

# Lucky's Story



The phone call came one Saturday afternoon – a couple walking their dog had found a ferret in a cemetery in Birkenhead. The call did not prepare us for what we saw when we arrived. What should have been a large male sable was nothing but skin and bone. His muscles had wasted away to the extent that he could no longer move from his chest down. Unable to walk he would drag himself small distances using his front paws before collapsing from utter exhaustion. When he opened his mouth it was discovered that several of his teeth had also been broken. Why was he so thin? Was it his teeth causing so much discomfort? Had he been starved? So many questions to ask and nobody knew the answers. Immediately the name “Lucky” came to mind as he was so lucky to be found so close to death.

We took Lucky home to care for him as best as we could. First we needed to get fluid and nutrition into this ferret and keep him warm at all times. He had no interest in food or water, so it was necessary to force-feed him using an eye dropper for even just water. Several drops at a time was all he could manage and this was repeated at least every hour or two. What became apparent about Lucky was his beautiful nature. Despite his obvious suffering and discomfort, he was invariably affectionate and loving.

We had serious concerns over the survival of this ferret and went to bed that night not expecting Lucky to be alive the next morning. The second day went much like the first. Regular force feeding but little sign of any improvement in appetite or condition. A visit to the vet found nothing obviously wrong.

On Monday the first changes occurred. While being force fed Lucky vomited. Examination of this vomit showed that a majority of the content was carrot. A second visit to another vet confirmed his heart-beat was strong, but his temperature was extremely low, and he was very dehydrated. Intravenous fluids and vitamins were placed under the skin to encourage Lucky along. As Lucky did not have the muscles or energy to maintain his temperature he was then kept on an electric blanket. We still had to force feed Lucky and he still occasionally coughed up pieces of carrot.

On the night of day four Milica (our vet) had returned to Auckland from a conference out of town, and immediately took Lucky into her care at the emergency vet clinic. What Milica offered Lucky from here on was the best supportive therapy possible – injected fluids, vitamins, paraffin oil the works..... Lucky remained with Milica for two days. On the second day I rang Milica very nervous about what she had to say. I asked her “How is Lucky? Is he lucky..or unlucky (thinking he may not have made it)?” Milica responded with very very Lucky indeed. Lucky had passed a carrot half the size of a little finger

His immediate improvement came clear when Milica was cleaning his cage out and temporarily placed him in another cage previously occupied by a cat. Lucky still could not walk, however Milica heard a noise coming from his cage and much to her surprise witnessed Lucky stealing cat food and hiding it under a blanket. The road to recovery was all his.

Lucky has now been cared for by us since November 1998. He has doubled in weight, he can now walk and run, and for the first time last week we saw him war dance. Lucky may never be the most active or agile of ferrets, and he is still clumsy and has difficulty climbing, but he has now got a second chance at life. Lucky has still never shown a sign of aggression or bitten anyone, and he continuously craves cuddles, hugs and attention.

Lucky is now available for adoption, it will be sad to see him go, but he is now ready to be integrated into a new home. If you would like to give Lucky, or another of our other rescued ferrets a second chance please feel free to contact us.