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WBOP Council helps wildlife tales fly





ARRC founder Liza Schneider with one of the books.



Fostering kindness and respect for wildlife is the message behind a donation of children's books to Western Bay libraries by Western Bay of Plenty District Council.

The 10-book sets have been produced by the Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Wildlife Trust (ARRC) in Tauranga and will be distributed to Council's libraries, some schools and environmental groups.

The stories, based on true bird life experiences, are written by ARRC founder and Tauranga Holistic Vet Dr Liza Schneider and illustrated by five local artists.

The books feature the individual adventures of 10 commonly known New Zealand birds (Frankie, Wiremu, Daphne, Tilly, Sal, Pipi, Kingi, Hemi, Sheldon, Manu) as they get into trouble at the hands of humans and are rescued and returned to the wild by the heroes who come to their rescue.

Liza says she wrote the stories in the hope of educating communities on the importance of looking after our natural heritage and taking responsibility for the wellbeing of our wildlife.

"Most birds come to harm by the hand of humans. The stories are all based on true cases and tell how wildlife can be impacted by humans and how that can be avoided. All the stories have a happy ending," says Liza.

The birds featured in the stories are developed into endearing characters and represent those species rescued and brought to Liza at the ARRC refuge. ARRC has been rehabilitating injured and orphaned wildlife in the Bay of Plenty since 2003 and receives more than 800 rescued birds a year.

Council's Community Relationships advisers Ben Wilson and Glenn Ayo have spearheaded Council's plan to use the ARRC series as a way to promote wildlife education.

"Council wants to help educate our children about respecting wildlife and having a caring attitude to our animals and the environment," says Glenn.

"We work with some amazing groups such as Wild About New Zealand and Maketu Ongatoto Wetland Society (MOWS) to promote and support the conservation message in our communities. These great stories from ARRC, presented so beautifully for children, is an excellent way to help with this message – and our libraries are a great start."

Liza hopes the ARRC Wildlife Trust book series will attract sponsors to enable the Trust to fund distribution of the books to all schools in the Bay of Plenty – and further afield if possible.