

# Dogs and wildlife: messaging tip sheet

## Tips to motivate dog owners to keep kiwi and other wildlife safe.

We can encourage responsible dog ownership by:

- Priming owners' **care values**, including understanding why it's important to keep *all* dogs away from wildlife
- Working with owners' **identity**, in our choice of message tone and messengers
- **Social norming**, showing through our words and images that it's normal for owners to walk on-lead and keep their dog secured when at home
- **Making it easier** for owners to take action, for example by providing designated off-lead areas and recommending training to make on-lead walking more enjoyable.

See the **full message guide** for more, including many examples illustrating the tips below.

### Tip #1: Connect with care values

Focus on care more than compliance, carrot more than stick. Connect with owners' deeper motivations for caring for their dogs and other animals.

### Tip #2: Home is where the heart is

Use the idea of a home for kiwi, and show that kiwi and dogs can co-exist if we do the right thing.

### Tip #3: We're in this together

A diverse range of people are working together to keep kiwi and other wildlife safe in their homes, while also keeping dogs happy and safe. We can bring dog owners on board by being civil, helpful and inclusive.

### Tip #4: Show what we want (not what we don't)

Both in words and images, show happy dogs being walked on loose leads, and thriving wildlife. Avoid showing what we don't want, or mythbusting.

### Tip #5: You can make a difference

Let dog owners know the huge difference they can make by keeping their dog on-lead and secured when at home.

### Tip #6: Use a Vision-Barrier-Action story structure

Lead with a positive values-based vision and focus on what owners can do to achieve it.

- **VISION:** Happy dogs and thriving wildlife
- **BARRIER:** Any dog can harm or kill wildlife
- **ACTION:** Responsible owners keep their dogs away from wildlife. Keep your dog secured when at home, and exercise them on-lead or at a designated off-lead area.

## Words and images to replace and embrace

Replace	Embrace	Why
<p>“When dogs are free”, “allowed to roam free”</p>	<p>“When dogs are off-lead”</p>	<p>Avoid the “freedom for dogs” frame. (However, wildlife should be free to wander in their own homes, e.g. “free-ranging kiwi”.)</p>
<p>“Dogs must be on-lead” “Penalties apply”</p>	<p>“Dogs on lead” “Welcome”, “please”, “thank you”</p>	<p>Use the enforcement tone sparingly. Be civil and emphasise working together: we’re with you, not against you.</p>
<p>“Control your dog”, “uncontrolled dogs”</p>	<p>“Dogs on-lead”, “dogs off-lead”</p>	<p>“Control”/“uncontrolled” are open to interpretation. They may also evoke the unhelpful “freedom for dogs” frame.</p>
<p>“Restrictions”, “restrain”</p> 	<p>“Dogs welcome – on a lead!”</p>	<p>Help people feel good about being out and about with their dogs on-lead, rather than being restricted / restrained / banned.</p>
<p>Red strikethrough sign (dogs banned)</p> 	<p>Convey ‘no dogs’ without the red strikethrough. Emphasise the reason for no dogs: - “Home for wildlife – no dogs” - “No dogs in our home, thanks. We live on the ground and dogs could hurt us!”</p>	<p>The red strikethrough feels draconian. Banning is rarely popular with those being banned; looking after wildlife is more positive and inclusive.</p>
<p>Showing dogs off-lead in bushland</p> 	<p>Showing dogs being walked on a loose lead</p> 	<p>Show and thereby help to normalise what we want, not what we don’t want (tip #4).</p>
<p>Myth: It’s very rare for dogs to hurt or kill kiwi. Fact: Dogs are the biggest threat to adult kiwi.</p>	<p>State the fact, without the myth: Dogs are the biggest threat to adult kiwi.</p>	<p>Mythbusting only serves to reinforce the myth in people’s minds.</p>