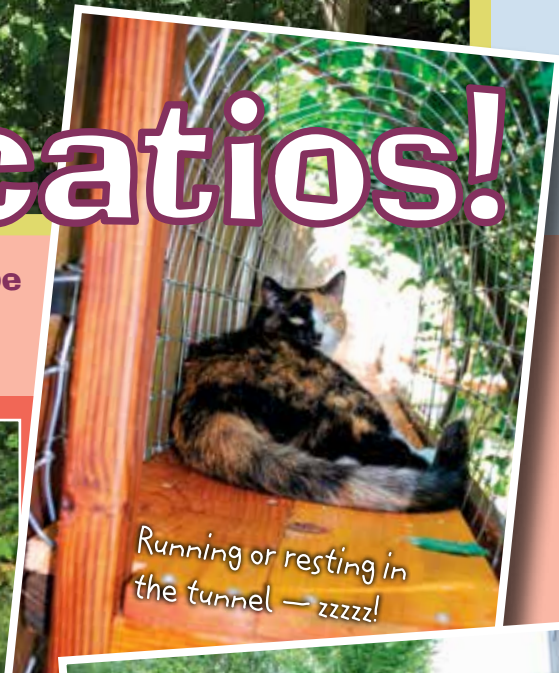
What risks do wandering, outdoor cats face?

- Being hit by vehicles.
- Getting lost or stolen.
- Being attacked by predators, such as raccoons or coyotes.
- Getting fleas, ticks and worms.

BEV TOMICH



Can you think of three additional risks for outdoor cats? Check out the bottom of the opposite page for help.



Running or resting in the tunnel — zzzzz!



Fun tunnel, mee-wow!

Do you have a catio?

Share a photo – you might see it published in the next issue of **Bark!**

Send to kids@spca.bc.ca

We also have to keep wildlife safe from cats. Cats are natural hunters. They hunt birds, bats and other small animals.

Guess how many birds are killed by cats each year in North America?

- a. Thousands
- b. Millions
- c. Billions

Answer: It is estimated that cats kill between **1.3 and 4 BILLION** birds each year.



Lots of plants inside the catio create shade and privacy. Make sure plants are cat-safe!

Catio furnishings: An ideal catio has ramps and lots of climbing, perching and hiding spots.

You can make a catio or you can buy a cat enclosure kit. Designs are available for small balconies and yards. Search online or visit a home centre.



Ever heard of a **pup tent**? What about a **kitty clubhouse** for your cat?

Idea! Do you have a **playhouse** you don't use anymore? Convert it into a **cat enclosure**!

More risks to outdoor cats: ⚠️ poisoning, 🐾 fighting with other cats, 🦠 contracting diseases, 🏠 becoming trapped in a neighbour's shed or other building, + getting injured from falls, 🌡 being exposed to weather extremes – hot and cold, 🐾 victims of animal cruelty.



KATE BENJAMIN, HAUSPANTHER.COM



This DIY from the hardware store is patio-party-central for kitties!



More risks to outdoor cats:



becoming trapped in a neighbour's shed or other building, + getting injured from falls,



being exposed to weather extremes – hot and cold, 🐾 victims of animal cruelty.



COZY COOP DUPE!



At grocery stores, you've likely seen a large selection of different-looking cartons of eggs. The eggs come from hens raised in different housing systems. Some housing is better for hen welfare. The trick is decoding the labels.

◀ What comes to mind when you see this label? Do you imagine the hens living outside and nesting on straw in a "cozy" hen house? **Well, don't be fooled. Life for "Cozy Coop" and "Comfort Coop" hens isn't all that cozy.** The

hens are raised in what are called "enriched cages." This is a newer system that is supposed to improve the quality of life for the hens. **But what does "enriched" really mean?**

THERE ARE FOUR MAIN WAYS HENS ARE HOUSED:

1. Conventional (battery) cages POOR WELFARE



Hens in these systems suffer greatly. Each hen has space smaller than a sheet of paper. The mental welfare for hens is poor. Farmers have agreed to move away from these cages by 2036.

2. Enriched cages SLIGHTLY BETTER WELFARE THAN BATTERY CAGES



Many farmers are now switching to housing called "enriched," "furnished" or "colony" cages. Like battery cages, hens still live in cramped cages from ten to 100 birds. **They have slightly more space than a piece of paper.** Hens still can't shake their bodies, fully lift their heads or stretch their wings. There is a nesting area and a small plastic scratch pad. There are some hen perches but not for all birds at once. **Hens can't move freely, explore or forage and there is little natural light.**



Did you know? Chickens clean themselves by flicking sand and dirt into their feathers – a dust bath. This removes old oils from their feathers and helps get rid of parasites like fleas and mites.

How you can help hens

Try to buy cage-free eggs. The best eggs include:

1. **Certified organic or other certified eggs** (hens are cage-free and can go outside; farms are inspected to ensure high standards for welfare).
2. **Free-range eggs** (hens can socialize, explore and forage naturally; hens have access to outdoors).
3. **Free-run eggs** (like free-range, though hens are always in a barn).



Alternatives to eggs

Hens raised to higher welfare standards do cost more. Some people may choose to eat fewer eggs, or use egg alternatives for baking made from **flax** or **chia seeds**. Search “egg alternatives” online for more ideas.

3. Free-run barns IMPROVED WELFARE



Like the first two systems described, hens live their entire lives in a barn. But free-run hens are cage-free. They can jump down from perches that are up high to explore the barn floor to forage. They can freely stretch, flap wings and dustbathe. Hens are provided with a nesting area but have limited natural light.

4. Free-range systems BEST WELFARE



Much like free-run hens, chickens are cage-free. They have most of their welfare needs met. There are nesting areas and high-up perches. There is lots of floor space to scratch, peck and dustbathe. Plus, hens can also go outside when the weather isn't too cold or wet.



Could your family
care for 11 puppies?
That's how many
were in this litter. »



« This litter of kittens
was abandoned in a
cardboard box outside
the BC SPCA.

FIX BEFORE SIX

Did your family get a new kitten or puppy over the summer? If you haven't already, it's time to have them spayed or neutered!

Spaying (for females) and **neutering** (for males) are surgical procedures to prevent pets from having babies. This is **important** because of the issue of **pet overpopulation**. When there are more animals than there are homes to care for them, animals suffer.

When a kitten or puppy is still only a few months old, it can seem early to think about having them spayed or neutered. But that's exactly what responsible pet guardians do. If they aren't spayed

or neutered early enough, you may find your family dealing with an unplanned litter of animals.

The BC SPCA says "**fix before six**" to remind people to **spay or neuter pets before six months of age**. Kittens can have the procedure as early as eight weeks old. Some veterinarians may tell you to wait a little longer for dogs.

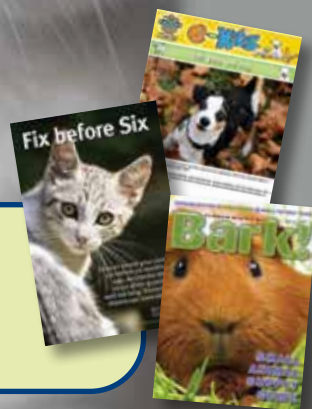
Act now! Have your family book an appointment with a veterinarian today.



LOVE ANIMALS? THEN JOIN THE BC SPCA KIDS CLUB!

Get **Bark!** four times a year, monthly **eNews**, and a fun **Kids Club package** with **posters** and **activities** when you join.

Sign up at spca.bc.ca/kidsclub today!



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