

kids speaking for animals Vol. 17 • No. 2

BCSPCA

# Bark!

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BCSPCA

**INSIDE:**

**WAYS TO BE KIND  
TO ANIMALS**

**ABANDONED BUNNIES**

**WILDLIFE MYTHS**

**CELEBRATING  
125 YEARS  
PROTECTING  
ANIMALS**

# Pet Pals

Help the animals!



Aariya Rathod, 8, Burnaby

Magical Cat



Danika Allan-White  
14, Vancouver

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

BC SPCA Kids Club  
1245 East 7th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5T 1R1

Email: [kids@spca.bc.ca](mailto:kids@spca.bc.ca)



## High Paws

KIDS HELPING ANIMALS!

## Letterbox

(letters to the editor)



Dear BC SPCA,

I have an idea. What if you founded a club where kids could come and make crafts with the animals that are okay with new people? They could even find a home.

Yours truly,  
Rivka Mills, Victoria  
P.S. I <3 the SPCA



#adoptdontshop

The Grade 6 Leadership Team at Cataline Elementary in Williams Lake showed great leadership in helping animals! They collected towels and blankets, raised \$100 through a bake sale and made treats for the dogs at the shelter.



Jorja, 11, donated \$45 in birthday money to the Kelowna SPCA!



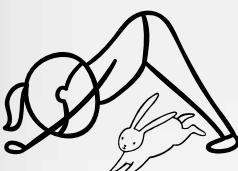
Cree is a cat lover who regularly makes the trip from Bowen Island to the West Vancouver SPCA to read to the animals. He has also raised \$145 by selling handmade cat beds, and even donated some of the beds to keep the shelter kitties comfy.



Olivia showed compassion for animals by visiting the Shuswap SPCA and donating \$30 that she raised at her birthday party.



#catlove





Shelters need lots of supplies to care for the animals! To help, Arden and Ellise held a collection drive at school. They gathered 86 much-needed items for the Nanaimo SPCA.



Elijah stopped by the Victoria shelter with \$62 in birthday money for the animals.



Not only did Malia hold her birthday party at the Castlegar SPCA, but together with her friends raised \$40 to help the animals!!



Deklan, 6, and Kai, 3, were excited to help animals at the West Vancouver SPCA.



These thoughtful brothers asked friends for money instead of birthday presents, then each donated \$150 to the shelter.



Loreley, Phoebe and Audrey teamed up to help animals! They raised \$64 for the Vancouver SPCA.



Leif celebrated his birthday by collecting donations to help animals. He delivered \$42 to the Parksville shelter – plus some yummy treats for the cats and dogs!



Ishan, 7, spent some quiet quality time with the guinea pigs at the Penticton SPCA, reading them a story. The guinea pigs appreciated the company as they awaited adoption!



For the third year in a row, Kaiya donated \$50 to help care for homeless animals in Comox.



For a second year, Nora asked friends and family for presents for homeless animals instead of birthday gifts for herself. She brought all the goodies to the Chilliwack SPCA.

# BCSPCA

1895 125 2020

YEARS OF PROTECTING ANIMALS

## Celebrating 125 Years Speaking for Animals

For the past 125 years, the BC SPCA has been the voice for animals in need. In the beginning it was the poor treatment of horses. Today, the BC SPCA speaks for all animals – pets, farm animals and wildlife.



In the 1800s, horses were used as a source of power, including hauling logs out of the woods.



Horses – called pit ponies – were used to pull carts of ore deep within mines. These horses suffered harsh conditions and were treated poorly.

As B.C. was settled, horses, oxen, cows, donkeys and even camels were used as pack animals carrying supplies for settlers, farmers and gold rush explorers.



In cities, horses outnumbered cars – moving supplies from milk to water for fighting fires.



In the 1930s, the SPCA helped to create laws to protect dogs who were falling off running boards of the early vehicles. Drivers needed to get creative to make sure their dogs were safe.

Today, dogs falling out of pick-up trucks is still a concern.



In 1948, the BC SPCA was called upon to help rescue animals in the great flood of the Fraser River. You can read about this in *Flood Warning*, a book by B.C. author Jacqueline Pearce.

Today, the BC SPCA helps to rescue animals when there are forest fires, floods or other natural disasters.



During the 1950s, B.C.'s population grew rapidly and so did the number of pets. In this time, few people spayed or neutered their pets. This was the start of pet overpopulation.



To help with all the unwanted pets, the BC SPCA opened animal shelters across B.C. Today there are 36 shelters and the SPCA spays and neuters thousands of animals each year.



In 1997, the BC SPCA opened Wild ARC, a wildlife rehabilitation centre on Vancouver Island near Victoria. Wild ARC treats thousands of injured and orphaned wild animals for release back to the wild.



Today the BC SPCA continues to help abandoned, injured, homeless and abused animals across the province.

# Be kind

**“In a world where you can be anything, be kind.” – Unknown**

As humans, we share the world with many different types of animals – pets, farm animals and wildlife. Every day, we have chances to be kind.

*What will your kind act be today?*

## Kindness Kongs

Stuff a Kong® and turn your dog's mealtime into a puzzle game with mouth-watering rewards. Keep it simple with some wet food or a few pieces of kibble – or have fun with layers of flavour!

Step 1: **Tantalizer.** Meat chunks, a soft treat, peanut butter or cheese.

Step 2: **Dessert.** Fill 1/3 of the cavity with crunchy or soft dog treats.

Step 3: **Main course.** Fill the last 2/3 with a mixture of canned and dry dog food.

Step 4: **The Appie.** Leave a tasty tidbit sticking out of the top. YUM!

Step 5: **Freeze your Kong®** so the enjoyment lasts longer.



Bark!

6



Brush up on your pet care skills. Go to [spca.bc.ca/pet-care-for-kids](http://spca.bc.ca/pet-care-for-kids) for tips on grooming, feeding, toys and more for your pets.

## Garden goodness

Rabbits and guinea pigs love their greens! You can show kindness to small animals by planting a veggie patch of kindness this spring. Plant seeds or use starter plants to get growing (favourites include kale, parsley and mint). Whether you have a bunny or piggy of your own, or want to help feed those at your local shelter, your garden will be a kind act that keeps on giving.

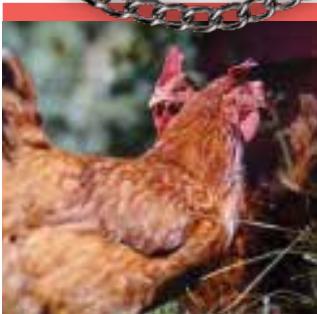


Is your dog's collar kind?



Ditch the choke chain and choose a flat collar.

More space means happier hens! Look for cage-free eggs.



Did you know...  
May is Be Kind to Animals Month!

Can you think of ways to be kind each day of the month?



Rats rule!

## Make a statement

Do you have an important message to share about helping animals? Why not WEAR it?

You will need:

- A plain white t-shirt
- Fabric markers
- The message you want to share!

Whether your t-shirt is about adopting from an animal shelter, putting ID on pets, or simply says to BE KIND, wear it proudly and make a difference.



## “Bee” a friend

Bees pollinate a third of all the foods we eat! Gathering all that pollen makes them thirsty. Be kind by making a special bee bath – enough fresh water to drink, but shallow enough that they won't drown.

Step 1: Line a shallow bowl or plate with rocks.

Step 2: Add water, but leave the rocks as dry “islands” to serve as landing pads.

Step 3: Place the bath at ground level in your garden.

Step 4: Refresh the water daily, adding just enough to evaporate by the end of the day.



## Toy joy

Cats love to play! A homemade feather or fleece wand is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. Gather a chopstick and some fleece fabric.
2. Cut the fleece into strips.
3. Tie or hot glue the strips to the chopstick.

**And voila!** An instant cat toy, perfect for some quality time together.

# AMAZING ANIMAL ABILITIES

We all know that humans are pretty amazing animals. We **use tools to solve problems** and our brain power allows us to adapt to different environments. Yet, many animals are also **extremely smart** and many have abilities that people don't. Here are seven examples of B.C. animals with unique abilities.

FERNANDO FESSA

## 1. SPAWNING SALMON MYSTERY

Salmon hatch from eggs laid in freshwater streams and rivers up and down the B.C. coast. The small fish (called fry) start their life in fresh water. But soon they venture downstream and go far out to sea. They spend their entire adult lives (one to four years) at sea, travelling more than a **thousand kilometres**. But how do the adults find their way back home to the exact same place they were born to spawn and lay their eggs? While scientists aren't completely sure, they believe salmon have **built-in compasses**. The magnetic compass leads them back to their home river. Then their keen sense of smell guides them up the stream to find the exact place they were born.

## 2. FLOWER POWER!

Bumble bees travel great distances from their hive to find flowers rich in nectar. These flights use up a lot of energy. It would take even more energy if they landed on empty flowers. So how do bees find the flowers that haven't been plundered by other bees? Scientists have discovered that bumble bees sense from a distance a change in a **flower's electrical field when the nectar is gone**. This information allows bees to quickly move on and not waste energy going to an empty flower. Until recently, scientists had no idea this sense even existed.

RUDI CAROLSFELD



## 3. SURE-FOOTED MOUNTAIN GOATS

B.C. has **half of the world's mountain goat population**. These goats have survived, in part, because of their unique rock climbing abilities. Mountain goats can climb steep cliffs where predators can't reach them. How? They have special feet. Goats have **split (cloven) hooves**. This allows their toes to spread wide to balance on the tiniest rocky ridges. They also have a rough foot pad that provides extra grip.





DEBBIE THIESSEN

## 4. HOVERING HUMMERS

You often hear hummingbirds before you see them. Their rapidly beating wings make a unique sound different than every other bird. Kind of like the buzzing sound of a drone. This is because hummers have **special wing joints** that make a circular arc when their wings beat. This allows them to go frontwards, backwards and even upside down. Since they can **hover like helicopters**, they can stop at flowers for long periods to lap up their nectar. No other bird can match their aerial acrobatics.

## 5. MASTERS OF DISGUISE

Octopuses are the **smartest invertebrates** (animals without spines) in the world. Like us, **they use tools** and are great at solving puzzles. Scientists have found they can figure out, for example, how to open jars to get at food placed inside. Octopuses have also been observed carrying shells when crossing open sea beds. Why? So they can quickly hide in them if a predator like a shark comes by. Not to mention, they can **instantly change colour** to blend into their surroundings to hide from danger.

## 6. SNAKE BITE PROOF

A rattlesnake bite is highly poisonous to most animals, including people. Yet, opossums are one of the few animals in the world who have evolved an **immunity to snake venom**. If bitten, their bodies immediately release a special protein that breaks down the poison. It turns out that opossums are also **safe from bee and scorpion stings**.



## 7. MAGIC FROZEN FROGS?

Wood frogs, a medium-sized frog common to B.C.'s interior and the north, have a unique ability. **They can survive being nearly frozen solid**. In winter, they actually stop breathing and their hearts stop beating! How is this possible? As winter sets in, the frog's body builds up a **sugar substance** that protects the frog's cells. This prevents the frog from completely freezing solid. As spring temperatures rise, the frog thaws and "magically" comes back to life. Now that's a deep sleep!



CAROLE VALKEMIER

# QUIT BUGGING ME!

IS YOUR DOG SCRATCHING AND CHEWING AT HIMSELF? HE MAY HAVE FLEAS, OR SOME OTHER ITCHY, IRRITATING PARASITE!

## FLEAS

- Small, wingless insects
- Feed on blood
- Excellent jumpers
- Pass from pet to pet
- Bite people too!

Dogs can get fleas anytime they go outside. Itchy flea bites make dogs scratch, chew and lick a lot. Slowly part your dog's hair, and you might see a flea quickly crawling away. You might also spot black dots of flea "dirt" which is really their poop. **Gross!**

## TICKS

- Small arachnids (related to spiders and mites)
- Feed on blood
- Attach to skin
- Bite people too!

Dogs can pick up ticks when they go for walks in tall grass. A tick feels like a small lump on your dog's skin. Tick bites are sometimes painful.

## EAR MITES

- Microscopic arachnids (related to spiders and ticks)
- Feed on ear wax and oils
- Very contagious between pets
- Rarely bite people

Dogs usually catch ear mites from other pets who have them. Ear mites make dogs extremely itchy. They shake their heads and scratch their ears until they're sore. Your dog's ears might look red

and swollen.

They might be smelly and filled with a black crusty material (a mixture of blood, wax and mites – **ewww!**).



This hook is being used by a veterinarian to safely remove a tick from a dog.



## Protecting your dog from parasites

Dogs with fleas, ticks or mites should get medical treatment right away. They can get skin or ear infections, or even diseases from them.

Luckily, it's pretty easy to prevent these parasites in the first place. You can get medication from your vet – either pills your dog swallows or a liquid you put on his skin once a month.

Be careful of products for parasites found at your local pet store. Some products for dogs that contain a chemical called permethrin are very poisonous to cats.



## QUIT BUGGING ME! CONTEST

Can you complete the word scramble below? Send your answer to [kids@sPCA.bc.ca](mailto:kids@sPCA.bc.ca) using the subject line "**Quit Bugging Me!**". You could win one of three adorable plush GIANTmicrobes®: a flea, a mite or a tick!

Parasites are organisms that live on or in an organism of another species, known as the

\_\_\_\_\_ . o t h s

This contest is open until June 30, 2020 to all Bark! readers ages 13 and under. Remember to include your name, age and address in your email, too.



# Have you ever heard of a snuffle mat?

Sometimes it's called snuffling, other times **nose work**. It's a dog's way of using his sense of smell to find a reward – like treats!

A snuffle mat is a toy that lets dogs express their natural behaviour. Searching for his food can be more satisfying for your dog than simply scarfing it out of a bowl.



Snuffle mats aren't just for dogs – cats love them too. Even guinea pigs, rabbits and ferrets can enjoy snuffling on mini mats.



1



2



3



## Make a mat!

Snuffle mats can be found at your local pet supply store, or online (like some of the examples on this page from Amazon).

But if you want a fun project, they're also easy to make yourself!

1. Start with a **rubber sink mat with holes**.
2. Use about 1.5 metres of **fleece fabric cut into strips**, which you can loop and knot through the holes in the mat.
3. Make a basic mat or try different shapes and patterns. Check out **YouTube** for some great instructional videos!

## Start snuffling!

The first time you introduce the snuffle mat, have your pet watch while you sprinkle a few pieces of kibble or treats on top of the mat.

Once they've found the kibble, play again – but this time hide some of the food underneath the flaps of fleece.

As your dog catches on, make the game more challenging each time you play!

### Safety tip!

Watch your pet while they snuffle. If left alone, they may chew and swallow the fleece, which can be harmful.

# Rabbit Woes

## No more abandoned bunnies!

Have you ever seen rabbits hopping around at a park? Did you know that some of them used to be people's pets? You can usually tell because they're different colours – like grey, black, orange or white – and less afraid of humans than wild rabbits.



Sometimes, when people no longer want their pet rabbits, they let them go outside. Abandoning an animal is a crime, but people do it anyway. Sadly, these rabbits don't usually survive for very long. Those that do go on to have lots of babies who suffer too.

Rabbits reproduce at an amazing rate. They can have up to 12 litters a year with as many as 14 babies (called kits) in each litter. If they all survived, there would be billions of bunnies roaming around in just a few years! But dangers like cars, diseases, freezing temperatures, predators and starvation prevent a rabbit population explosion.

What you don't see in a short visit to the park are the hurt, sick and starving rabbits hiding in warrens underground. Warrens offer protection from the weather and predators. They're also where rabbits rest and care for their young. Rabbits tend to sleep during the day and come out at dawn and dusk to feed on grasses and other plants.



As a prey species, rabbits have a lot of predators. Sadly, pet rabbits aren't as good at escaping from them as wild rabbits. Many are tame enough that you can easily approach them. Predators quickly realize this too. Hawks, eagles, owls, coyotes, foxes, mink, dogs and cats all hunt rabbits.

While the friendlier ones can find new homes, most of the rabbits born in parks would be too stressed to live with people. They haven't been socialized around humans. Rabbit rescues along with the BC SPCA try to adopt out as many unwanted rabbits as possible. But, unfortunately, they just don't have the space to take in all the rabbits who need homes.

## Take action: Stop rabbit overpopulation!

**1.** Have a rabbit? Make sure they're spayed or neutered! That way, you won't have any accidental litters on your hands, and they won't be adding to the rabbit overpopulation problem.

**2.** Thinking of getting a rabbit? Adopt one (or, better yet, two!) from the BC SPCA or a rabbit rescue. Unlike rabbits from a pet store or breeder, they'll already be spayed or neutered.

**3.** Know someone who doesn't want their rabbit anymore? Remind them that it's against the law to release them outside. Ask them to reach out to the BC SPCA or a rabbit rescue instead of abandoning them to a cruel fate in the wild.

# WILDLIFE MYTHS **BUSTED!**

## How well do you know your wild neighbours?

*Myth: Bats like to fly into human hair.*

**Fact:** Bats might swoop down towards your head when you're standing outside on a summer's night. But they're not looking to get tangled in your hair. They're just feeding on the insects hovering in the air above you!



**Myth: Woodpeckers hurt trees.**

**Fact:** Woodpeckers bore into trees with their chisel-like beaks. Then they push their long, sticky tongues into the holes to feast on the bugs inside. This can actually help keep the trees healthy. When you see a tree with a lot of woodpecker damage, it was probably infested with insects which were harming the tree long before any woodpeckers came along.

SHERRI TAYLOR



*Myth: Toads can give you warts.*

**Fact:** Although they're often called warts, the bumps on a toad's skin are actually glands. These special glands produce a mild, bitter-tasting poison that helps protect the toad from predators. Touching a toad won't give you warts, but the poison can irritate your skin. It's best not to handle toads at all!



*Myth: Fawns found alone need rescuing.*

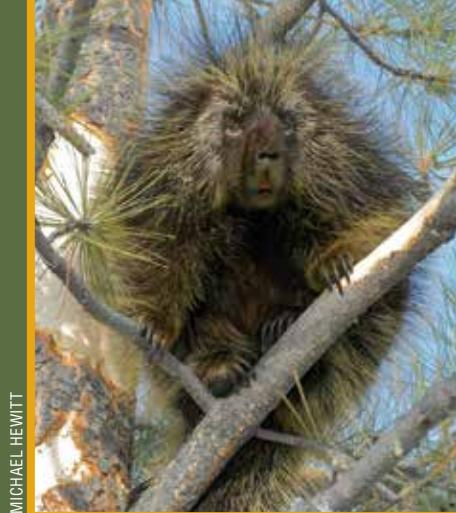
**Fact:** For a few weeks after giving birth, a doe stays away from her fawn on purpose. She only returns a few times a day to nurse. While she's gone, her fawn lays quietly hidden from predators. The two begin to travel together once the fawn is old enough.

Fawns should be left alone unless they're injured or orphaned. If you aren't sure what to do about a fawn you've seen, call the BC SPCA wildlife hotline for help: **1-855-622-7722**.



**Myth:** Baby birds can't be returned to the nest once you've touched them.

**Fact:** Sometimes, baby birds fall out of the nest. They can be put back (with an adult's help!) if they aren't hurt. Their parents are very committed to caring for them and won't reject them for smelling like humans. If they're hurt, you can't find the nest or the parents don't return, call the BC SPCA wildlife hotline (**1-855-622-7722**) for advice.



MICHAEL HEWITT

**Myth:** Porcupines can shoot their quills.

**Fact:** When they feel threatened, porcupines raise their quills and lash their tail. But it takes direct contact with the quills for them to come loose and get stuck in some animal unfortunate enough to get too close. Porcupines then grow new quills to replace the ones they lost.

CHRISTINA BEGESSNER



**Myth:** Moles will ruin your yard.

**Fact:** Lots of people don't like moles because of the little piles of dirt ("molehills") they leave all over their lawns. But yards can actually benefit from mole activity. Moles eat the larvae of bugs that can damage plants. Their tunneling also loosens and mixes the soil, which can help plants grow better.



**Myth:** Opossums sleep hanging upside down by their tail.

**Fact:** Opossums have a long, scaly tail which acts like an extra limb. They use it to grasp tree branches, balance and even carry nesting material. They rarely - if ever - use it to hang upside down, and they definitely don't sleep in this position!



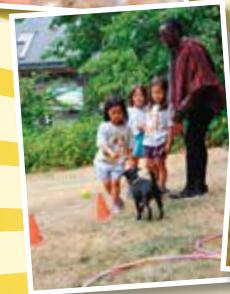
# Camp is coming!

(We hope.)

**BC SPCA summer camp is THE camp for kids who love animals.**



Spend time with some of the BC SPCA animals.



Meet animal experts like veterinarians and dog trainers!



Take action for animals with creative projects.

**Register now for select locations - or be the first to find out when more camps open up!**  
Everything you need to know is at [spca.bc.ca/camp](http://spca.bc.ca/camp). \*Activities and animals available for interaction vary by location.

» If you're not already a BC SPCA Kids Club member, join today! You'll receive a «  
Bark! magazine subscription, posters, a fun welcome package and e-Kids Mews!letter.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, you can email me e-Kids Mews!letter and other BC SPCA Kids Club updates

**Savings!** Two-year membership (\$25)  One-year membership (\$15)  Cheque payable to BC SPCA

Or by credit card  Amex  Visa  Mastercard Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**Join the Kids Club  
TODAY! Fill out this**

**FORM AND MAIL IT TO:**

**BC SPCA KIDS CLUB**

**1245 East 7th Avenue**

**Vancouver, BC**

**V5T 1R1**

**OR SIGN UP ONLINE AT  
[spca.bc.ca/KIDSCLUB](http://spca.bc.ca/KIDSCLUB).**

**BCSPCA**



CANADA WIDE  
MEDIA LIMITED

**Who showered their rabbits with love and kindness:**

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