



## NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS NOVEMBER 2024

### GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

## Actress Amy Sedaris Says Goodbye to Tina, A Flamboyant Boy Who Ruled Her Apartment

By Jane O'Wyatt

Tina had been in the care of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab volunteers at the noisy, chaotic Union Square Petco store *for six months* when Amy Sedaris adopted him on Sept. 1, 2014. As word of the adoption spread, Tina's admirers in RR&R all cheered, because Amy was known to be a passionate rabbit advocate who would give this bright, independent-minded bunny a peaceful, loving home. Amy treated Tina like royalty! She also made him a star on social media with her amused and amusing [Instagram](#) posts. On Oct. 31, 2024, Halloween, when Tina fell asleep for the last time, he was the most famous house rabbit in America. In response to Amy's sorrowful Instagram announcement of his passing, her account received thousands of likes and compassionate comments.

In 2016, I became one of the lucky people who fed, praised, cuddled, read to and played with Tina while Amy was away. He was a contented, friendly, feisty, free-range bunny with perfect litter-box skills, fiercely devoted to Amy, whose care of him was impeccable. When, in

September 2024, he began to eat fewer pellets, hop more awkwardly, fumble landings from his throne and slide off Amy's bed, he was around 11 years old. His decline had begun slowly, as though he were giving Amy time to get used to the idea that he couldn't stay with her forever. Recognizing the signs, she did

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Tina on Amy's bed.

everything in her power to ensure his comfort and safety. Her grief at his death was mixed with profound gratitude for the support that she and Tina had

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### APPEAL TO READERS

## Call to Action: Stop Petland Rabbit Sales Immediately

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Just two months ago, we celebrated a major victory won against Petco. We hope you took a moment to thank them for recommitting to never sell rabbits in any of their stores.

However, the nationwide disrespectful treatment of rabbits never seems to end. We need to focus our advocacy on the current target: Petland.

In New York State, fortunately, all pet stores will be banned from sales of rabbits, dogs and cats as of Dec. 15, when a new law takes effect (see [Thump](#)

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## Help Our Rabbits On Giving Tuesday

As the holidays draw near, please consider helping Rabbit Rescue & Rehab rabbits. We have spent this year dealing with abandonments, surrender requests, and pleas to pull rabbits from local shelters.

Giving Tuesday is on Dec. 3 this year, and a donor will match up to \$2,000 of

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## Goodbye to Tina

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received. We at Thump are grateful for Amy's willingness to share her thoughts in the following brief interview.

**Jane:** Could you talk a little about Tina's last days?

**Amy:** I had a coven of people to help me with Tina's last days. Thank God for Dr. Laura George, who helped me with medical advice, who talked to me every day on the phone and advised me on everything. Please look at her website Coming Home Sanctuary. Thanks to my friend Adam Selman, who helped me turn my home into an assisted-living situation. We built up my floors with foam to help with Tina's joint issues. We got thicker rug pads and added a hay box closer to Tina's hangouts. Thanks to Paul Dinello, who, by removing the box spring, lowered my mattress to the floor so Tina could still get into bed with me. Paul also gave Tina the best three-finger-technique massage. Tina really liked men. I think he liked deep voices. Thank you, Jane, for loving him and coming over to assist me on zero notice. Thanks to James Gottlieb, who watched Tina for me when I went out of town for more than three days. James was totally up for watching Tina when Tina needed extra care. He didn't hesitate for one minute. Thanks to Donna Schletter, who loved Tina so much and helped me to figure out how I could get Tina to eat. Donna is in my will, because she wanted to make sure if something ever happened to me, Tina would go to her. And thank you to Catnip & Carrots, the best vet for rabbits. Always there for me.

**Jane:** Interspecies communicators can reassure mourning pet guardians that they did the right thing in having their beloved companions put to sleep, and they can help with other unresolved issues. Is there any unfinished business between you and Tina that you would want help with?

**Amy:** Tina was a real communicator. He told me when it was time, and I listened and watched. No doubt it was time. I'm so grateful he went peacefully. It could not have been a more beautiful ending. We had closure. He died on my bed on his favorite spot, which was my spot. He always took it from me when I got out of bed. I hovered over Tina, and he didn't always appreciate it. But you have to be observant with rabbits. I sure was lucky to have him in my life. I will miss him so much – still sobbing but that's ok. (I'm pretending everyone is sad

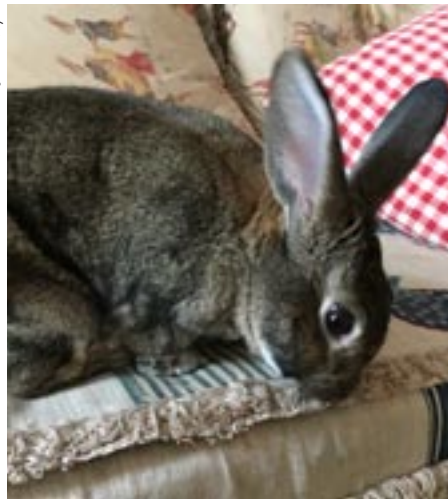
about Tina and not the election results.) He was my third bunny. What a guy!

**Jane:** Although you had known for several years that Tina was a neutered male (See January 2021 [Thump](#)), you referred to him as both "she" and "he." And in your Instagram post about his passing you wrote, "I treated him like a queen" and "He was my first boy bunny." How would you explain this?

**Amy:** I loved when I found out Tina was a boy. My first boy pet. He was

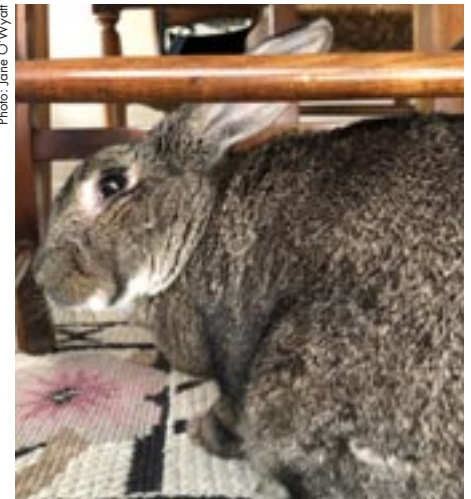
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Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



A free-range bunny, Tina liked hopping up on this couch.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Under the furniture was OK, too.

Photo: Katie Tibaldi



Tina with Amy.

## Goodbye to Tina

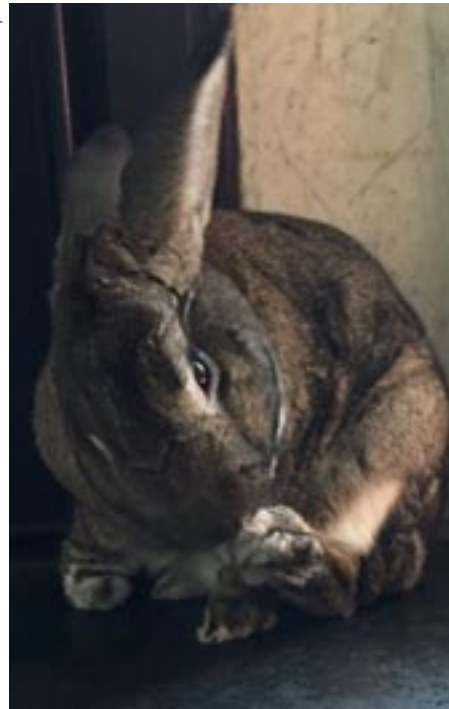
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putting out male vibes. It just made me love him even more. I called him a queen because he was regal, powerful, funny, a goddess. He had a throne, and he sat up on it and ruled the apartment – which was a walk-in hutch that we both lived in. He ruled. A raving queen!! He was my RuPaul. Flamboyant, feminine. (A true compliment.)

**Jane:** Have you been dreaming about Tina?

**Amy:** I have. He also left good energy throughout his apartment. Dusty, my second rabbit, did as well. I still call Tina's name when I walk in the door. He was always happy to see me, and I was always happy to see him. He made my life so much better. I can't believe he is not here.

Photo: Jane O'Wynn



Tina was a meticulous groomer.

## Thinking About Adopting?

By Amy Sedaris

The first thing I would do is find a vet. Rabbit vets are hard to find. Ask around. Educate yourself. Make sure you have the space for a bunny. If you travel a lot, find someone who can watch your bunny when you go out of town. I would make sure you have a medical kit on hand in case you can't get to the vet. Rabbit issues can happen with zero warning. A lot of times it's considered an emergency. There is a lot of good [information](#) about rabbit care out there, so, again, educate yourself. I wouldn't adopt if I had small children or any aggressive animals in the house. Rabbits are prey animals, and they need to feel protected. You need room for lots of hay and a big roomy hutch.

## CALL TO ACTION

### Petland

(Continued from page 1)

[article here](#)). But we must continue to press Petland to halt its sales of rabbits nationwide.

Petland already has a bad reputation for the neglectful and unsanitary conditions that sicken animals in their stores. For years, animal welfare advocates have raised serious concerns about Petland's sale of rabbits, puppies and other small animals. From documented cases of abuse, to ongoing sourcing from questionable breeding operations, Petland has been repeatedly called out for their lack of adequate living conditions.

Petland has been involved with the rabbit mill industry for many years. Rabbit mills are facilities, just like puppy mills, where rabbits are kept in deplorable conditions and used as breeding machines until their death. Many of the rabbits die from untreated medical conditions

that make their lives unbearable. The surviving babies are boxed up and shipped to Petland stores around the country. Many don't survive the transport, and many more die in the stores from inappropriate care or complete neglect. They do not receive veterinary care. As they die, more are ordered like mere stock to fill the shelves. The rabbits that survive these abhorrent breeding facilities are

usually riddled with illnesses or are in generally poor health.

A nationwide company "ordering" rabbits from breeding facilities to be sold as "easy, caged pets" leads to the abandonment, neglect and death of thousands of rabbits each year.

Further, Petland employees are not well-versed in proper rabbit care. Therefore, the purchasers aren't educated about rabbits. Usually purchased on impulse, a Petland rabbit will soon become a hormonal teenager that the buyer doesn't want to deal with. The purchaser will not know about neutering, or won't want to finance an expensive spay/neuter surgery. These rabbits will likely be abandoned outdoors or dumped in some other way. We already know that most "Easter bunnies" don't live to see their first birthdays because of a lack of education,

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## Petland

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lack of commitment, lack of veterinary funds, and indifference.

As we've discussed before, the number of rabbit abandonments is at an all-time high. There are not enough rabbit rescue groups, shelters that take rabbits, or rabbit-loving homes to make a dent in the homeless rabbit population as it is. Impulse purchases from stores like Petland will only exponentially exacerbate the homeless rabbit crisis in the U.S.

We can't tolerate rabbits suffering, no matter where in this country they may be. The only way to get the attention of a corporation is to threaten their bottom line and we need your help. Just like Petco, Petland should reconsider using rabbits as commodities if they hear from a huge amount of interested people.

Petland is prioritizing profit over animal welfare, so we must hit them square in their pocketbook. Innocent rabbits have only us to count on and we must be proactive and loud. Unfortunately, Petland has never offered a glimmer of hope that it will consider the welfare of rabbits and stop selling them in their stores. We have never seen Petland show

compassion for rabbits. We believe it will be a long battle to convince them to change their ways. With commitment, we can all be part of the solution. Rabbit advocates must unite and take action to hold Petland and other stores selling rabbits (and other animals) accountable. Please help.

- To this end, we are asking for an immediate boycott of Petland.

Please refrain from shopping at Petland, implore your friends and families to do the same and most importantly, let Petland know about it. If you don't currently shop there, tell Petland that you are boycotting until they institute a "no rabbits for sale" policy.

- Please sign and share the [change.org petition](#) linked here.

Within the petition, you will find links to the horrors that have been found in Petland and the breeding mill they have been connected to.

- Please call Petland headquarters and individual stores and email them to express your dismay. Send your emails over and over again, using these addresses:

- Send emails to Petland's CEO, Joe Watson at [joe.watson@petland.com](mailto:joe.watson@petland.com)

- Send emails to Petland customer service: [customerservice@petlandinc.com](mailto:customerservice@petlandinc.com)

- Call Petland's corporate offices at 800-221-5935 and make your opinions heard.

- Comment on Petland's social media! Continually leave comments until they change their policy:

IG: <https://www.instagram.com/petlandusa/>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/PetlandUSA>

- Please continue to support rabbit-rescue organizations and educate others about the importance of adopting rather than purchasing rabbits from pet stores and breeders.

Several major chains, like Petco, have made the responsible decision to cease the sale of live rabbits, though they unfortunately sell other small animals such as mice, hamsters, birds, guinea pigs, rats and ferrets.

The only way we can get Petland's attention is with a massive number of people bombarding them with calls, emails and social media posts. Helping these poor animals will require action by all of us. Let's go!



## Animal Communicator Offers Sessions

Would you like to communicate with your current companion or one who has crossed the rainbow bridge? Warren, animal communicator, has generously offered his services, donating 100% of his fee to benefit the rabbits of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

He is offering 20-minute phone sessions to help you learn more about your rabbit or any other furry family member.

For all information, email: [chiguygo@icloud.com](mailto:chiguygo@icloud.com).

# A Rabbit Tale

By Robert Kulka

Throughout the history of mankind there are references to rabbits. Whether they are called rabbits, bunnies or bunny rabbits, they have had their ups and downs in stories and everyday life. Rabbits have been creatures of prey, much maligned, often misunderstood. They are an enigma in the true sense of the word. In modern-day references, they are seen as cute, cuddly and fluffy. They show up in children's literature and as plush animals to hug and love. They are part of our culture in seasonal representations and fictional manifestations. Who doesn't love the Easter Bunny or the little-known Santa Bunny and Tooth Fairy Bunny? Okay, so I stretched it a bit here. Beyond children's stories they have been used to point out human behavior and admired characteristics. There are philosophical metaphors and cautionary tales in books such as "Watership Down" (not bedtime reading for your children or your bunny). In fact, the rabbit has been used in all those ways almost back to the beginning of mankind's history.

Such is the revered Jade Rabbit. Also called the Moon Rabbit, it is often represented as cute, fluffy and white. But the Moon Rabbit is no ordinary bunny. Calling the moon its home, the Jade or Moon Rabbit is a mystical and enchanting legend found in many different cultures. In China, for instance, the bunny is making immortality elixirs as it keeps the beautiful goddess Chang'e company in the Moon Palace. It symbolizes selflessness, piety and sacrifice. It is thought that the Jade Rabbit is on the moon so that no matter where we are on Earth, the qualities of righteousness and self-sacrifice are there to look up to.

But why do a rabbit, the moon and a beautiful girl show up in so many cultures? To understand it, you need to dig into the legends and myths that seem to go back thousands of years. The Moon Rabbit is a figure found not only in East Asian but also in indigenous American



Why do a rabbit, the moon and a beautiful girl show up in so many cultures?



Most East Asian mythology represents the rabbit as seen pounding a mortar and pestle.

folklore. The origins appear to be based on the dark markings on the near side of the moon resembling a rabbit.

All the various tales are believed to be traced back to an original story found in the Jataka (a classic collection of ancient Buddhist literature). As the tale goes, on a day with a full moon, three animals encountered an old man by a fire who begged them for food. The animals decided to help the old man. Each animal brought some food for the old man. The rabbit, only able to gather grass that humans could not eat, leapt into the fire, offering itself as sustenance. The rabbit was spared a painful death, and the man revealed himself as the Buddhist ruler of heaven. Touched by the rabbit's act of sacrifice and to honor the noble animal, the picture of the rabbit was imprinted on the moon – an image

surrounded by smoke from the fire it threw itself into. Thanks to this, the rabbit is believed to be a bodhisattva, an enlightened being. (But we knew that already, didn't we?)

Most East Asian mythology represents the rabbit as seen pounding a mortar and pestle. That is where the story varies some by country and culture. Found in many stories, the contents of the mortar differ whether in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese or Indian folklore. It can also be found in stories told in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. Much of the story and history of Moon Rabbit can be seen in China. The Chinese version features the rabbit as the companion of the Moon Goddess, making the elixir of life for her. In fact, in China the Moon Festival is a long-cherished tradition inspired by the legend. Celebrated the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, it is a time for families to come together, enjoy mooncakes and gaze at the full moon. The myths and legends of this tradition capture the hearts of young and old alike. Proving the significance of the tradition, a series of Chinese robotic lunar rovers have been named Yutu, the Chinese name for the Jade Rabbit. The first of the Yutu rovers landed on the moon on Dec. 14, 2013, and was named after the Jade Rabbit as the result of an online poll.

In the Japanese and Korean versions of the story, the rabbit is often pounding ingredients for mochi, a type of rice cake. As in Chinese folklore, the Moon Rabbit is believed to be preparing the elixir of immortality. Certain interpretations show the Moon Rabbit preparing medicine for mortals.

Stretching beyond Asia, the Moon Rabbit can be seen in legends originating from North and Central America. Among the Mayas living in Chiapas and the highlands of Guatemala, a lighthearted version of the rabbit appears as a son of

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## A Rabbit Tale

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the Moon Goddess, pulling pranks on his siblings. Depicted in Mayan art, the Moon Goddess frequently can be seen holding a rabbit. In Central American myths about the gods Quetzalcoatl, Nanahuatzin, and Tecciztecatl, the rabbit appears as a noble and selfless creature. A representation from Aztec legend has a god in a journey on Earth as a human. After walking a long time, the god becomes hungry and tired. With no food or water, the god thinks he might die. As luck would have it, a rabbit resting nearby offers itself as food to save the life of the god. Moved by the offering of the rabbit, the god elevates the rabbit to the moon and then lowers it back to Earth. The god says to the rabbit, "You may be just a rabbit, but

everyone will remember you, there in your image in the light, for all people and all times."

Canada and the U.S. also have their representations of the Moon Rabbit. A Cree cultural legend tells a story about a young rabbit who wished to ride the moon. Only the crane was willing to take him there. The trip stretched the crane's legs as the heavy rabbit held them tightly, leaving them elongated as the legs of all cranes are now. When they reached the moon, the rabbit touched the crane's head with a bleeding paw, leaving the red mark cranes wear to this day. According to the legend, on clear nights, the rabbit still may be seen riding the moon.

If you think the stories of the Moon Rabbit are only a part of ancient history, consider this. The Moon Rabbit was the

subject of a humorous conversation held between mission control at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the crew of Apollo 11. In the exchange, Houston control told the astronauts to watch for a lovely girl with a big rabbit on the moon. Houston relayed the legend of a beautiful Chinese girl called Chang'e who had been living on the moon for 4,000 years with her companion, a large rabbit. The astronauts were told that the rabbit should be easy to spot since he was always standing on his hind feet. To this, astronaut Michael Collins replied, "Okay. We'll keep a close eye out for the bunny girl."

The Moon Rabbit continues to make itself known even in modern-day popular culture. Next time it is a clear night with a full moon, you may just want to look up and wonder.

## Giving Tuesday *(Continued from page 1)*

donations to RRR. This global day of giving began in 2012 and is now an annual event. It takes place on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Many companies participate by matching the donations made by their employees. Millions of dollars are raised each year for local nonprofit groups.

Donations can be made to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab through PayPal. You can also

send donations to:  
Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC Metro Rabbit, 333 Mamaroneck Ave., #363, White Plains, NY 10605.

Our team has worked to help as many rabbits as we can, and many of them require costly veterinary care as a result of neglect and difficult living situations.

RRR relies entirely on donations to cover all of our veterinary expenses and to be able to rescue abandoned rabbits,

especially to help those who are injured and sick.

Enjoy the holidays and thank you for all the support and encouragement you have provided. Your contribution is tax-deductible. Donations can be made to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab through [PayPal](#).

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab (d/b/a NYC Metro Rabbit) is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) charity registered in New York State.



## You Can Help!

We desperately need help driving our rabbits to and from the veterinarian, between foster homes, etc. Having to worry about how the rabbits will get to the vet or back home is adding a huge amount of stress on top of our already difficult mission.

Most of our foster rabbits are quite far from their veterinarian. Unfortunately, many trips can be last-minute due to an emergency.

If you are based close to Westchester County, are a safe driver with a clean driver's license, and want to help the rabbits in a huge way, we'd love to hear from you! Thank you!

[NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

# Cottontail Connections: Tidings From Cottontail Cottage and Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

By Brigitte Dix  
N.Y. State Licensed Wildlife Rehabber

## The Unsung Heroes of Our Ecosystem: Why Local Bats Matter

As the founder of Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab, I've had the privilege of working closely with many incredible animals, but today I want to share my love for a group that often flies under the radar: our local bats. While butterflies and bees get their fair share of attention for their roles in pollination, bats are just as crucial to our ecosystem, and they need our help.

### The Importance of bats

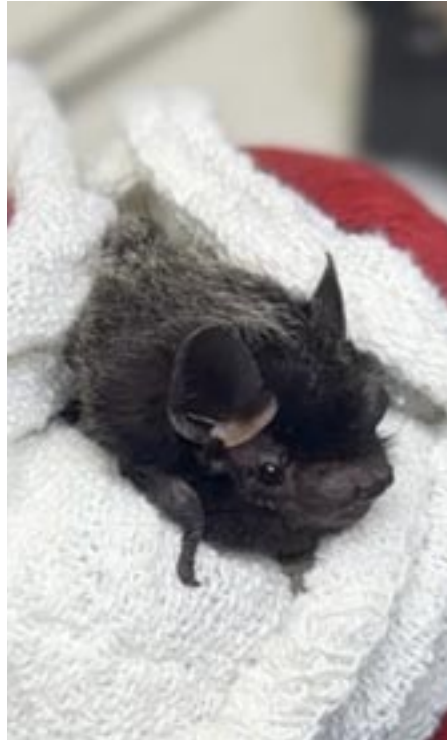
Bats are often misunderstood creatures, yet they provide invaluable services to our environment. As natural pest controllers, these amazing animals can consume an astonishing number of insects each night – some species can eat up to 1,000 mosquitoes in just one hour! This means fewer pests buzzing around and a reduced need for chemical pesticides, which is a win for everyone.

In addition to pest control, bats play a vital role in pollination and seed dispersal. Just like butterflies, bats are essential for the growth of many fruit and flower species. Some of our favorite foods, such as avocados, bananas, and even the agave plant used to make tequila, rely on bats for reproduction. Their contributions help maintain the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

### The threat of White-Nose Syndrome

Bats are facing significant threats, particularly from a devastating disease known as White-Nose Syndrome (WNS). Discovered in a cave in upstate New York in 2006, WNS has spread rapidly

across North America, leading to alarming declines of up to 90% in certain bat populations. This fungal disease causes bats to wake from hibernation too early, leading to exhaustion and starvation.



Bruce, a silver-haired bat who is currently in our care after being found with symptoms of head trauma.

What makes this situation even more concerning is that bats have a low replacement rate; they typically rear only a few young each year. With high mortality rates due to WNS, bat populations are threatened and many of our cave-dwelling bats are on the endangered species list.

As someone who works hands-on with these animals, I've seen the impact of WNS firsthand in my rehabilitation work. Each bat I care for has its own story to tell – a testament to the resilience of these creatures. Contrary to the myths that bats are aggressive or mean, my experience has shown me just how adorable, loving and gentle they truly are. They deserve our empathy and protection.

### Our role in bat rehabilitation

At Cottontail Cottage, we take pride in being the only New York State RVS (Rabies Vector Species)-licensed bat specialists in the lower N.Y. region. The Wings & Whiskers Conservation Project, led by Kristin St. Clair and myself, focuses on rehabilitating bats and raising awareness about their vital role in our ecosystem.

To enhance our rehabilitation efforts, we are currently raising funds to complete a 25-foot-long bat flight cage, which is essential for a successful bat rehabilitation program. This cage will provide a safe space for our bats to regain their strength and prepare for their return to the wild.

Please help.

### Here are a few ways you can support our local bats:

1. Educate Yourself and Others: Knowledge is power! The more we understand bats and their vital role in our environment, the better we can advocate for their protection.
2. Create Bat-Friendly Spaces: Consider adding bat houses to your yard. They provide a safe roosting space and help keep insect populations in check.
3. Support Our Fundraising Efforts: Any contributions you can make toward our flight cage project would be greatly appreciated. Together, we can create a better future for these incredible creatures.

As we work to protect and rehabilitate bats, we can ensure they continue to thrive and contribute to our ecosystem. They may not have the colorful wings of butterflies, but they are just as vital and deserving of our attention and care.

Thank you for being part of our community and for helping us celebrate the amazing bats that enrich our world! With gratitude.

## RHDV2 Confirmed in Washington State

### By House Rabbit Society

On Oct. 4, the Washington State Department of Agriculture state veterinarian's office confirmed the presence of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease in rabbits on two islands in San Juan County. This is the first confirmation of RHDV2 in Washington state since 2022.

RHDV2 is a serious and extremely contagious disease. Rabbits of all ages are affected by RHDV2. House Rabbit Society strongly encourages rabbit guardians to vaccinate their rabbits.

Is your rabbit due for the RHDV2 vaccination? Even indoor-only rabbits

are at risk of RHDV2, since the virus can be transferred to them by people (on their shoes and clothes), other animals (including dogs and cats, especially if they go outside), and even insects. Vaccination against RHDV2 is the most important way to protect your rabbit from this highly contagious and often lethal disease affecting rabbits of all ages.

RHDV2 is the first of the rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus strains to affect both domestic and North American wild rabbit and hare species. As many as 70% to 100% of rabbits exposed to the virus will die within 48 hours to 10 days after exposure.

There have since been confirmed cases of rabbit hemorrhagic disease in 40 countries. The new strain, RHDV2, emerged in France in 2010.

Talk with your veterinarian to learn more about the RHDV2 vaccine from [Medgene Labs](#).

There is no known cure for RHDV2, and the virus is extremely hardy. Visit the HRS [resource center](#) to learn more.

## Bunny-Proofing Tips

### By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Bunny-proofing your home is part of living with a house rabbit. It includes preventing damage to your property, protecting your rabbit from harm, and giving your rabbit safe and fun chewing alternatives. Wild rabbits chew through tree roots and brambles to make their burrows, and their domestic cousins, our pet rabbits, will instinctively chew items in their environment, too. The joy of living with a house rabbit is well worth the effort of protecting both his well-being and your valuables.

Here are some general suggestions to keep in mind during the holiday season, as well as the rest of the year:

**Electrical and phone cords:** Deter your rabbit from chewing cords by encasing them in split loom tubing (available at IKEA and at home centers such as Home Depot and Lowe's), plastic shower rod covers (housewares stores), plastic cable covers and raceways (home centers and [online](#)) or for stubborn



A ceramic tile protects against carpet shredding.

buns, PVC pipes. Block cords and outlets with furniture so the rabbit cannot reach them.

**Carpet:** Cover a favorite chewing area with a large ceramic tile or a plastic office chair mat. Choose low-pile carpeting that may be less tempting.

**Baseboards and corners:** Use plastic or decorative wood corner protectors (home centers). For baseboards, you can attach a "sacrificial" piece of untreated wood to the rabbit's favorite chewing surface.

**Furniture legs:** Cover the legs with cardboard or PVC tubing. Provide your rabbits with alternative rabbit-safe chew sticks.

**Box springs and upholstered furniture:** Rabbits love to burrow and some will get into the soft underside of upholstered furniture and bedding. Protect the entire underside with plywood or hardware cloth, or create a barrier underneath with a 2x4 framework.

**Houseplants:** Remove poisonous plants from rabbit areas, but also be aware of falling leaves. Some common poisonous plants are amaryllis, daffodil, elephant ears, holly and ivy berries, mistletoe and philodendron. [See list of toxic houseplants.](#)

**Insecticides:** Prevent access to roach/ant traps and powders, as well as all other poisonous household products.

**Getting stuck:** Be aware that a rabbit can become entrapped in recliners, heating vents and toilets, as well as behind and between appliances and furniture. Keep the hanging cords of your drapes and

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# Turmeric Won Us Over With His Flop

By Samantha Rowan

It had been six months since Lenny, our beloved senior rabbit, had died when I saw the brown and gold lop-eared bunny on the city shelter's website. I had been casually looking at pictures of bunnies for a few weeks, but there was no one who spoke to me until I saw a picture of this little guy. He was undeniably adorable, but what drew me to him was the sadness in his eyes. He was the saddest bunny I'd ever seen.

I texted a picture of the rabbit, named Turmeric by the shelter staff, to my husband and son and the verdict was unanimous: We would go to visit Turmeric to see if he liked us enough to want to be our bunny. And it was with a feeling of excitement that we arrived at the shelter the next day.

The shelter, by definition, is a hard place for pets. The rabbits were slightly insulated, in their own room with a thick door, but it was still possible to hear the dogs and cats in the hallways around us. There was also a consistent squeaking, which we realized came from a wall of guinea pigs on the far side of the room.

Some of the bunnies were curious, coming to the front of their enclosures. Others eyed us more warily. And then we saw the bunny we hoped would want to come home with us in a cage just behind the door.

Turmeric was huddled on the top shelf of his cage, withdrawn and miserable. I gasped; our son covered his mouth with his hand and the bunny slowly hopped down from his shelf and stuck his nose up against the bars. We saw him and he saw us and we stood there, people and bunny, for a few minutes and talked to each other.

"He likes us," my son said.

"I really think he does," I said.

And then Turmeric flopped over onto his side right under our noses. For us, that sealed the deal – this bunny seemed to like us as much as we liked him. We did, however, say hello to all of the other bunnies before we were drawn back to Turmeric.

It wasn't long before the paperwork was filled out and the shelter staff were trying to encourage Turmeric into a box



Truman fka Turmeric was undeniably adorable.

to go home. He was a tiny thing. He was fast and strong and didn't like being told what to do, and it took two staffers and several treats to encourage him into the box. From there, we went back to our apartment, where Turmeric's new home was waiting – fresh water and hay, pellets, a clean litter pan and a hidey box.

I lifted Turmeric, who had been renamed Truman on the bus ride home, into the cage and closed the door. While the goal was for him to become a free-range rabbit

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## HEALTH ISSUES

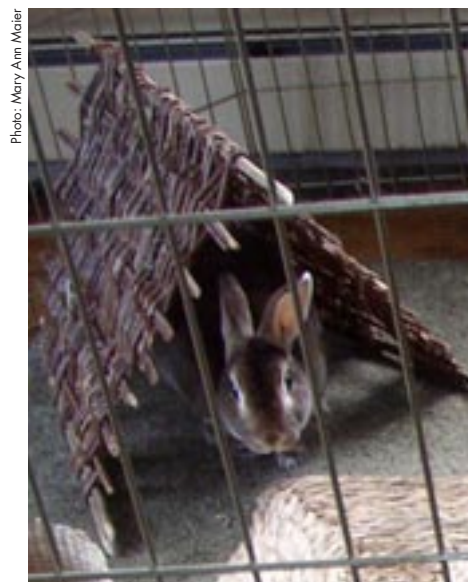
### Bunny-Proofing

*(Continued from page 8)*

blinds out of their reach, as they can entrap or choke a fleeing bunny.

**Barriers:** Keep unsafe areas off limits, or the bunny confined to a safe area, with a portable baby gate. Avoid plastic gates or those with vinyl-covered grates, as they are chewable. Metal puppy pens can be configured to fit most areas. How high the enclosure needs to be depends on the determination and athletic ability of the individual bunny.

**Diversions:** These can include hay, bunny-safe baskets (no paint or varnish) and grass mats to chew. Other suggestions



A willow tent is an excellent diversion.

are cardboard toilet paper and paper towel rolls to toss; purchased toys including hard plastic baby keys to shake; plastic and willow balls to roll; cardboard boxes, willow tunnels and cardboard concrete forms to explore. You can also try shredded paper or junk mail in a box for digging.

**OUR DISCLAIMER:** Expect the unexpected. Don't be surprised to find your bunny where you were sure he couldn't go. Bunnies are as different as we are...some are more adventurous than others. Left unattended, some can definitely get into trouble.

See [Rabbit.org's rabbit-proofing page](#) for more information.

# How My Different Bunny Personalities Show Love

By: Megan Hilands

If you have spent significant time with bunnies, you may already know they can show their affection for you in ways that are quite different from dogs and cats. Being naturally timid and cautious, it is unlikely that a bunny will charge you as you enter the door in the same way a friend's dog might. Many experts say bunnies feel at ease with you if they are comfortable eating and sleeping in your presence.

Sometimes with bunnies, though, you might find yourself thinking: Sure they tolerate me, but how do I know they really love me?

I find my three bunnies demonstrate their affection differently based on their personalities. Here's how I know each one of them truly cares for me.

## Charlie, the cuddle bun

Of my three bunnies, Charlie is the one who most obviously shows that he loves me. Almost as soon as we brought him home and he became acclimated to us, Charlie has been energetic, affectionate and almost puppy-like. He loves pets and cuddles from me more than any bunny I've ever met. Many evenings he will hop on the couch next to me and demand pets by nudging his head under my hand. Charlie also follows me around the house, though fortunately he has gotten out of the habit of waiting outside the bathroom door for me!

Not every bunny will be like Charlie, of course, but I am incredibly appreciative of my little couch bunny.

It's worth noting here that even though Charlie likes being close to me and touched, he still does not enjoy being picked up. The only time I do so is when he needs to go in the carrier or in emergencies (i.e., he needs to be given medication).

## Simba, the shy bun

If you've read Thump much in the past, you might remember that Simba is

my shy bunny. Simba is very much a homebody and does not do well being boarded away from her home and humans. That is part of how I know she loves me. If we are with Simba, she seems fine to go to our parents' homes for the holidays, but take her away from both her home and her humans? Simba will honestly act a little depressed being so out of her element. Once we needed to come home from a vacation when she was not eating. Fortunately, though, she returned to her usual input and output very soon after we arrived home.

Simba does enjoy head pets but generally will not actively pursue them the way Charlie does. Both she and her bonded sister, Nala, also seem to enjoy showing off for us. Simba enjoys sprinting or binkying around our home and then standing very close to us and staring in our direction. She will stay in that position until we give some sort of praise ("good job!" or "do it again!") before she proceeds with more sprints, a relaxation pose or another activity.

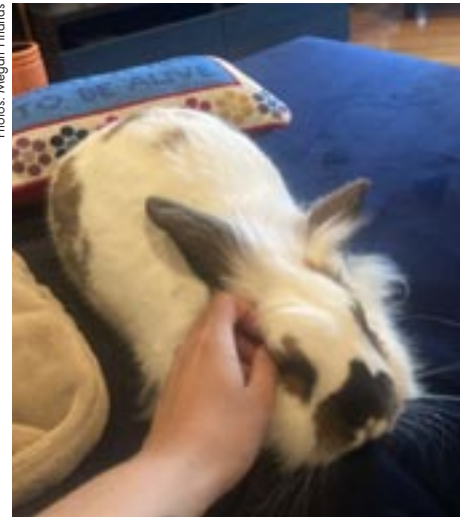
## Nala, the adventurous bun

Simba's sister, Nala, is the least cuddly of my bunnies. She will occasionally accept head pets, but not for long, and does not enjoy being touched very much. She is, however, adventurous and is the only bunny who goes into our kitchen. Nala is also the reason we had to put up a baby gate to block access to our stairs.

Like Simba, Nala likes to seek our approval when doing binkies, sprints and other bunny acrobatics. She also enjoys being near us and will sit close to the TV when we are watching. Nala has also tried to groom my hair a few times – in fairness, she's probably doing that because she thinks I look messy, but I appreciate that she seems to care about my appearance.

Ultimately, I enjoy that my bunnies show their affection differently, as it demonstrates they can be just as unique as humans! What do you think?

Photos: Megan Hilands



Charlie.



Simba.



Nala.

## Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

By Noah the Bunny with assistance from Shari Zagorski

Hello, my human and bunny friends!

Since the past few months have been quiet in the educational event department, I decided to share my musings about the need for more foster homes and rescue group ambassadors. I realize I am preaching to the bunny choir, but my little paws are twitching to help fellow bunnies in need.

Please allow me to share what sparked this line of thinking. One day several weeks ago, my human mom seemed more pensive than usual. She received a call from a friend about two bunnies in the neighborhood. The friend described the bunnies and then sent some photos and videos of them. One was pulling grass and running off with bunches in her mouth, as though she was nesting. Even I knew the danger as I saw them close to the street in the pictures. Mom sent messages and emails and made some calls but no rescue groups had room to take any bunnies in, no less two of them.

She told her friend to please talk to neighbors and friends to see if anyone could foster one or both. Mom even tried to figure out how we could fit two more bunnies in our house, separate from me and my bun-siblings. Human dad reminded mom that caring for four of us was keeping her plenty busy on top of her employment, which she says is to maintain our comfortable bunny lifestyle. Mom could not find anyone to foster the two bunnies and sadly told her friend that the rescue groups had no ability to help unless safe indoor housing could be found.

I see two facets to this problem. One is the increased number of bunnies being dumped and left to fend for themselves outside. The second issue is the lack

Photos: Shari Zagorski



Share fun bunny photos throughout the year.

of additional foster homes to provide shelter so bunnies can be rescued and brought to safety.



Post mushy bunny photos.

How can we bunnies and humans work together to find a solution? Okay, my whiskers and tail are twitching now.

Every one of you can be a rescue group ambassador!

Fellow bunnies, each of you can be a spokesbunny for rescue groups. You don't have to go to formal events at libraries or other places. Just be your adorable fluffy self and remind your humans to talk about you all the time and post photographs on social media or anywhere possible. You can pose for the camera and have your humans send the adorable photos for holiday greetings. Kind humans, please advocate for our rescue

*(Continued on page 12)*

# What Is the Best Part About Living With a Rabbit?

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Friends of LIRRG is a Facebook community of over 1,000 rabbit owners and rescue volunteers who live on Long Island. We asked our Friends: What is the best part about living with a rabbit? Here's what they had to say.

“The best part about living with a rabbit: the constantly adorable behavior. No matter what Oats does, he’s awe-inspiring while doing it.” – Denise B.

“The best part of living with Harold and Ethel is watching their love for each other. They really are each other’s person.” – Tara L.



Oats.



Harold and Ethel.

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Spokesbunny

*(Continued from page 11)*

groups and help educate other people on the attributes of our species. We are playful toddlers that never grow up, but we share all of the love in our hearts with our trusted human companions. Please remind people to adopt, not shop, and try fostering a bunny if possible. Together perhaps we can help save more bunnies in need.

Photos: Shari Zagorski



Pose for motivational bunny messages.



Send bunny messages for any reason.

## Turmeric

*(Continued from page 9)*

(which he is now), an entire apartment and three new people seemed a lot for him to handle on the first day. We left him to it, sitting quietly nearby and reading or talking softly while Truman took in his new surroundings.

He still had that look in his eyes, the one in which the world seemed heavy and hard, but it wasn't long before Truman put his nose into the hay and started munching. A little bit after that, he had

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Truman seems happy now, satisfied with his home.

some water, used the litter pan and started eating pellets.

Since then, Truman has forged ahead. He seems happy now, satisfied with his home and strongly connected to our family. He has his quirks, including using his paws like a cat would to feel things, thumping tiny thumps to show his displeasure, zooming around the apartment, and silently creeping up to us and licking our ankles in an alarming but endearing way. But that heaviness is gone and Truman knows he is home.

## Living With a Rabbit

(Continued from page 12)

“The best part of living with a rabbit is having a constant companion through everything life throws your way.”

– Mary O.

“The best part about living with a rabbit is to see how beautifully Dolly and Amber coexist. Watching nature is a beautiful thing.”

– Julie T.



Dolly.

“The best part about living with a rabbit, especially a bonded pair, is they teach you how to love unconditionally.”

– Danielle P.



Dylan and Sophie.

“The best part about living with a rabbit: Sunny’s cute face is the first thing I see every morning.”

– Carly H.



Sunny.

“Best thing about living with a rabbit: We can share snacks! My bunnies remind me to eat fruit and veggies.”

– Carly H.



Cloud.

“The best part of living with a rabbit is how much joy they bring.”

– Amy H.



Eugene.

“The best thing about living with a rabbit is the morning tramples of little feet and the furry face waking you up.”

– Jess L.



Enzo.

“The best part of living with a rabbit is having at least one family member who rarely complains and frequently loves to jump for joy.”

– Christina B.

“The adorable butts. And snapping bunny butt pictures when blessed with sploots. Oh, and of course the binkies!!”

– Lauren B.



Odin.

## Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

For Information on Adopting Any of Our Rabbits, Contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

### Dove

Unfortunately, the summer of 2023 was a record year for outdoor rabbit abandonments. We were called to a neighborhood where several rabbits were seen trying to survive. During week two, little Dove appeared on the scene. She was very young and quite fearful; it took a few days to convince her that we were there to bring her to safety.

She is a beautifully elegant 7- to 8-month-old sable seal point, tipping the scales at 3.5 pounds.

Dove is a very sweet little girl. She is rather demure, with a cautious approach to the world. She is an active girl and loves to run and does fantastic binkies! Her binky game is no surprise because she has the legs of a supermodel! Dove is spayed and would thrive in a calm, adult home. If you are interested in adopting Dove, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Dove.

### Pink

Pink is a sweet Himalayan boy with an affectionate demeanor. He does have a big energetic streak and likes to get in his exercise by running big laps and fluffing up his blankets before settling in for a nap on his IKEA doll bed. He's particularly fond of toys that can be tossed around, and loves all of his pellets, greens and hay. Pink is neutered and ready for adoption. If you are interested in adopting Pink, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside and, wanting to help this poor bunny, brought her back to his home. Once there, she surprised him with a litter of

babies. When we first saw Skye shortly after she had given birth, every bone in her small, frail body was visible and all movement was taxing for her in her emaciated state. Still, Skye was a wonderful mother to her babies and slowly but surely, she gained weight and became stronger. Today, Skye is completely healthy and enjoying some well-deserved free time now that her babies are grown up and off on their own adventures. Skye is looking for a quiet, calm human companion to match her sweet but reserved energy.



Pink.



Skye.

She is a gentle soul who will form a close bond with her family and enjoy receiving affection, provided she is given the opportunity to approach first. Skye has a particular affinity for her Oxbow woven grass toys and is content to stretch out and fall into a deep sleep for afternoon naps. If you are interested in adopting Skye, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

*(Continued on page 15)*

## RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

*(Continued from page 14)*

### Indigo

Indigo's puppy-like playfulness is as endearing as his ears are enormous! Indigo arrived at ACC showing signs of terrible neglect. When we pulled him from the shelter, the veterinary treatment he was receiving had already filled an 8-plus-page-long medical record in that short time. He was facing an abscess, severe sore hocks, skin conditions, parasites and more. Today, Indigo has settled in beautifully and gained a whole 3 pounds since he first arrived at the shelter (currently tipping the scales at a magnificent 9.5 pounds!). Now living on cushy, appropriate floor material, Indigo's once infected and painful hocks are growing in nice new fur to protect his wonderfully giant feet. Indigo has been neutered and is living in foster care. He hopes to soon meet his forever family who will enjoy playtime and cuddle time as much as he does! If you are interested in adopting Indigo, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Indigo.

### Lucy

Lucy was found outside in a dirt alleyway off a busy street where someone had cruelly abandoned her. Now adjusting to the safety of her foster home, Lucy's active and curious personality is shining through. She is a very young and playful rabbit who loves interacting with people and toys, and especially enjoys carrying her stacking cups to different spots around her pen and exercise space. If you are interested in adopting Lucy, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Lucy.

### Carmela

Carmela is a young medium-sized Rex rabbit. Her beautiful coat is mostly white with tan and black spots. She is a sweet rabbit who loves to have her soft nose petted. She also likes to explore her house, but her favorite thing is to relax with a nice soft blanket. Carmela is shy and would likely do best in an adult-only home. She would also likely make



Carmela.

a good partner for another rabbit. She has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange

a meeting with Carmela, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

## These Rabbits Are Available for Adoption From Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group has many rabbits available for adoption. Here are a few of the wonderful bunnies looking for homes. For more information about adoptions, please contact LIRRG at this email address: [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](mailto:information@longislandrabbitrescue.org)

### Diamond and Reggie

This is the bonded pair you've been dreaming of! Diamond and Reggie are an adorable, kid-friendly, bonded pair who enjoy doing everything together: eating meals, napping, playing, binkying and enjoying life. Diamond was rescued in early July 2020 by a local wildlife rescue. Nine rabbits were rescued that day, each hungry, overheated, and scared. Despite the horrible beginning to her life, Diamond is thriving – she is a precious gem. Reggie is the kind of rabbit who makes his presence known! He is playful and energetic. Reggie is an attentive rabbit and wants to be social with every volunteer he meets. His stunning blue eyes and skillful hops will have you hooked!



Diamond and Reggie.



Genevieve and Gideon.

### Genevieve and Gideon

Gideon and Genevieve are a delightful bonded bunny pair seeking a loving home. This young couple endured the elements and unknown dangers until they were rescued from the middle of a busy street on Christmas Day. Though their harrowing ordeal has ended, the strength of their bond is as powerful as ever. The two cannot bear to be apart but they each have their individual charms. Gideon is playful and energetic, with a love for cup-stacking and unstacking, exploring, and expressing his joy with

high-flying binkies. Genevieve complements Gideon's spark with her sweet and gentle warmth. She has plenty of affection to share with her human friends. Both she and Gideon love playing with their ball pits, tunnels and food puzzles. Their story of true love continues as they wait to meet their forever family. Gideon and Genevieve use their litter box reliably and are comfortable with school-age children. This pair would be great companions to humans who are new to rabbit care.



(Check Petfinder for Updated Listings;  
Some Rabbits Have Found Homes!)

## These Rabbits Are Available At Manhattan Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)



Goobie.



Buffy.



Chelsea.



Shortround.



Matilda.



Snowball.



Little One.



Trunks.



Runner.

*(Continued on page 19)*

## These Rabbits Are Available At Queens Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)



Buster.



Paige.



Cashmere.



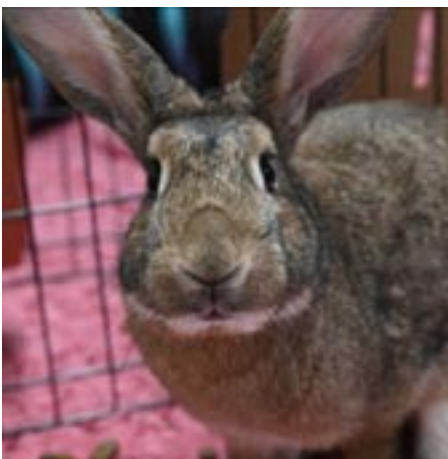
Moon Pie.



Elle.



Rascal.



Cinnabun.



Rascal Jr.



Cha Cha.

*(Continued on page 19)*

ADOPTIONS

**Rabbits at Queens NYC ACC**

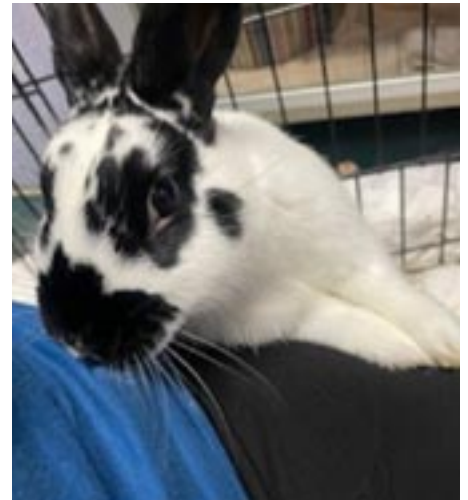
*(Continued from page 18)*



Genius.



Snow.



Lulu.



Pearl and Little Bunny.

**Rabbits at Manhattan NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 17)*



Lucy.

**Forever Homes Found!**

We are happy to report that Bugs, Confetti, Bob, Bernadette, Chamomile, Deacon, Emmy, Primo, Camille, Cinnamon, Gear, Zipper, UMBER, Floppy, Claude, Eden, Siggie, Estelle and Sweet Pea were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

## Head Tilt (Torticollis) in Rabbits: Don't Give Up

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

*University of Miami Biology Department  
House Rabbit Society of Miami*

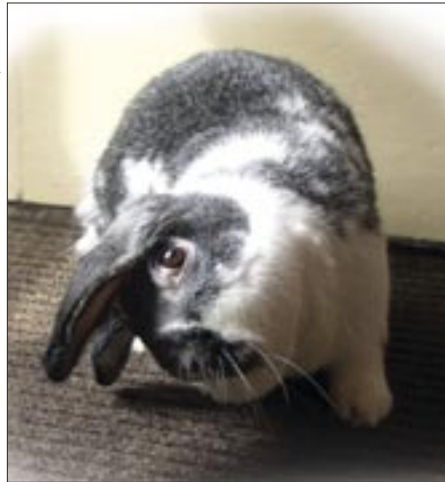
What is head tilt? The condition medically known as torticollis (Latin for “twisted neck”) and sometimes as “wryneck” makes a rabbit’s neck twist, causing the head to tilt sideways. Sometimes, torticollis is accompanied by nystagmus, a constant, involuntary movement of the eyeballs. The direction and nature of nystagmus can help your vet determine the cause of the torticollis in order to prescribe appropriate treatment.

Signs of torticollis may develop gradually or appear quite suddenly, but the result is the same: a bunny is walking around with her head on sideways.

In severe cases, the bunny may be so disoriented that he simply cannot walk, and spends much of the time either lying on his side in apparent paralysis, or rolling in a wild attempt to regain footing. Of course, the sight of a bunny in this condition is distressing to the human caregiver. But far too many a bunny suffering a treatable case of torticollis has succumbed to his caregivers’ well-meaning desire to “not let him suffer.”

In truth, head tilt is usually not only survivable, but treatable, though recovery may be gradual. Even a rabbit with a head tilt can live a happy, comfortable life as long as there is no pain, and the bunny enjoys eating, drinking, and being loved. I would consider euthanasia only as a last resort, if all attempts to treat the condition have failed, leaving the bunny in misery, unwilling to eat, drink or act normally at all. Remember that a permanently tilted head is not a symptom necessitating euthanasia! Many rabbits with their heads tilted at a jaunty angle are living completely happy lives, running and playing with all the vigor of their straight-headed bunny pals. The most important thing is to

Photo: Mary Ann Moir



Nancy Schreiber's beloved Hillary, RIP.

Photo: Natalie Reeves



Tank.

address the source of the head-tilt symptom. Once this is accomplished, improvement of the rabbit’s posture will usually follow gradually, with physical therapy and exercise.

It is not uncommon for torticollis to appear suddenly. As with almost any illness, the more rapidly the cause of the problem is diagnosed and treated, the greater the chance for full recovery. If you do not already have a good veterinarian who is experienced with rabbit medicine,

please use the House Rabbit Society Veterinarian Listings (<http://rabbit.org/vet-listings/>) to find one in your area.

### Causes of Torticollis

Torticollis is not a disease in and of itself. Rather, it is a sign of a problem with the rabbit’s balance system, components of which include the central nervous system (CNS, comprised of brain and spinal cord), the visual system, the vestibular apparatus in the inner ear, and even the pads of the feet, which tell the bunny he’s standing on terra firma. Thus, a rabbit exhibiting torticollis may have a problem with one or more of the balance components. Causes include (but are not limited to):

- middle- or inner-ear infection
- parasitic infection by *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* in the CNS
- parasitic infestation by the nematode (roundworm), *Baylisascaris procyonis*
- stroke
- abscess or tumor in the brain (i.e., intracranial abscess)
- head trauma

Successful treatment of the condition requires correct diagnosis of the problem’s ultimate cause.

### Ear Infection

One of the most common reasons for torticollis in rabbits is infection of the middle- or inner ear. The vestibular system, largely responsible for the sense of balance, is located in the auditory bulla of the skull, a large, hollow space near the base of each ear. Infection in this area can cause inflammation and swelling of the soft tissues, and this can interfere with proper function of the

*(Continued on page 21)*

**Head Tilt** (Continued from page 20)

vestibular apparatus. A very severe inner ear infection can actually cause the bulla to fill with hard, caseous (i.e., of a solid, cheeselike texture) pus.

Sometimes, pus is visible inside the ear, and the vet can take a sample for identification. This will reveal

- the type of bacteria most likely responsible for the infection
- the types of antibiotics most likely to kill the specific bacteria causing the infection

Although common pathogens associated with head tilt commonly include *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Pasteurella multocida*, there are many others that also can cause ear infections or abscesses. Each species/strain of bacteria has characteristic sensitivity to certain antibiotics and resistance to others. If possible, it is wise to identify bacteria so that the most effective antibiotic (or combination of antibiotics) can be administered.

Once the pathogen is identified, don't be surprised if your vet proposes to try a combination of antibiotics to kill the bacteria. A combination of antibiotics is often more effective at resolving an infection than a single one. It is especially important that your veterinarian be familiar with the specific needs of rabbits in terms of antibiotics, since some of them (e.g., any oral penicillins such as amoxicillin, and any lincosamide antibiotics such as clindamycin) can be deadly to rabbits, even if they can be used safely in other species.

Whatever the prescription, it is important to continue to administer the full dose for the full course your vet has prescribed, even if signs of disease improve. Stopping antibiotic therapy before an infection is fully controlled can select the most resistant bacteria, since they will be the

(Continued on page 22)

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Dizzy fka Thumpelina, during speed date at Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine, 2015.

Photo: Laura George



Dizzy fka Thumpelina, 2017, at Coming Home Animal Sanctuary. Note that her head is more upright.

**Head Tilt** (Continued from page 21)

last ones to die when exposed to antibiotics. If antibiotics are removed too soon, only the most resistant ones will be left to reproduce and repopulate your poor bunny's head!

Unfortunately, ear infections and head abscesses, in general, can be difficult to treat. They tend to become "walled off" and are poorly supplied with blood vessels. This makes actually getting the antibiotic where it's needed a challenge.

One antibiotic therapy that has proven very effective in many difficult torticollis cases caused by middle- or inner-ear infection is dual-acting penicillin injections. This combination of Penicillin-G (benzylpenicillin) (often combined with procaine, a local anesthetic) and Benzathine penicillin has resolved abscesses in some of our rabbits who had previously been deemed terminal and untreatable. *Pasteurella* tends to be susceptible to penicillins, but if the abscess is caused by *Pseudomonas* (or other penicillin-resistant bacterium), then penicillins will not be effective. A different antibiotic must be chosen.

While the antibiotics are doing their work, your vet might also prescribe other drugs to help restore balance and control the discomfort associated with vertigo. Meclizine can be helpful for controlling dizziness, though it will not work for every rabbit. If meclizine does not control the vertigo and nystagmus, your vet might prescribe a course of short-acting corticosteroids to reduce the inflammation interfering with the vestibular apparatus. We have found that these drugs can sometimes help restore normal posture even before the infection is fully cured. However, corticosteroids should be used with great caution in rabbits, as they tend to be more prone to the adverse side effects of these hormones than many other species.

It can sometimes take weeks or even months to completely cure an inner/

Photos: Austin Torres

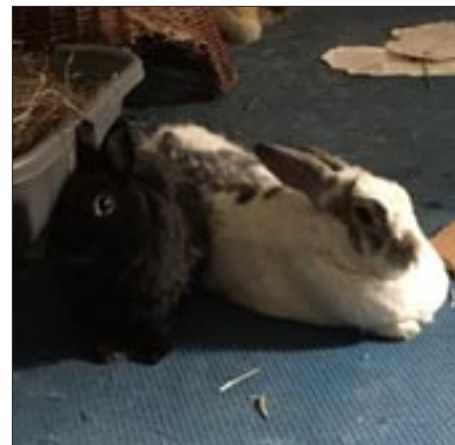


Jack eating pellets, about three years ago.

middle ear infection. This may sound like a long time, but if supportive care is offered, and the rabbit continues to eat and drink normally and is still interested in life, then he's not ready to give up. The condition is disorienting, but does not seem to be painful. The illness is temporary, if hard to watch, but it's worth a course of supportive care to see your bunny happy and running around again.

The results of patiently nursing a bunny through torticollis can be very rewarding. I have nursed several rabbits through torticollis apparently due to ear infection/abscess.

- Slooby's head tilt appeared very suddenly. After only 14 days on Baytril (enrofloxacin), he was completely upright, and the condition did not recur.
- Hamish and Jamie Blue both had severe torticollis when they came to us as rescues, so we're not sure about the onset of their signs.
- Hamish had a severe ear infection due to *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* sensitive to quinolone (e.g., enrofloxacin [Baytril], ciprofloxacin, marbofloxacin) and aminoglycoside (e.g., amikacin, gentamicin) antibiotics. He retained his tilt after the infection was resolved, but acupuncture, chiropractic treatments and massage helped immensely. Still, the single most important form of physical therapy – once he stopped rolling – was regular exercise in a spacious play area where



Jack with Jenny, snuggling together.

he could run in wider and wider circles, working himself up to straight lines.

- Jamie Blue's story is similar to Hamish's: She was so disoriented that she could not stand, and spent most of her early days with us rolling in a padded pen. She had severe nystagmus. It took eight months on antibiotics to completely clear her ears of the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (which happened to be resistant to all the antibiotics tested except ciprofloxacin and colistin. Though she retained a slight tilt all her life, her head would go almost straight as she ran around looking at all the interesting things to see during supervised outdoor play time.

**Encephalitozoon cuniculi**

Although there is little conclusive evidence that this microsporidian parasite – related to coccidia and to the protists that cause malaria and other serious diseases – is truly a causative agent of torticollis, anecdotal reports and circumstantial evidence suggest that – if only in some immunocompromised rabbits – *E. cuniculi* can generate torticollis and other nervous system disorders (hind limb paresis, general weakness, seizures).

Mature *E. cuniculi* inhabit the central nervous system and renal (kidney) tissues of their definitive hosts, and infected rabbits showing signs of head tilt can

(Continued on page 23)

## Head Tilt (Continued from page 22)

also be suffering from renal compromise due to this parasite.

At the moment, positive diagnosis of *E. cuniculi* infection can be made only upon necropsy, though histological results do not conclusively prove that the parasite was the cause of signs of illness.

A blood sample can be collected and sent to a laboratory to obtain a titer of *E. cuniculi* antibodies, produced by the rabbit in response to the presence of the parasite. However, a high titer does not necessarily indicate active disease; it says only that the rabbit has been exposed to the parasite at some time.

- A high titer may indicate that there is an active infection being battled by the immune system, or it could mean that the rabbit has the parasite under control.
- A low (or negative) titer may indicate little or no reaction to *E. cuniculi*, but this could mean either that the parasite is not present, or that the host's immune system is not mounting a response.

Some vets will send two blood samples, taken a couple of weeks apart, for a paired titer. If the titer is rising, one interpretation is that there is an active infection and the bunny is mounting a defense. If the titer is falling, it could mean that the immune system is "standing down" after defeating an infection...or it could mean that the immune system is failing to respond to the parasite. Bottom line: Antibody titers are not necessarily the final answer for proper diagnosis. Because of this, many veterinarians will simply treat for *E. cuniculi* and hope for improvement of signs.

Benzimidazole drugs (e.g., oxibendazole, fenbendazole; [albendazole is NOT recommended, as it has been associated with acute death due to bone marrow damage in rabbits and other species]) readily cross the blood-brain barrier to

inhibit the function of *E. cuniculi*'s tubulin, a protein essential for the parasite's feeding and infection of new host cells.

Ponazuril is a drug developed for treatment of equine protozoal myeloencephalitis – a horse disease caused by a parasite, *Sarcocystis neurona*, similar to *E. cuniculi*. Many veterinarians have been using this drug "off label" to treat *E. cuniculi* in rabbits, with anecdotal reports of success. I have been witness to one such case in our rescue bunny, Tilda. Tilda came to us with severe torticollis, but had no visible evidence of ear infection. We suspected that her tilt might be due to *E. cuniculi*. She was treated with fenbendazole and ponazuril concurrently for 30 days, and all traces of head tilt resolved completely, never to return.

## Baylisascaris procyonis

*Baylisascaris procyonis* is a roundworm (Nematoda) that ordinarily inhabits the intestine of raccoons. However, if other species (including humans) ingest eggs transmitted by raccoon waste, there is a possibility of "wrong host" infection. The larval worms migrate, not to the intestine, but to the kidneys and central nervous system, causing life-threatening neurological problems.

At present, there is no treatment and no cure.

## Physical Insult to the Central Nervous System

If head tilt is caused by a stroke or head trauma, the best one might hope to do is treat appropriately and hope for recovery over time. Treatment must be administered quickly at the onset of signs for best hope of a good prognosis.

If the problem is believed to be caused by an intracranial abscess, with no pus to culture, your vet might wish to try dual-acting penicillin (as described above).

## The Benefits of Physical Therapy

Once medical treatments are starting to do their work, your bunny can benefit from regular exercise and physical therapy. Allowing the bunny to run in a very large area, where he can move in straight lines (not small circles) can make a significant difference, and speed healing.

Physical Therapist Larry Gavlak shares his hints for physical therapy that helped his bunny (Boper) regain his balance. Larry has used the same technique on humans who had lost their sense of balance, and he simply translated and scaled it for his bunny!

([http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/tilt\\_therapy.html](http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/tilt_therapy.html))

## Don't Give Up

Many, many people have written to me, asking about head tilt. I'm happy to say that almost every one of them has written back to say that patience, loving husbandry and the proper medicine and physical therapy had their bunnies up and running again, even if it took weeks or even months. Everyone said it was worth the time and care.

Treatment of head tilt is not only possible, but often successful and rewarding. It might help to realize that rabbits do not mourn over what might have been, nor what the future might hold. If your rabbit is willing to survive the moment, is eating and drinking and showing affection and interest in life (however dizzily), he or she deserves a chance to heal. It is so rewarding to see a head tilt bunny race and frolic as before, even if it takes several months of treatment and love.

## Adoptable Rabbits

There are lots of adoptable rabbits available in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Westchester and Long Island.

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

On **Long Island**, contact [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](mailto:information@longislandrabbitrescue.org).

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the Brooklyn Animal Care Center at 2336 Linden Boulevard.

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Brooklyn can be found by going to: <http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an adoption search (for ACC inquiries about adoption/bunny dates, email [adopt@nycacc.org](mailto:adopt@nycacc.org)). Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only. Please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com) to make arrangements.

Many of our rabbits are living in foster homes and you can meet them as well. You also can arrange to foster a rabbit until he or she finds a permanent home. Contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to [rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://rabbitrescueandrehab.org), [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org) and the House Rabbit Society main site, [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

**If interested in volunteering for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).**

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Peter.

## Donations

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them by sending contributions to: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC Metro Rabbit, 333 Mamaroneck Ave., #363, White Plains, NY 10605 or <https://www.rabbitrescueandrehab.org/donate>

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).

## THUMP NOVEMBER 2024

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS  
[rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://rabbitrescueandrehab.org)

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

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Mary Ann Maier

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation in New York State. Our purpose is to rescue, rehabilitate and find permanent homes for abandoned, abused and neglected rabbits, and to educate the public on rabbit care through publications, phone consultations, home visits and presentations. This newsletter is published by RRR/NYC HRS, which is solely responsible for its content. We retain the right to edit all submissions, which become the property of the NYC Chapter and cannot be returned.



## Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

Here's our recommended vet list for the New York metropolitan area. **Please note that many clinics have multiple veterinarians, and our recommendations are for specific veterinarians in those clinics.** If you can't get an appointment with a recommended vet at one clinic, don't assume (no matter what you are told by the clinic) that other vets in the same clinic can help your rabbit. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the vets on this list, please contact Mary Cotter at (914) 643-0515. When you make an appointment with any of these vets, please tell them you were referred by us.

### Manhattan:

**Deborah Levison, DVM**  
Symphony Veterinary Center  
170 West 96th Street,  
New York, NY 10025  
(212) 866-8000

**Katherine Quesenberry, DVM**  
The Animal Medical Center  
510 East 62nd Street,  
New York, NY 10065  
(212) 838-7053, (212) 329-8622

**Alexandra Wilson, DVM**  
The Center for Avian and  
Exotic Medicine  
568 Columbus Avenue,  
New York, NY 10024  
(212) 501-8750

### Westchester County:

**Gil Stanzione, DVM**  
Dakota Veterinary Center  
381 Dobbs Ferry Road,  
White Plains, NY 10607  
(914) 421-0020

**Laurie Hess, DVM**  
Veterinary Center for Birds and Exotics  
709 Bedford Road,  
Bedford Hills, NY 10507  
(914) 864-1414

### Long Island:

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**  
**Erica Campbell, DVM**  
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital  
2056 Jericho Turnpike  
New Hyde Park, NY 11040  
(516) 877-7080

**Heidi Hoefler, DVM**  
Island Exotic Vet Care  
591 East Jericho Turnpike  
Huntington Station, NY 11746  
(631) 424-0300

**Ellen Leonhardt, DVM**  
Animal General of East Norwich  
6320 Northern Blvd  
East Norwich, NY 11732  
(516) 624-7500

**Maggie Camilleri, DVM**  
Paumanok Veterinary Hospital  
639 Route 112  
Patchogue, NY 11772  
(631) 475-1312

**Jeff Rose, DVM**  
Jefferson Animal Hospital  
606 Patchogue Rd. (Route 112)  
Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776  
(631) 473-0415

**Shachar Malka, DVM**  
Long Island Bird & Exotics  
Veterinary Clinic  
333 Great Neck Road  
Great Neck, NY 11021  
(516) 482-1101

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

**Alex McIe**  
Chapter Manager,  
NYC House Rabbit Society  
alexlmcie@gmail.com

**M.C. Basile**

**Mary Cotter**  
Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,  
mcotter64@gmail.com,  
(914) 643-0515

**Jeanine Callace**  
Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net

**Marcie Frishberg**

**Cindy Stutts**  
bygolyoly@yahoo.com,  
(646) 319-4766

**Laura George, DVM**

### Long Island:

**Nancy Schreiber**  
President, Long Island Rabbit Rescue  
Group, nschreibmd@gmail.com,  
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

**Mary Ann Maier**  
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group  
Volunteer, altitude8@yahoo.com,  
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**Donna Sheridan**  
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**Jennifer Saver, DVM**