Chickens dumped at North Berwick recycling plant

The Scottish SPCA is appealing for information after two chickens were dumped at a recycling centre in North Berwick at the weekend.

Scotland's animal welfare charity was alerted on Saturday (25 January) at around 1.30pm after staff at the centre on Heugh Brae discovered the chickens in a cardboard box in a skip equipped with a roller used to compress the waste.

One bird was sadly already dead, while the other was rescued and taken to the Scottish SPCA's Edinburgh and Lothians Animal Rescue and Rehoming Centre for care and attention. She has been named Jill.

Senior Inspector John Toule said, "We understand that a staff member was about to start up the crusher when he heard a noise coming from the skip.

"He picked the box up and shook it and heard the noise again and when he opened the box a chicken jumped out.

"There was one other chicken in the box but she had, unfortunately, already died. However, the surviving one is doing well in our care. Jill is a red hybrid hen and has a friendly, sweet nature so it's very likely that she has been kept in a domestic setting.

"This was a particularly cruel abandonment which appears to have been done with the intention of causing the birds serious harm or death.

"A review of CCTV footage has revealed a man placing the box into the skip close to the inactive crusher some 45 minutes

before the staff member was alerted. We believe the individual responsible for this act may have been driving a silver Citroën or Peugeot type vehicle.

"It may be that someone locally might have noticed their neighbour's hens going missing and if so we'd like them to get in touch with us. Indeed, we'd urge anyone with information to contact our animal helpline on 03000 999 999.

"Meanwhile we will care for Jill until we can find her a loving new home with some other hens for company."

Abandoning an animal is an offence and anyone found guilty of doing so can expect to be banned from keeping animals for a fixed period or life.