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Why You Must Be Trained To Care For Wildlife

This week WReNNZ member, Dr Liza Schneider, Director and Veterinarian at [ARRC Wildlife Trust](#) and [Holistic Vets](#), was interviewed by The Sun for their article [Home Rehabilitation Efforts Harming Wildlife](#).

As this is such a critical topic Dr Schneider has also provided WReNNZ content to share, to help the community understand, why wildlife must be cared for by qualified carers.

Wild animals are protected

All native species are protected and you must have an appropriate permit from the Department of Conservation (DOC) to care for wildlife.

Native animals have very specific medical and husbandry needs

The health of native animals can be severely compromised when correct care isn't provided. Wildlife need their native diet and appropriate facilities, away from any unnecessary contact with people or other animals to have the best chance at successful rehabilitation.

Additionally, some species can be dangerous to people who do not handle them properly – herons and shags can cause eye injuries with their sharp beaks and long reach, tuis, hawks and moreporks have very sharp claws that can cause painful penetrating injuries.

Animals suffer unnecessarily, and can die, if they do not get the right care

These are some of the cases Dr Schneider has seen:

- A Shearwater was kept for 5 days being fed bread. It was too emaciated to be rehabilitated. Had it presented sooner it would have survived and been able to be successfully rehabilitated.
- A Kereru (Native Wood Pigeon) flew into a window and was kept in a bird cage for a week where it was given budgie food it did not eat. A week later ARRC were presented with a very debilitated and emaciated bird with a severe wing fracture that needed to be humanely euthanased. This bird suffered unnecessarily for a week.
- A Little Blue Penguin was found debilitated on the beach. It was taken home, inappropriately housed and fed an unsuitable diet. A week later it was presented at ARRC Wildlife Trust emaciated with diarrhoea. After weeks of rehabilitation the bird was returned to the beach. Had it been presented sooner and received the correct care, its rehabilitation would have been days rather than weeks

How can you help?

1. If you find sick, injured or orphaned wildlife follow WReNNZ [rescue advice](#). Hundreds of sick, injured and orphaned native animals are cared for every year by WReNNZ members, who are dedicated to ensuring the welfare of our wildlife.
2. Support organisations like [ARRC Wildlife Trust](#) and other [WReNNZ members](#).
3. [Join WReNNZ](#) if you are interested in wildlife and finding out more about wildlife rehabilitation.
4. Spread the word to ensure that all your friends, family and colleagues, know what to do if they find wildlife needing care, to ensure no animals suffer unnecessarily.

