

Pet Life - Magazine Issue 11.  
SPRING 2019  
CELEBRATE YOUR PET

FREE

## RECALL

DOES YOUR DOG  
COME BACK?

### WIN

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competitions inside

## PARROTS AS PETS

## FISH FIRST AID

IT'S NOT ABOUT DIRECT TRAUMA

Immune support for your pet

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# New Zealand



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Every pet deserves



# Letter from the Editor



Spring has finally sprung and with it we are seeing heaps of birds in our garden. It is so lovely to sit in the sun listening to them sing while our cat, Fred, lounges beside us soaking up the warm rays. Lucky for us, Fred isn't much of a hunter ... yet! He is still young so I am dreading the day when he masters the art of bird catching. Luckily, new research has

shown that bright coloured fabric collars can give birds a competitive edge. Read our tips on how to prevent bird kill from happening in your garden.

When we got our first dog, he was very much a spoilt baby who was allowed to sleep on the bed and pretty much do as he pleased. If he ran off, I would have to go hunting for him. Vin had no recall. I remember one day standing there, yelling his name, only to find him 15 minutes later behind a bush. He didn't come to me because, to be fair, I hadn't mastered his recall. When we got our second dog we went to a trainer to help us train him and perhaps help with Vin, too. We soon learnt that with consistency we could have a well behaved dog who would come when called, stay when asked and still love us... that was Bruce. Vin was still as naughty as ever!

Ensuring your dog has great recall is so important, especially if you take your dog out to dog parks or the beach. We never walked our dogs off lead at the beach and it was surprising how many owners had little to no control of their dogs. Dogs would rush up to ours and people would yell "it's OK, they are friendly" and call their dogs to come back, but they never did. Luckily, our dogs were not aggressive, but if they had been then the owners of these "off lead" dogs would have been no help to us whatsoever because there was no recall going on. If you are a dog owner and have a dog with ears painted on then check out this issue's article on recall.

Ever thought about getting a parrot or rat as a pet? Then keep reading. In this issue we have a story to help you consider what type of parrot would best fit your family, how to choose a healthy bird, determine its age and look after it. Parrots are extremely intelligent and need mental stimulation as boredom can lead to behavioural problems like feather picking. Like parrots, rats are extremely intelligent and social animals which make fantastic pets. I remember asking my mum for a pet rat when I was young and I got a firm "NO, don't ask again". Rats may not be to everyone's liking, but they are often misunderstood. Taking the time to learn about having a rat as a pet can help break down any barriers.

Finally, I would like to thank our readers who send us photos of their pets for inclusion in the magazine and who tag us on social media. We love learning about them and seeing all the adventures they get up to. If you haven't yet, please send us a photo of your pet for our summer issue.

Until then, enjoy the lengthening days and warmer temperatures.

EDITOR

*amy*

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## DOES YOUR CAT HUNT BIRDS?

Be sure to read our article on bird predation which shares tips on how to reduce the number of birds your cat catches. Learn how a bright collar scrunchie can help.

Photo: Neska trying to stalk birds while wearing her scrunchie.

# BREED PROFILE - SIAMESE

The exotic and somewhat mysterious Siamese cat hails from the country of Thailand and is probably one of the most instantly recognisable of cat breeds.

Siamese cats, in the past, were trusted to protect royal palaces and monasteries from evil spirits. They were also thought to bring good fortune to their owners. In 1884, Siamese cats made their way to England, given as a gift to a British general. Eventually, they made their way to the United States and the rest of the world.

Siamese cats are sleek and svelte in appearance. They're elegant and graceful, with long bodies, long legs, a long slender tail and small paws. They have a triangular face with almond-shaped eyes that are large and blue in colour, and large bat-like ears.

## General care

While Siamese can be high maintenance in nature, their general care is pretty straight forward. Check their ears regularly for wax and clean when necessary with a suitable ear cleaner. This cat generally has good teeth but be sure to keep an eye out for gingivitis and get a yearly check from the vet. Structurally, the Siamese has been bred to have open nostrils so you shouldn't have to worry about any breathing issues. Your Siamese will be naturally intelligent so keep his mind and body active to help stop any behavioural issues.

## Coat care

Siamese cats have a very short and silky coat that doesn't need much maintenance. Weekly brushing with a slicker brush will help to remove dead skin and dirt while stimulating blood circulation. Regular petting will also help dislodge dead hair and encourage new hair growth. It'll also strengthen your bond with your cat.

## Personality

The Siamese cat has real character. They are extremely lively, friendly and intelligent, and get very attached to their people. Siamese seem to regard their people as belonging to them instead of the other way around. They are also real chatterboxes and will talk to you about everything and anything.

## Health problems

This breed is generally healthy, however, there are a few genetic conditions to be aware of, such as amyloidosis, a form of liver disease, some forms of cancers and progressive retinal atrophy. With this in mind, take your time when looking for a breeder. Visit a few. Ask around to find someone who is reputable, and ask whether they do genetic testing for hereditary illnesses.

No matter how you look at it, the Siamese cat is a beautiful breed which enjoys company. These cats are great as a child's pet, simply because they crave spending time with people. A friendly and confident attitude make the Siamese cat a fun family pet.

## THE SIAMESE AT A GLANCE

Weight range: males 3.6-5.5kg; females <3.6kg.

Life expectancy: 15-20 years

Eye colour: deep blue

Coat length: short

Coat colour: seal, chocolate, blue, lilac and red pointed

Grooming: low

Shedding: low

Affection level: high

Friendly: high

Social needs: high



# HOME AWAY FROM HOME

If you are thinking about heading away for the summer holidays and haven't already booked your pet into a boarding facility then now is the time. It is important to remember that good boarding facilities are usually booked up well in advance. If you are unsure where to start in finding the perfect "holiday retreat" for your pet, check out these top tips to help you find a suitable boarding facility.

## REFERRAL

Before you start searching Google ask your friends, family or vet if they know of any reputable boarding facilities within your area. Good referrals are very important.

## TAKE A VISIT

Make sure you visit a few for comparison. View the enclosures, look for any potential hazards and check the overall cleanliness. Be sure to ask lots of questions like what their feeding schedule is, what kind of animals they board (some will board cats and dogs) and what vet clinic they use.

## CHECK CREDENTIALS

Are they an Assured Quality facility? If so they are subjected to audits by independent and impartial inspectors with no commercial link to the pet boarding industry. Do any staff have certification in animal behaviour, animal nursing or basic animal handling?

## VACCINATION POLICY

It's uncommon for boarding facilities to allow unvaccinated animals to board, regardless ask the question. It is also a good idea to ask if the owners have pets, are they vaccinated and will they come in contact with your pet.

## EMERGENCY POLICY

Make sure you are aware of their emergency policy. If your pet becomes unwell or is injured will they seek veterinary advice immediately as well as contact you? Do they use your vet or do they use someone different? It is also a good idea to ask about what emergency evacuation plan they have in place and where you will be able to find them if this situation arises.

## ENCLOSURES AND EXERCISE

All boarding facilities will be set up differently, however, there are a number of things to consider with respect to the enclosures and exercise space.

In a cattery, check to see if there are double doors (safe passage) leading into the main cattery boarding rooms or into each enclosure. Double doors can be very important especially if a cat accidentally gets free. Do they have an exercise area for the cats and are you happy with this?

In a kennel look at how the runs are set up. Is there space between the runs so dogs can't fight between the netting? If your dog is not "dog friendly" then it will be important to disclose this as some kennels may exercise dogs together.

## MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

If your pet has specific medical requirements then ensure the staff can manage these effectively in your absence.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PROVIDE?

Talk to the facility to see if they supply food. If your pet has a specific dietary requirement then you will need to talk this over with the owners. Likewise, chat to them about whether you should provide treats and, for your cat, if you should supply your cat's preferred kitty litter.

## LESSEN THE STRESS

To lessen the stress for your pet ask if you are able to bring in their own bedding and toys. This will help them settle and feel more at home. If you have an anxious dog then take them to visit the facility and staff before you head away. A trial night is best but otherwise at least let them have a run in the exercise area and check out the boarding enclosure.

Once you have found your perfect boarding facility be sure that you book your pet in early to avoid disappointment. If you think they are perfect then it's likely other pet owners think so, too!



# COMMON MISTAKES IN HOME PET GROOMING

When pet owners attempt DIY grooming at home, no matter how many precautions they take, an accident or mistake is likely to occur.

Pet grooming is a skill but with the right equipment and patience it can become a household duty that will save you both time and money. With this in mind, you do have to be careful, a slip of the clippers can cause injury to your pet. Not only a physical injury but also an emotional injury. Trust can be lost once pain (even accidental) is inflicted and your pet may not treat you the same afterward.

Here are some tips for owners who want to try grooming their own pet.

Before attempting to groom your pet consider whether the process will cause them to become anxious and run? A big mistake in DIY grooming is leaving your pet unrestrained or loose during grooming. Some animals, especially cats, hate baths and will run at any opportunity. Your dog and cat can put themselves in dangerous situations by trying to escape the looming pet grooming activity. If your dog is prone to bolting then wash with their collar and lead on, and be sure to close the door of the bathroom when washing your cat.

Use a suitable pet shampoo or soap. There are many products on the market so ask around to find out which would suit your pet best. Try using a clarifying shampoo

that is mild and helps to restore/balance skin pH. It is important not to use human shampoo as it has been specifically formulated for human skin which has a different pH to that of your pet. Upsetting the skin pH can cause damage to your pet's skin, leaving it vulnerable to infection. It is also important to rinse your pet well to remove any trace of the shampoo. Shampoo residue can cause irritation or itching so it is important to thoroughly rinse your pet's coat. A good guide is when you are sure your pet's coat is rinsed clean, rinse once more. If you use a hair dryer to help dry off your pet's hair be sure not to hold it too close to their skin or in one spot for too long.

A common mistake is getting too close to the skin while clipping. When the clippers are working they can become hot and end up leaving a nasty razor burn that can open up and get infected. If you accidentally burn your pet while grooming, stop immediately and apply first aid. Try to clean the area of any loose hair prior to applying your preferred anti-bacterial salve or healing cream. Watch the wound carefully and if it becomes red, oozes puss or doesn't heal within a couple of days, contact your veterinarian for an assessment. Be sure to keep an eye on your pet so they don't lick or otherwise irritate the wound as it will only increase healing time.

It is almost inevitable that shampoo or soap will drip into your pet's eye while washing them, even if they're in a bath. This unintentional act will sting your pet's eyes and ultimately lead to an unpleasant pet grooming experience. If you do get shampoo in your pet's eye, wash it out immediately with lukewarm water or a saline solution and dab the corners of the eye with a clean or sterile cloth. Soothe your animal and try to take the focus off their eyes and maybe gain their attention by showing them a favourite toy. Hold the toy up so they can see it and watch your pet's eye as they track the toy, checking for signs of irritation. Signs of irritation can include redness, itchiness, watering and light sensitivity. Any irritation should be gone within 24 hours. If not, give your vet a call.

For some owners, getting a professional groomer for their pet will indeed be the best option. However, mastering the art of home grooming can be very fulfilling for you and your pet as you share extra bonding time together.



# Immune support for your pet



**Bugs such as bacteria and viruses, as well as parasites such as fleas and worms, are common in the lives of our animals. In fact, many of these unwanted residents live normally on or in the bodies of our animals.**

With any infection, there are two main factors allowing for progression. Firstly, the susceptibility of the host (animal) and, secondly, the virulence (ability to cause disease) of the bug. While there are some infections where the bug is extremely virulent, more commonly these days we see infections arise from bugs which are common residents. This has a huge amount to do with the immune systems of our animals not coping as well as they should.

From a holistic viewpoint, the presence of an infection is the tip of the iceberg. Underlying this is the big question of why is the body out of balance and not managing to maintain health so that it naturally repels bugs and parasites.

To support the immune system:

**Minimise stress:** Stress of any kind will impair the body's ability to heal and limit an animal's general vitality. Limiting stress by avoiding stressful situations such as overcrowding or adverse weather conditions and making use of remedies such as Emergency Essence or Rescue Remedy will go a long way to supporting the immune system indirectly.

**Regular exercise:** Exercise and fun as well as mental stimulation are important to help preserve health and ensure optimal function of the immune system.

**Feed a wholesome and well-balanced diet:** To allow for the body's inherent healing wisdom to function optimally and do what it does best (heal), there are three main tiers from which to draw resources. Firstly, nutrition, providing the good fuel; secondly, the healing mechanism must be running smoothly; and, thirdly, the presence of toxins will act as "spokes in the wheel" of healing.

**Feed food that is free from chemicals, preservatives and carcinogens:** So much of our animal food has foreign chemicals; some, like BPA, are known carcinogens. Contaminants such as glyphosate also end up in our food chain and have been shown to damage genetic material. With foreign ingredients, those that the body is not naturally evolved to metabolise, an analogy would be the running of a car: you may put in all the best fuel but if the engine is faulty or it is clogged up with waste then it won't run smoothly or go at all.

**Provide optimal amounts of important nutrients:** Nutrients such as omega 3 fatty acids and antioxidants can make a huge difference to the body's ability to naturally combat infection.

**Use immune building nutraceuticals:** Extra nutrients such as vitamin C and grapeseed extract are superb at helping to boost the body's defences as well as mop up damage caused by free radicals (which cause cell damage) and thereby allow the body's resources to be freed up to support healing and maintain health. Intravenous vitamin C, used by your vet, can work wonders to assist in severe infection.

**Herbal medicine can be incredibly beneficial:** Herbs such as golden seal and garlic (which can be toxic in high doses, one medium clove per 25kg dog per day is fine) have superb antimicrobial properties and echinacea (not for cats as the bitter taste makes them froth and hypersalivate) used as a preventative aid for a week or two at a time can work wonders to help ward off infections.

**Homeopathy has its place:** Homeopathy is also a wonderful tool and is best used under the guidance of a qualified homeopath for an individual's specific requirements. However, complex formulations can be easily applied in high risk situations such as in catteries or kennels to assist in preventing infection.

**Additional therapies:** Therapies such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, NIS, Bowen therapy, acupuncture, massage and many more can also be very supportive tools to assist the body's natural defences.

**Vaccination:** For certain diseases, vaccinations can be a helpful preventative tool. Research has shown that over-vaccination may be detrimental to health so it's always important to weigh up the cost:benefit-ratio of their use and consider the individual animal and their risk factors as well as the owner's/guardian's needs and the environment that the animal lives in.

All in all, and as usual, by respecting natural principles, infections may be easily prevented and resolved adding quality of life and increasing longevity.

Dr. Liza Schneider  
Veterinarian  
[www.holisticvets.co.nz](http://www.holisticvets.co.nz)

# PET LIZARDS CAN TELL YOU WHAT THEY WANT - IF YOU LET THEM!

Lizards are growing in popularity as an alternative to “normal” companion animals like cats and dogs. Part of their appeal is that lizards are interesting and fascinating to everyone, whether they are 8 years old or 58. Unfortunately, many people think reptiles are easy to care for and have few needs. They don’t find out until once they have one that, like all pets, reptiles have a variety of needs and requirements.

Good lizard husbandry dictates that owners provide an environment and climate for their animals in order for them to display normal patterns of behaviour. If they don’t then lizards could develop physiological problems, such as respiratory issues, deformed bones or atrophied muscles, and psychological problems such as stress.

Lizards are ectotherms, meaning they rely on behaviour to regulate their body temperature, i.e. they seek external sources to warm up or cool down. Wild lizards will select habitats which are good for foraging in, or in which they can avoid predators, over access to heat and light. The same applies in a domestic situation.

Recent research done by Unitec Institute of Technology into caring for pet lizards has shown that lizards can be trained to make choices, such as selecting to spend time with a heat or light source. Five different species of lizards were trained to move through a T maze, and could either enter the left arm for light or the right arm for heat. When given free access to the T maze, it was found that some of the lizards distinctly chose heat over light. Although the results are just the beginning of the research, the data suggests that lizards might not use a resource just because of its presence, but instead make a choice whether to use it or not.



Research conducted by Dr Kristie Cameron, Dr Lorne Roberts and student Regina Kowk-Heon of the Environmental and Animal Sciences department at Unitec Institute of Technology; Dr Lindsay Skyner of Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology; and Dr Jodi Salinsky of the University of Auckland.

“The research showed us that pet lizard owners need to be aware of their lizard’s ability to make choices, as well as the ability to show a preference for some resources over others,” said researcher Dr Kirstie Cameron, lecturer in applied animal behaviour and husbandry at Unitec.

“This method is a relatively simple way for owners, zoo keepers and anyone with exotic animals to test their animals for preferences, especially if the animal, like a lizard, isn’t able to be handled or trainable like a dog.”

The research also shows it’s not just a simple matter of owners providing a heat lamp and UV-B light. The lizard may not use the heat or light source if they are in a part of the enclosure that isn’t favoured. Therefore, it’s important for owners to put these resources in parts of the terrarium which the lizards are observed to like.

The findings of the research will be used to inform pet owners that lizards are more intelligent than often given credit for, and that they do have the ability to make choices. The placement of heat or light sources, food and other enrichment items in an enclosure needs to be carried out with some thought to maximise the health and welfare benefits.



## UP COMING EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

Sunday 8th, 9am

GAP Walk

Tauranga CBD, **Tauranga**

Sunday 15th, 9am

GAP Walk

Marine Parade, **Petone**

Saturday 21st, 9am - 3.30pm

The Dominion Cat Club

Lower Hutt Town Hall, **Lower Hutt**

Saturday 1st, 12pm - 2.30pm

Dog and Grog

Pocket Bar & Kitchen, **Grey Lynn**

Sunday 22nd, 7.30am - 3pm

4 Paws Marathon

Bottle Lake Forest Park, Waitikiri drive, **Christchurch**

Sunday 15th, 9am

GAP Walk

Cambridge Avenue Lookout Carpark, **Manawatu**

### OCTOBER

Wednesday 2nd, 9am 2019

Black Hawk National Dog Show

Marlborough Lines Stadium 2000, **Blenheim**

Saturday 19th, 12pm - 2.30pm

Dog and Grog

Pocket Bar & Kitchen, **Grey Lynn**

### NOVEMBER

Saturday 16th, 12pm - 2.30pm

Dog and Grog

Pocket Bar & Kitchen, **Grey Lynn**

*Pet Life Ltd takes care collating upcoming pet events listed within. Pet Life Ltd is not associated with the running of the events listed and as such recommends you check directly with the organisers regarding each event. Times and dates may vary to those listed here. If you would like to see your event listed here, email us with the details [info@petlife.co.nz](mailto:info@petlife.co.nz).*

# COME BOY!

**Does your dog have strong recall? Most owners will firmly answer YES but, before you do, ask yourself the following questions.**

**Does my dog come back to me when I call him but:**

- he can't see me?
- he is a long distance from me?
- he has run off investigating?

**Now, are you still going to say yes?**

Training a dog to come when called is an important, and potentially life saving, part of any successful dog training programme. All properly trained dogs must learn to respond instantly to their owner's voice. The sooner this lesson is learned the better, but remember a strong recall won't happen overnight.

The advantages of teaching a dog to come when called are obvious. For starters, coming when called will help you regain control of the dog in case of collar break, snapped leash or other similar equipment failure. This is particularly important when you are out with your dog, especially in an area with lots of traffic. Also, if you are walking your dog off lead at the beach or dog park and an unsafe situation arises, you can rest easy knowing that your dog will come when called.

## **RECALL TRAINING**

The command to stay and the command to come when called are often combined in obedience training lessons, and they do go naturally together. Start with the dog on a loose leash, ask the dog to sit and then slowly back away. If the dog begins to get up and follow you, return to the dog and ask him to sit again. Continue this process until you can reach the end of the leash without the dog getting up.

After you can successfully reach the end of the leash on a consistent basis, try dropping the leash altogether. Of course, you will want to do this in a controlled environment like a fenced in yard. After the dog has mastered the stay command, it is time to add the come when called command.

Repeat this procedure many times until, consistently, the dog stays and then comes when called. After the dog has mastered coming when called while attached to the leash, slowly start introducing the concept of when the leash is removed. As before, these training sessions should only take place in a controlled, safe environment, such as a fenced in front or backyard.

A well trained, obedient dog should respond to the call to return to its owner no matter where it is and no matter

what distractions may occur. It is therefore necessary to test the dog with distractions of your own.

If you have a neighbour, preferably one with a dog of their own, try having them come over with the dog. Have them and the dog stand just outside the fenced in area and repeat the come when called exercise with your dog off leash. If your dog becomes distracted by the other dog, put the leash back on and repeat the process. The goal is to have your dog consistently pay attention to your commands no matter the distraction.

## **WHAT NOT TO DO**

Before you ask your dog to come back to you, it is important to teach them how to. Spend time teaching your dog recall before expecting a 100 per cent recall rate. Be sure to make recall exciting, so don't scold your dog or get angry if they have taken too long to come back to you. This will just confuse your dog and make them less likely to come back. Don't set your dog up for failure. If you haven't practised recall with lots of distractions then don't expect your dog to come to you when temptations are heavy. For many dogs, giving them a treat when they come back to you will go a long way. If this is your dog and you have only mastered recall with a treat, then be sure not to be empty handed when out and about. If your dog decides not to come back, don't be the chaser but revert the roles and be chased ... get your dog to run after you!

Teaching your dog a strong recall is something that every owner can do either by themselves or with the help of an instructor. Be sure to make it fun, practise often and reward your dog with lots of love and praise.

**ONE NOTE ABOUT DOG TRAINING** – it is all too easy for training sessions to become dull and routine for both handler and dog. A bored dog will not be receptive to learning, just as a bored handler will not be a good teacher. Always incorporate fun things into every training session, and ending each session with a few minutes of free play time is a great way to help the dog associate obedience training with fun and not drudgery.



# FLOWER ESSENCES



Meg Harrison of BlackWing Farms.

Flower essences are good for animals and also kinder to the planet,” says Meg Harrison, founder of BlackWing Farms Natural Remedies based in California.

Meg has been using flower essences to address behavioural and emotional challenges for over 40 years.

Like many practitioners in the natural health field, Meg learned by doing. She tried flower essences because she was looking for a solution to a problem. Working in Tucson, Arizona, in the mid-1970s as a caregiver for teenage alcoholics who were “stuck in the revolving doors of the juvenile penal system”, Meg wanted to find something that would help break the cycle. “We needed to find a way for them (the kids) to stop the drinking long enough so that we could get into their heads.”

Meg started her research by looking for information on what was used historically because, as she puts it, “medicine changed when pills were invented”.

Searching for her breakthrough using the Materia Medica and other information sources, she made a flower essence blend of impatiens for patience and restlessness, gorse for hope and star of Bethlehem for emotional shock and sprinkled it on the floor of the room where group meetings were held. “And a teenager who hadn’t spoken to us for weeks came into my office to talk.”

Later, when Meg and her horse were involved in a serious accident, she used flower essences to help them both recover. It was this experience that led her to concentrate her efforts using flower essences to address behavioural challenges in animals – something she’s been doing for the last 15 years. BlackWing Farms was officially launched as a business in 2004.

## Flower essences rediscovered

“Indigenous cultures from around the globe looked to their environment to provide them with solutions to problems,” says Meg. “What Doctor Edward Bach did during his years of work from 1930 to 1935 was search for remedies in the plant world that would be a gentler and softer way of dealing with disease in humans. Bach believed there was an emotional component to physical ailments. He mapped what is known as the original 38 remedies by documenting the impact that these plant materials had on human emotions.”

Meg has studied Dr Bach’s letters to a colleague and believes that Bach would have done further research

had he not died young in 1936. “His original 38 remedies were based on accessibility during the seasons when he was collecting material.”

## How they’re made and what to look for

To make a flower essence, the flowers or leaves must be placed in a glass bowl or container. “We never use bark or root material for sustainability reasons.” Adding purified water, the material should sit in the sun for between 20 and 60 minutes which Meg says is Dr Bach’s recipe for a 1X concentration.

When finished, the plant material is removed through straining and then preserved with brandy.

When an order is placed for a BlackWing Farms essence blend, each mother tincture is added to the bottle using a 60 per cent flower essence to 40 per cent brandy ratio and shaken by hand to mix. Brandy is a high-quality preservative that enables the flower essence to last for between three and five years.

“This is another aspect to a quality product. If we use vinegar as a preservative, the useful life of the product is reduced by half.”

Quality is important to Meg and her team. They have carefully established supply systems for the plant material to ensure that if they can’t grow the plant themselves, they are sourcing it from reputable organic growers which ensures the material is free from commercial grade fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides. Because small amounts of plant material are needed to create essences, some plant materials can be sourced from the wild without harming the natural ecosystem.

“We have to ensure we harvest when flowering has reached its peak.”

Meg emphasises that a quality product will be transparent with its labelling. “The label should tell you what flower essences are found in the bottle and what emotions these will support. For example, yarrow for bravery.

“If a bottle says something like a proprietary blend, walk away,” emphasises Meg.

Pet parents can make their own flower essences using the Dr Bach recipe if they have the time and the material available in their local area.

### When to consider a flower essence for your pet?

Flower essences can be used with companion animals of all types.

Meg says “whenever a pet parent is feeling anxious about a pet’s behaviour, a flower essence can be considered as part of the solution”.

She cites, for example, the case of a dog that is rushing the door when the doorbell rings. The reason for that behaviour could be fear, protectiveness, or aggression or a combination of those emotions. “A training programme can be put into place but addressing the emotions of the dog is where flower essences can help to get better results from the training.”

Another example would be a cat that hides under the bed or bushes in the garden or attacks people’s ankles as they walk by. “The behaviour has to be addressed; it’s not socially acceptable.

“Rabbits tend to be fearful and that’s where a flower essence can also lend support.”

The mode of delivery depends on the animal. For most animals, pet parents can spray flower essences on their hands and then gently pet or massage the animal from head to toe. Spraying the water bowl before adding water and spraying the dog treat bag before dog training are also common applications. During high intensity events such as thunderstorms, essences can be sprayed into the air, onto a bandana around the pet’s neck, and throughout their bedding and crate.

For animals weighing less than a kilo, such as birds, guinea pigs and rabbits, Meg recommends dilution of a flower essence by a factor of 10 before using. That’s because small animals have very sensitive nervous and olfactory systems. Alternatively, spraying the flower essence in the room several metres away from the animal also has a diluting effect.

Whereas some essential oils are toxic to cats and small animals because of their potency and the animal’s inability to metabolise the material, essences are by their very nature dilute and safer to use. “Ingestion of the essences doesn’t pose the same level of risk.”

LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Making a flower essence of impatiens.

Meg’s products are used and have been endorsed by rescue organisations, including the Humane Society of the United States, the Beagle Freedom Project, and Best Friends Animal Society.

A selection of flowers ready for extraction.



Although Dr Bach documented single flower essences and their effects, many essences sold commercially are blends to act on emotions that are rarely one-dimensional. Most readers will be familiar with Rescue Remedy, which is a blended product sold in most New Zealand pharmacies and health shops and comes in distinctive yellow packaging.

### Blend or single remedy?

“My favourite essence is dandelion,” says Meg. “It’s the first plant to bloom and the last to go away. And as many gardeners know, it’s almost impossible to kill unless you pull it up to remove the tap root. Thinking about that plant, it’s resilient – if you step on it, it bends but doesn’t break. No wonder that we use dandelion to address deep-rooted fears.”

In practice, Meg has found that using flower essence blends is the most effective approach when using essences with animals. “In many pets, particularly those from adoptive and rescue situations, we have incomplete histories. A dog that lashes out can be doing so because of fear, aggression, emotional trauma or a combination of these. Choosing a blend of flower essences helps us to have an effect rather than guessing on a single remedy to use.”

### Better for the earth

Although both flower essences and essential oils are created from flowers, the demand on the earth to produce the products is dramatically different. “This is why flower essences are kinder to the earth,” says Meg.

Environmental website EcoWatch has reported that to extract one pound (approximately half a kilo) of lavender oil requires 250 pounds of lavender flowers.

“We can extract a mother essence that will supply us for a year using plant material that weighs less than a pound.”

### Complementary – not alternative

Natural remedies including flower essences are not a substitute for traditional veterinary care. Behavioural changes should be looked at from both a physical perspective as well as an emotional one; in instances of a sudden behavioural change, a health check by your veterinarian is always recommended.

Kathleen Crisley  
Principal Therapist  
[www.balanceddog.co.nz](http://www.balanceddog.co.nz)

# PARROTS AS PETS

Parrots make wonderful pets and companions. You will quickly find that these birds are extremely smart and their ability to learn make them fun to own. However, before you bring a parrot into your home it is important to learn what type would best fit your family and how to keep your new pet happy and healthy.

Do you know the characteristics of the parrot you are interested in buying?

Do they:

- make tremendously loud noises which can cause huge disturbance to the neighbours?
- have powerful beaks that can damage your personal belongings if let free in the house?
- need special accommodation, which will potentially incur higher costs for you (bigger birds require bigger cages made of metal so they cannot damage it)?
- need special nutritional foods (which means a greater cost)?

When looking to purchase your parrot, check its overall health and inspect its living conditions. Dirty or poorly maintained perches, food and water containers, and excess faecal waste in the cage, all show poor management which leads to bad health. Check the bird's eyes. They should be clear with no discharge. Also look out for any swelling signs which will indicate rising health problems.

Bird feathers should be tidy and clean. Any bald areas on a parrot's body could indicate an infection or it may also be due to the bird being a feather plucker, which means boredom. This activity may stop when you start to show the bird more attention.

Check for any crusty appearance on and around the beak and feel the flesh on both sides of the breastbone to ensure it is solid and not hollowed. If protruding, it could indicate a nutritional deficiency. Ensure all claws are present, and there should be two toes pointing forward and two facing backwards. Also, look for any protruding leg scales as they could be potential sources for leg mites.

Beware a parrot which reacts aggressively towards you when you approach. Look out for the fluffing up of feathers and dilating eyes when you try to move your hand close. You will likely be bitten if you get too close for comfort.

Determining the age of a parrot can be tricky, however, some basic things to look out for are the scales on the legs, the colour of the eyes and the colour of the body. A young parrot often has dark gray irises, where as an adult bird's will be white or brown. The scales of young parrots are also much smoother than that of mature

birds. Their body colour also appears much duller than when mature. Don't be afraid to purchase an older bird but be mindful that taming and acceptance may take a little more time and patience.

Once you have chosen your parrot and brought it home it is important to keep him happy, busy and occupied by enriching the environment in which he lives. Boredom can lead to behavioural problems such as feather picking.

Your parrot's cage should be as large as possible and generally wider than it is tall to allow room for wing flapping. It should be in the corner of a room so the bird feels more secure. Don't overcrowd it with toys, and rotate toys regularly to keep your parrot interested in playing with them.

Allow your parrot to exercise by flying around the room and playing with toys in a playpen. Regular bathing is also important for the wellbeing of your pet, and it can be as simple as turning on the tap at the sink.

Companionship is vital. Parrots need to be talked to, looked at, preened and allowed to perch on your wrist, forearm or shoulder. When your parrot is alone, play him some music or leave on the radio or television to keep him happy. Or take your parrot for a drive if you have to pop out to the shop – many parrots enjoy car rides.

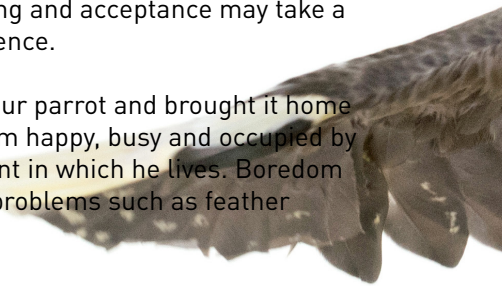
Try to encourage your parrot to forage for food as he would in the wild. Fresh fruit or veg can be hidden in cardboard tubes, woven through the bars of the cage, or hung from a blunt-ended stainless steel skewer.

Pet parrots should have at least 10 hours of sleep daily so cover the cage at night to shut out light. Your bird needs a regular routine when it comes to eating, sleeping, playing, interacting and being alone.

Great care should be taken when you buy toys to make sure they are free of potential hazards and safe for your parrot. Small parrots require little toys as they can get their head trapped in toys made for large parrots. Large parrots need big toys as they can get their toes caught in toys made for small parrots. Supervision is important with new toys to make sure they cannot be broken down into small pieces that can be swallowed and cause a gastrointestinal blockage.

Care needs to be taken with rope toys because fibres can be swallowed and cause a blockage in a bird's crop. Birds can also get their claws, toes, legs or even their necks entangled in loose fibres from frayed or loosely woven rope toys. Wound tight, these fine threads can be hard to spot and will cut off the blood supply, causing gangrene.

Metal toys and connectors of toys to the cage should be made of stainless steel because of the risk of zinc or lead poisoning. Heavy metals such as lead or zinc can damage the gastrointestinal tract, liver, kidneys and





nervous system. Symptoms include lethargy, weakness, loss of appetite, regurgitation, increased thirst, increased urination and seizures.

Be careful with clasps, open chain links and split rings that may be chewed, swallowed or caught on the beak, tongue or toes. All mirrors must have a covered back or frame so the bird does not chew the potentially toxic reflective backing.

Safe items that make good toys are cardboard tubes from toilet paper and paper towels, paper cups, small branches and leaves from non-toxic trees and edible flowers. Ping-pong balls are often popular with parrots.

Parrots are naturally inquisitive so there is a real risk of poisoning if they are left unsupervised out of the cage.

Heavy metal poisoning is commonly seen in pet parrots and can result in death. Zinc can be ingested from chewing on galvanised wire or other metal objects like screws, nuts or bolts. Lead poisoning can occur from chewing on lead-based paint, solder or stained glass, and roof flashing.

Many indoor plants can be poisonous to birds. Natural perches should be made from non-toxic wood such as apple, ash or willow. Don't use wooden perches that have been treated.

Avocados, chocolate and onions can be very toxic to birds, and alcohol or caffeine drinks, like coffee and tea, are extremely dangerous.

Toxic fumes from non-stick cookware can cause fatalities. Smoke can cause severe respiratory illness. Many household cleaning agents, such as those containing chlorine and ammonia, are also toxic for birds and should not be used to clean cages.

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# STOP THE FELINE HUNTER

Moving into spring there'll be an influx of birds in gardens, and for some cat owners this can mean some lovingly caught presents of feathers on the doorstep.

While the easiest way to stop your cat from hunting birds is to keep them as inside cats, this is not always an option. If you are unable to keep your cat inside all day consider keeping them in at certain times during the day. Keep them confined an hour after sunrise and an hour

before sunset as these are the times that birds come out to feed.

With this in mind, if you have a bird feeding station then, move it to part of the garden where your cat doesn't venture or place it away from trees or bushes that your cat can use as cover to ambush birds.

Try deterring your cat's desire to hunt by feeding them a well balanced diet. A full and

content cat is less likely to hunt than a hungry cat.

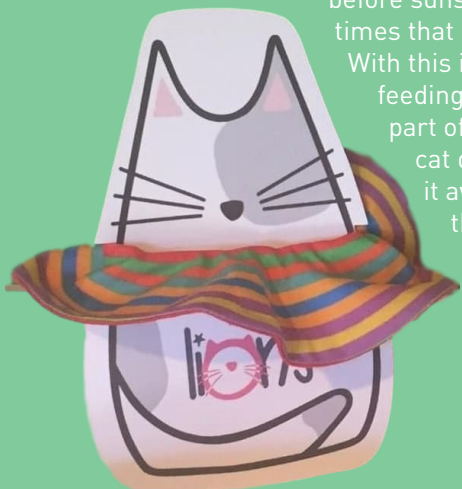
If your cat wears a collar then attaching a bell is an easy and effective method of helping to reduce the kill count (be sure to use a quick release collar that is fitted well). However, studies have indicated that over time cats can learn how to work around the jingle jangle of a bell.

Another technique to try is to have your cat wear a bright, scrunchie-like collar. This works because bright colours are noticed by birds and a cat isn't able to stop a collar from being bright like it can stop a bell around its neck from jangling.

Stopping the predation of birdlife by your cat will be best achieved by working a combination of these tips.

*Little Lions has designed bright fabric scrunchies that, when worn correctly by your cat, can help reduce their predation on birds.*

*Check them out at [littlionsnz.co.nz](http://littlionsnz.co.nz)*



## TELL US

What techniques have you used to stop your cat from catching birds? Email us at [info@petlife.co.nz](mailto:info@petlife.co.nz) for a feature in our summer issue.

# THE FANTASTIC RAT

Rats make fantastic pets – they are intelligent, social animals – but they are not necessarily the pet for everyone. Before you buy or adopt a rat, you should do your research. There is plenty of misleading information out there so make sure you search reputable websites.

Rats may be cheap to purchase but they are not a cheap pet to keep. Veterinary care, food, cages and accessories can all add up. Do some costings on these items to make sure you know the true cost of your pet. Rats may be small but they deserve care, good food and vet treatment like any other animal.

Rats in New Zealand live two to three years so make sure you can give them that commitment – they are not disposable animals. Once you have decided that a pet rat is for you, you will need to purchase a few basic items.

Your rat's cage needs to be the biggest you can afford and have space for – your rat will live most of his time in here so it needs to be suitable. Go to [ratclub.org/rat\\_care.htm](http://ratclub.org/rat_care.htm) and check out the cage calculator. Rats need at least one hour out of the cage a day to play and bond with you. Rats need to be kept indoors as they are very sensitive to extreme changes in temperature.

They'll need beds and hammocks, food bowls, water bottles and chews – rats' teeth continually grow so they need something hard for chewing to keep their teeth down. Litter may also be required – never use pine or cedar based litter/bedding as this can cause respiratory issues in rats.

You will need to get at least two rats of the same sex as rats are social animals and require company of



another rat even if you are giving them plenty of attention. Having more than one rat will not mean they are any less likely to bond with you.

Rats require a grain-based diet but many rat mixes on the market are quite high in seeds. Check different products to find the best one for your rats. Rats should also have fresh fruit and vegetables every day. Rats can also have the odd treat to enjoy. There are foods which are harmful to rats so check the list at the Ratclub website.

Rats are prone to some health issues, so be prepared to make the occasional veterinary visit. Consults and medication are similar in price to that of a cat or a dog.

# FISH FIRST AID?

Thankfully, it is very rare that a fish will experience direct trauma, such as an open wound, but there are a number of things that ornamental fish owners should be aware of. Here are some underlying stress factors, causes or symptoms of illness or injury, and diseases common in pet fish.

## **Poor water quality**

The water needs to be the correct pH, and ammonia and nitrite levels should always be at or near zero.

## **Inappropriate water temperature**

Water temperature should be monitored daily and maintained at the appropriate level for the species of fish. For most tropical fish this is 25° Celsius. A drop in water temperature commonly results in white spot disease.

## **Poor fish induction procedure**

Fish need time to acclimatise to a new aquarium, and this means gradually. They need time to adjust to different temperatures and water quality.

## **Inappropriate tank mates**

Fish will eat others that they can fit in their mouth, so keep in mind how big each species will grow. Many species of ornamental fish are also territorial, so there may be fighting or stress.

## **Jumping out**

All fish jump so every aquarium should have a lid. Fish will usually survive the initial impact, if discovered in time, but they must be returned to the tank immediately to prevent their gills from drying out. Always wet your hands before handling a fish or you will damage their slime layer and increase any risk of infection.

## **Gasping**

This is when fish mouth at the surface of the water. Most fish do this from time to time but if they start to do it most of the time then there is a problem. It means they're trying to get extra oxygen, which means there is either something wrong with the water quality or the fish itself.

Ammonia in the water will stop a fish's gills from effectively absorbing oxygen. If a water test shows too

much ammonia then you will need to do a partial water change, check the tank for any dead fish, and reduce the amount of feeding or the amount of fish in the tank.

Warmer water holds less oxygen than cooler water so you will need to check the temperature and adjust it accordingly. Poor water circulation will also cause low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water, so make sure the tank's filter is working correctly.

## **Flicking**

This looks like the fish is scratching itself repeatedly on rocks, plants and other aquarium decor. Flicking often is a symptom of a parasitic infection such as white spot, but can also be caused by ammonia poisoning – always test the ammonia levels in the water.

## **Lethargy**

Fish that are not active or feeding are usually suffering from poor water quality. The first thing to check is the water temperature – a low temperature can often be the cause. The next thing to check for is the pH level, then other parameters.

## **Open wounds**

Wounds are usually caused by aggression from other fish, so make sure you separate the injured fish from the aggressor. A wound of a healthy fish in good water will often heal surprisingly quickly without treatment. However, there are medications available if needed.

## **White spot**

This parasitic disease causes white spots on the fish's skin and fins. It's the most common disease of ornamental fish, and your pet store should have a cure.

## **White cotton wool growth**

This is a fungal infection that will appear on a wound site caused by an injury or another infectious disease. The fungus is easily treated, and your pet store should have a remedy for you. Salt can also be used to treat the fungus but not all fish species will be able to handle an increase in salinity.



David Cooper  
Aquatics consultant  
NZ Certificate in Animal Care L3  
Pacific Coast Technical Institute

# TEACHING OLD TRICKS TO NEW DOGS

**Sit! Roll over! Shake! High five! Teaching your dog tricks might not be the easiest thing in the world but it's highly beneficial for you both. Teaching your dog tricks can help strengthen your relationship. Creating a better bond between you and your dog means your dog will look up to you as being the pack leader and will listen to your commands.**

The beauty of teaching your dog tricks is you learn many basic training techniques which can be used to gain control over your dog. Teaching basic tricks like sit and stay can be used in life situations like crossing the street, entering a store or going to the vet. It will also help keep your dogs mind active and responsive – especially good for older dog's who are less physically active. Plus, trick training is great to do on rainy days when you can't take your dog out for a walk. You can always break the tricks out to show off to your friends and family.

To teach your dog tricks, even easy ones, you need to have some small reward treats, be in a quiet suitable place, and keep training sessions to 10-15 minutes to prevent them from getting bored. Be sure to give your dog lots of praise and reward them with a treat when they get something right.

Teaching your dog a trick or two should be a fun exercise for you both. Do not get angry or scold your dog if they do not listen to your instruction or lose focus. Start with one of the simpler tricks such as a paw shake or high five before jumping into harder tricks like the army crawl or spin.

## PAW SHAKE

The first step is to get your dog to give you his paw. Get your dog to sit then say the word "paw" as you take your dog's paw in your hand. Give the dog a treat, and repeat the action and the word a few times. The next step is to take his paw not so quickly. Say "paw", count to one, then take it. You should notice that your dog brings his paw up as you say the word. If not, go back to saying "paw" at the same time as you pick up his paw for a few more goes. Most dogs pick this trick up quite happily after two or three sessions.

## HIGH FIVE

Like a lot of tricks, the high five is a progression of a trick – in this case the paw shake. Hold a treat in your fingers and raise your hand slightly higher than you would for the paw shake. Your dog will think you want to shake his paw and will reach for the treat with his paw as we taught him earlier. As he reaches up, say "high five" and give him the treat. Once your dog has mastered the paw shake, high five should be very easy for him to learn, and with just a few sessions he will do it on hand signal rather than voice.

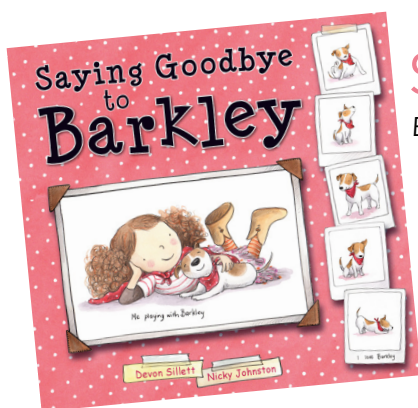
## HOOP JUMP

Start by getting your dog to walk through the hoop. Sit with your dog on one side of the hoop. Get his attention by holding a treat, and ask your dog to walk through the hoop. Be sure to keep the hoop low to the ground so your dog simply has to walk through it, not jump. If your dog tries to go around the hoop start again. If he wants that treat he will soon learn that going around is not an option. As soon as he walks through the hoop give him the treat. As your dog becomes comfortable with this, increase the height a little and ask him to do the same thing. Each time he succeeds, you can raise the hoop a little, but don't raise the height too quickly – you don't want your dog to hurt himself. As your dog becomes more and more confident, he'll be jumping through the hoop on command.

## SHUT THE DOOR

This is a cute trick that can be taught to all dog breeds, although do consider your dog's size and his ability to physically close a door. Also, select a door that swings easily on its hinges. Make sure the door is closed then place a treat on it, above your dog, so he has to reach up on his hind legs to get it. Placing it on the door handle or hanging it on a sticky hook are good options. When your dog becomes confident jumping up against the door to get the treat, start doing the same thing but with the door open a little. Once your dog's comfortable with closing the door, it's time to advance this trick by starting with him in another room. Call him in, then ask him to shut the door, pointing to it. If he does not understand, show him the treat and encourage him to get it. Finally, teach your dog to close the door without having any reward stuck to it. When he shuts it in response to your command, reward him with a treat and lots of praise.





## Saying Goodbye to Barkley

By Devon Sillett | Illustrator Nicky Johnston

RRP \$24.99 SAYING GOODBYE TO BARKLEY is available from [exislepublishing.com](http://exislepublishing.com) and wherever great books are sold.

Olivia and her dog, Barkley, are inseparable. He's her sidekick, her partner in crime-fighting - they're the perfect pair. But then Barkley dies and Olivia is heartbroken. She dreads falling asleep because waking up without Barkley is just too sad. Gradually, however, she realises that Barkley wouldn't want her to be unhappy for the rest of her life. So she thinks of a way that she cannot only get her own happiness back, but also give happiness to another animal, by adopting a new dog from an animal shelter. And so Spud joins the family. Spud is a terrible sidekick and crime-fighter - she wants to play with the bad guys not catch them! In fact, Spud couldn't be less like Barkley but Olivia grows to love her very much because she's special in her own way.

**Pet Life has three SAYING GOODBYE TO BARKLEY books to give away.** Enter at [petlife.co.nz/competitions](http://petlife.co.nz/competitions). Competition closes 30 November 2019.

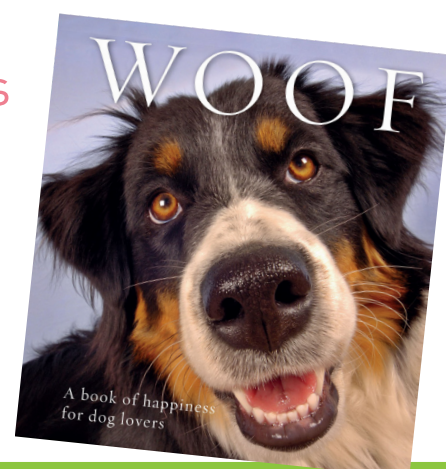
## WOOF - A book of happiness for dog lovers

By Anouska Jones

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Dogs have a way of making our lives feel complete. They're there for us through good times and bad, with their wholehearted engagement in life a lesson on living in the moment. WOOF is a beautifully presented hard cover book that is the perfect gift for any dog lover. It features memorable quotes, and each quote is accompanied by a gorgeous dog photograph.

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## MEET OUR READERS



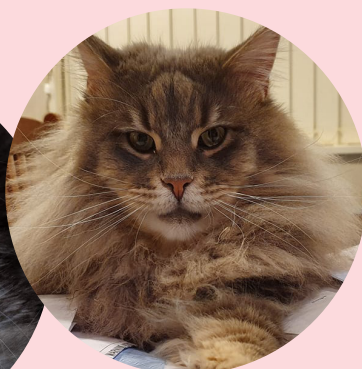
I'm Willa, born in March 2019. I know I'm super cute. I'm also a big flirt. I am so confident and curious and have so much love to give. If I meet you for the first time I'm rubbing up against your ankles wanting cuddles! My pawrents have just created an Instagram for people to follow me on my adventures: @willatheburmilla. I hope we can become friends!

**Frances B**



Meet Tino and Peppurr, Both are Maine Coones, retired from breeding so have come to live with us. Both are very smoochy and love their new lives keeping their new humans in check.

**Alison Beare**

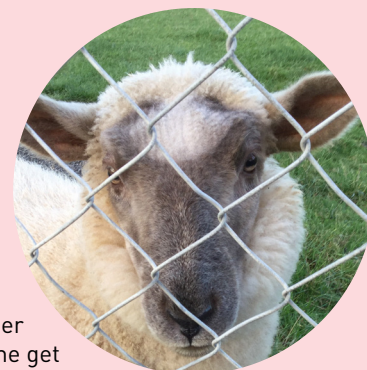


Hi, I am Vanilla, a 1-year-old sheep. At the start of my life it was pretty ruff. I lived in a paddock for three days after I was born with my mum, Big Bar, but she abandoned me and only wanted my twin. My new mum, Billie, found me and took me in. Her and her mum, Elizabeth, helped me get better and I was able to walk again. Soon I was healthy and had a new brother, Champion. I now live happy and love to go on walks with Eddie the dog. I love fresh green grass and sunny days.

**Billie-jo Crooks**

Hello. My name is Nibbles. I am a lop eared rabbit. I have been living with my family for three years. I am very cheeky and love fresh green grass. When my mummy brings up her sheep I get excited because I love company. I love to lie in the sun and eat the grass. I am multi-coloured grey and white.

**Elizabeth Maheno**



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Phone: 021 059 5863  
Email: info@kittycatfixers.org.nz  
Website: www.kittycatfixers.org.nz

### ROTTWEILER RESCUE & REHOMING NEW ZEALAND

Phone: 021 022 006633  
Email: rottierescuenz@gmail.com

### NZ RAT RESCUE

Email: office@nzrr.org  
Website: www.nzrr.org

### ANIMAL EVAC NZ

Email: info@animalevac.nz  
Website: www.nimalevac.nz

## NORTHLAND

### RUAKAKA DOG RESCUE TRUST

Phone: 021 222 2849  
Email: ruakakadogrescue@gmail.com  
Website: www.ruakakadogrescue.com

## AUCKLAND

### CRAZY CAT LADY CAT RESCUE SOUTH AUCKLAND

Phone: 027 248 0577  
Email: cclcr@hotmail.com

### FRANKLIN CAT RESCUE

Phone: 027 901 2244  
Email: franklincatrescue@gmail.com  
Website: www.franklincatrescue.co.nz

### 9 LIVES ORPHANAGE

Phone: 021 210 0051 or 021 208 2486  
Email: 9livesorphanage@gmail.com  
Website: www.9livesorphanage.co.nz

### HOPE RESCUE SOUTH AUCKLAND

Phone: 027 686 2778 or 021 0200 8791  
Email: hope.rescue.south.auckland@gmail.com

### PASSION 4 PAWZ

Phone: 021 126 1031  
Email: passionforpawz@gmail.com

### NORTH SHORE TURTLE, REPTILES & AMPHIBIAN RESCUE

Phone: 021 140 9491  
Email: nsrescues@gmail.com

### AUCKLAND FISH, TURTLE & REPTILE RESCUE

Phone: 021 113 3469  
Email: reptilerescuenz@gmail.com

### AUCKLAND PUPPY RESCUE

Email: Admin: puppyrescue@outlook.com  
Fostering: puppyfoster@outlook.com  
Adopting: puppyadopt@outlook.com  
Website: www.aucklandpuppyrescue.com

### AUCKLAND CAVY CARE

Phone: 021 969 301  
Email: jrpetkeeper@gmail.com  
Website: www.aucklandcavycare.org

### CHAINED DOG AWARENESS

Email: info@cdanz.org  
Website: www.cdanz.org

### LOVED AT LAST "LALA"

Phone: 021 179 8689

### 9 LIVES CAT RESCUE

Phone: 02 486 2374  
Website: www.9livescatrescue.org.nz

## BAY OF PLENTY

### WHANGAMATA CAT

Phone: 021 252 7002  
Email: whangamata.cat.adoption.team@gmail.com

### FREE AS A BIRD BATTERY HEN AND POULTRY RESCUE

Phone: 021 212 4788  
Email: freeasabirdrescue@outlook.co.nz

### ARRC WILDLIFE TRUST

Phone: 07 579 9115  
Email: info@arrc.org.nz  
Website: www.rrc.org.nz

## WAIKATO

### ADOPTABLE

Phone: 07 390 0529 or 021 263 5652  
Email: jay@adoptable.org.nz  
Website: www.adoptable.org.nz

### PAWS 4 LIFE

Phone: 021 246 8978  
Email: rachael@paws4life.co.nz  
Website: www.paws4life.co.nz

### NEW LIVES ANIMAL RESCUE

Phone: 027 649 9088  
Email: newlivesrescue@xtra.co.nz  
Website: www.newlivesrescue.co.nz

### PAWS AWHILE ANIMAL SANCTUARY

Phone: 021 102 9977  
Email: anna.dahlberg@hotmail.co.nz

### DOG PROTECTION LEAGUE

Phone: 027 535 8930  
Email: dogprotectionleaguenz@hotmail.com

### L.A.R.A ANIMAL RESCUE & FARM SANCTUARY

Phone: 07 974 9024  
Email: larafarmrescue@gmail.com  
Website: www.littleacresfarm.co.nz

### DC RESCUE

Phone: 021 041 4108  
Email: dc\_rescue@yahoo.co.nz

## HAWKE'S BAY

### HASTINGS & DISTRICTS SPCA

Phone: 06 878 8733 (shelter)  
Email: committee@spcaghastings.org.nz

### GOAT WELFARE NZ

Phone: 0211 602 329  
Email: goatwelfarenz@hotmail.com

## MANAWATU/WHANGANUI

### POPPELLES KITTEN RESCUE

Phone: 027 438 7913  
Email: poppelles@clear.net.nz

### ALL PAWS RESCUE

Email: rescueallpaws@gmail.com  
Website: www.allpawsrescue.org.nz

### HAVEN BULL BREED RESCUE

Email: havenrescue@yahoo.co.nz  
Website: www.havenrescue.org.nz

## WELLINGTON/KAPITI

### HUHA – HELPING YOU HELP ANIMALS

Phone: 04 392 3232  
Email: enquire.huha@gmail.com  
Website: www.huha.org.nz

### KITTEN INN

Phone: 04 565 1193  
Email: info@kitteninn.org.nz  
Website: www.kitteninn.org.nz

### WELLINGTON AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE RESCUE

Phone: 027 840 6064 or 027 318 3840  
Email: wgtm.rescue@gmail.com

### THE OUTPAWED RESCUE TRUST

Phone: 021 644 538  
Email: outpawed@gmail.com  
Website: www.outpawed.wordpress.com

### WAIRARAPA COMMUNITY KITTIES

Phone: 027 882 9518  
Email: wairarapakitties@gmail.com

### CATS PROTECTION WELLINGTON

Phone: 04 389 9668  
Email: catsprotectionleaguewgtm@hotmail.com  
Website: www.cpl-wellington.org.nz

### WELLINGTON RABBIT RESCUE

Phone: 02 026 05577  
Email: info@wellingtonrabbitrescue.org

### UPPER HUTT ANIMAL RESCUE

Phone: 4 526 2672  
Email: info@animalrescue.org.nz  
Website: www.animalrescue.org.nz

## MARLBOROUGH

### KAIKŌURA WILDLIFE RESCUE

Phone: 021 585 586

## WEST COAST

### GREYMOUTH SPCA

Phone: 03 768 5223  
Email: greyspca@xtra.co.nz

## CANTERBURY

### CAT RESCUE CHRISTCHURCH CHARITABLE TRUST

Email: catrescue.chch@gmail.com  
Website: www.catrescue.org.nz

### CHRISTCHURCH BULL BREED RESCUE

Phone: 021 296 7389  
Email: chchbullbreedrescue@hotmail.co.nz  
Website: www.chchbullbreedrescue.org.nz

### TURTLE RESCUE AND REHOMING

Phone: 021 202 0185  
Email: turtleinfo@paradise.net.nz  
Website: www.turtlerescue.co.nz

**CAT CARE INC**

Phone: 021 202 0185  
 Phone: 03 313 3851  
 Email: info@catcare.org.nz  
 Website: www.catcare.org.nz

**OXFORD BIRD RESCUE & CANTERBURY RAPTOR RESCUE**

Phone: 021 292 7861  
 Email: obr@xtra.co.nz  
 Website: www.oxfordbirdrescue.org.nz & www.canterburyraptorrescue.org.nz

**CATS PROTECTION LEAGUE CANTERBURY**

Phone: 03 376 6094  
 Email: cplcats@xtra.co.nz  
 Website: www.cats.org.nz

**DOG WATCH SANCTUARY TRUST**

Phone: 027 319 2411  
 Email: info@dogwatch.co.nz

**THE NEW ZEALAND RAPTOR TRUST**

Phone: 027 448 9044

Email: admin@nzraptor.co.nz

**ŌTAUHAHI RABBIT REHOMING**

Email: rabbitrehomingotautahi@gmail.com

**OTAGO****ANIMAL RESCUE NETWORK NEW ZEALAND**

Email: arnnz.enquiries@gmail.com  
 Website: www.arnnz.org.nz

**ONE BY ONE RESCUE NZ**

Email: onebyonenz@gmail.com  
 Phone: 03 926 9325 (Trina)  
 Phone: 027 857 9379 (Jaimee)

**SOUTHLAND****SOUTHERN CROSS GREYHOUND ADOPTIONS**

Phone: 027 201 6812  
 Email: debbie.branks@sit.ac.nz

**SOUTHLAND GREYHOUND ADOPTION**

Phone: 027 511 8894  
 Email: southlandgreyhoundadoption@gmail.com

**FUREVER HOME**

Email: info.fureverhomes@gmail.com  
 Website: www.fureverhomes.org.nz

*Pet Life is not associated with any group listed within. This list has been put together to assist our readers with finding suitable rescue and welfare groups within their area.*

**If you would like to see your rescue/welfare group listed here, email [info@petlife.co.nz](mailto:info@petlife.co.nz).**

# CAN YOU HELP?

Unfortunately, far too often, we see unwanted animals being abandoned, needing rescue or new homes, and people raising funds for rescue groups. If you want to help but are not sure what you can do, here are our top 10 tips to help reduce the numbers of strays and unwanted pets, and support local welfare and rescue groups.

**1. DESEX YOUR PET**

Desexing your pet is the most important thing you can do. This ensures your pet does not become the "problem" by reproducing. If you are concerned about the cost of desexing then talk to your local vet to see if there are any free or discounted desexing programmes in your area.

**2. VOLUNTEER AT A SHELTER**

Volunteers are always needed. Contact the shelter or organisation you would like to help and ask if they need any assistance. Perhaps they need help manning telephones, feeding animals or folding flyers. Kennels may need walkers for dogs or a stable may need help with mucking out stalls and exercising horses.

**3. BECOME A FOSTER FAMILY**

Foster families are a very important aspect for many rescue facilities. If you have the room or time to look after animals that need assessing or recuperating then becoming a foster family is very rewarding.

**4. SPREAD THE WORD**

Tell your friends and family about desexing their pet or the help that local organisations need. Share flyers and helpful posts on social media so all your followers become informed. Knowledge is power.

**5. ADOPT**

Thinking of getting a new addition? Well, consider adoption. There are so many pets looking for new forever homes. Visit your local shelter or rescue organisation

and talk to them about what you are looking for. They will be able to match you with a pet that will suit your family.

**6. DONATE ITEMS**

Items like blankets, food bowls, toys, newspapers and treatments such as wormers or flea treatments are all items that you can donate at minimal cost. Maybe you have knitting/crocheting skills? Why not whip up some catnip toys! Your old bedding can be washed and cut down to make blankets or beds, while newspapers are useful for lining crates and cages.

**7. BECOME A COLLECTOR**

Most organisations will have a collection day or may sell merchandise, run a fun day or hold a BBQ to raise money. Get involved and give your time.

**8. DON'T BUY FROM UNSCRUPULOUS BREEDERS**

By purchasing your pet from an unscrupulous breeder you are supporting their practises, and many of their animals end up in shelters. If you wish to buy a new pet then make sure you find a breeder who breeds for the betterment of a breed, and is not just "farming" for money.

**9. PAY IT FORWARD**

If you have a lifestyle property then offer free grazing or hay to a person and/or organisation which rescues and rehomes livestock. Finished with collars, halters, leads, crates, cages, jackets or coats? Pass them on for free to someone who needs them. Facebook is great for finding out who they may be.

**10. MONETARY DONATION**

Most rescue organisations heavily depend on donations from the public. A one-off monetary donation is great and appreciated, however, if you can set up a weekly stipend then even better. It doesn't have to be a lot – just the price of a coffee a week will help immensely. Talk to the organisation you wish to support and ask about direct crediting to their general account or vet account.

NZ Rat Rescue was founded in 2008, based on a need to educate people on proper rat care and a need for good quality rat food. At that stage there was a lot of misleading information about rats and a lot of unsuitable food. We chatted to Trudi Black about NZ Rat Rescue.

**Where are you based and can you help rats anywhere in New Zealand?**

NZRR is run by volunteers who open their homes and their hearts to unwanted rats and rats in need. We have a Nelson branch, along with Christchurch and Wellington Sanctuary home. But we have many helpers around the country so that we can help as many rats as we can.

**How many rats come into your care each year?**

It can vary. In the past we have had anything from one rat to 80 rats in one centre at any one time. These days, because we don't have as many centres any more, we offer the service of people being able to advertise their rats for adoption on our Facebook page. We have a 90 per cent success rate. This means the few centres we do still have are not overburdened with high numbers. We, of course, still take in stray rats, or if people are struggling to rehome their rats we will take them in.

**Why do rats end up in your care and how can we change the current situation?**

Rats arrive at New Zealand Rat Rescue for a few reasons. Mostly it's because people get them not realising how much care they actually require. Sometimes they are bought as pets for children who become bored of them and no longer want to look after them. On occasion, people are moving overseas and cannot take their pets with them. Sometimes, people have got what they were told were two rats of the same sex and suddenly they have a litter of babies. I guess, if you are thinking of getting rats, you should do as much research as you can about them. Costs of owning a rat can be higher than you think. They need lots of cleaning, and they should be handled and played with every day as they are social creatures. Rats are not cheap, disposable pets, they deserve as much love, attention and vet care as any other animal. You should think carefully about whether pet rats are right for you.

**Do you have a favourite rescue story?**

I have two that come to mind.

In December, 2016, Kelly who runs our Christchurch branch, was getting ready for work when a message came through the NZ Rat Rescue Facebook page. Some people moving into their new house had found a rat. She had come up to them and was clearly used to being handled. She had been released by her owner a week prior and had somehow survived. Being a mink hood (grey and white), she would have stood out like a sore thumb.

She went home with Kelly, and was very pleased to have food and water! Kelly named her Knoppie, Afrikaans for button. Knoppie walked oddly flat-footed and wonky, her tail curled over her back. This is often seen in rats who have had access to a wheel that is too small. This was her only health issue but she was given sanctuary status.

Knoppie is over 3 years old now, reaching the end of her long life. Her weird walking is more



LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Pew peeking out of a blanket.  
Knoppie living her "happily ever after".  
Curious rats keeping a close eye on things.

pronounced now, but she still climbs and moves with apparent ease. She is a wonderful rat: loves people and affection, and is ALWAYS the first to the cage door. She also adores her food, and sits right beside or in the bowl at dinner time. Knoppie shares a cage with four other rats.

Also in 2016, two female rats were surrendered to the rescue. Both arrived with litters of around six to eight. The girls had been with the rescue for a week when one started to nest again. Yikes. Her babies were taken out and put in a separate cage, and the next morning there were 11 more babies. Poor mum was pretty exhausted after raising her first litter and then giving birth to 11 more. We fed her up to make sure she got enough food for herself and to produce milk for her babies. There was a lot of care, cleaning and food required for all those little mouths. The mums were both kept by one of the rescue's members, to live out their lives with no more litters. Homes were found for all the babies once they were old enough.

**If you could tell the public one thing about rats, what would it be?**

Rats are awesome, intelligent pets which should be kept in same sex pairs, at least.

**What is the most challenging part of this work?**

One of the most challenging parts of this job is that things never change. We see the same things over and over again regarding the education of rats. There is so

much misinformation out there. We would love to see more correct information given to the people who are sold rats. About proper care and diet, and, in particular, cage sizes. We see a lot of sad rats come through our doors who are in a bad way. Incorrect diet has caused skin irritations or obesity; rats suffering from respiratory issues yet have not had any vet care; rats with large mammary tumors that have been left too long, and they are suffering. We also see undernourished rats who are skin and bone. The more we can educate people, the better for us and the rats.

**How can people help out?**

People can help out by buying rat products from our online shop. All money raised goes towards vet care, travel expenses, education, purchasing equipment and cleaning products, and food for any rats in our care. You can also make a donation to NZRR, every cent helps. Those keen to help out when we have rescues or fosters, etc, can follow our Facebook page. When we are in need of help we put a call out.

**Anything else you want to add or think our readers will find interesting?**

Rats are social creatures and should live in same sex pairs. Rats live for around 2-3 years. Rats' teeth continually grow so they need chew treats to keep them down. Rats can't vomit. Rats can be toilet trained and taught to do tricks. Rats are just plain awesome.



To make a donation to  
New Zealand Rat Rescue,  
visit  
[nzrr.org/support-nzrr/](http://nzrr.org/support-nzrr/)  
donate  
or email  
[office@nzrr.org](mailto:office@nzrr.org).



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