

THE HAMP



NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS SEPTEMBER 2024

Rabbits and Alfalfa

By Rabbit Rescue and Rehab

Many of us have never purchased alfalfa despite having had rabbits for many years, and for good reason! Alfalfa is not a good dietary choice for the vast majority of adult, healthy rabbits, and it should never be considered interchangeable with timothy or other grass hays that must make up the majority of rabbits' diets.

So, what actually is alfalfa and how is it different from grass hays?

Even though alfalfa can be baled, bagged and bought in all the same ways as grass hays, it is actually a different plant entirely. Alfalfa is a member of the legume family, more similar to bean, pea or lentil plants than grasses like timothy. A quick comparison of the nutritional profiles between alfalfa and timothy hay (one of the most commonly fed grass hay varieties) shows just how different they really are.

(These values will vary based on location, season, and other environmental factors.)

Alfalfa contains substantially more protein than timothy, and is much more calorically dense. It also contains about three times the amount of calcium compared to timothy. Feeding alfalfa would exceed the nutrient requirements of the majority of rabbits, to detrimental effect. While excess calories and protein can lead to obesity and its associated health complications, excess calcium can predispose rabbits to bladder stones, sludge (a buildup of crystalline sediment in the bladder) and kidney problems. In alfalfa, the amount of much-needed fiber that keeps rabbits' digestive systems healthy falls short compared with timothy and other grass hays.

Visually, alfalfa has small, dense leaves and stalks that are generally rigid but soft with a lot of branching. Grass hays can have very long straight "stalks" and range from soft and flat to quite tough and sturdy. If you see fluffy seed heads at the ends of stalks, you know immediately that you're looking at a grass hay. Alfalfa

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	Alfalfa hay mature	Timothy hay full bloom
Crude protein, %	13.0	8.0
Crude fat, %	1.3	2.6
Fiber, %	20-28	31.4
Calcium, %	1.2	0.4
Phosphorus, %	0.2	0.2
Calories per pound	977	804

<https://www.purinamills.com/rabbit-food/education/detail/alfalfa-versus-timothy-hay-for-rabbits>

Victory! Petco Drops Plans to Sell Rabbits

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Petco cancelled plans to sell rabbits following an outcry from rabbit rescue groups and animal welfare organizations.

The retail chain said several weeks ago that it would start offering young rabbits for sale in certain markets in the South.

The August announcement set off a wave of criticism from rescue groups throughout the country, including Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. These groups called for a nationwide boycott of Petco, and petitions were circulated by Change.org.

The company backed down just a month later.

"I have great news!! I got a call last night from Petco corporate. They have agreed to NOT sell rabbits in their stores!!!!!! That's the shortest campaign that I've ever been part of." said one RRR member.

In announcing its policy reversal on Sept. 24, Petco said it was recommitting to an adoption-only policy for rabbits. It said it had completed a limited pilot involving the sale of fewer than 50 rabbits in select locations.

Petco said of its reversal, "The decision was made in line with the company's longstanding Think Adoption First philosophy – which encourages prospective pet parents to consider adopting a

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Petco

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homeless pet rather than purchasing one, whenever possible.”

The statement quoted a Petco executive, Benjamin Thiele-Long, who said the company concluded that “we can have a greater impact by refocusing our efforts into helping find homes for the thousands of rabbits already looking for loving families across the country.”

Petco said it would offer a 20%-off “Start Right” savings for pet parents who adopt a rabbit from any established rabbit rescue or adoption group through October. In addition, Petco said, “all remaining miniature rabbits that were made available for purchase at select Petco locations as part of the recent pilot will be offered for adoption.”

The company’s planned rabbit sales produced outrage among the rabbit-rescue community. “Shame on Petco! It has been confirmed that Petco will renege on the company’s agreement, made years ago, to not sell rabbits in their stores. This is devastating news that will lead to countless rabbits being bred as commodities,” Rabbit Rescue & Rehab said.

The proposed rabbit sales hadn’t included Petco stores in New York State because of a new pet store law here ([see Thump article here](#)).

But Rabbit Rescue & Rehab and others pointed out that the number of rabbit abandonments is at an all-time high here and elsewhere. There aren’t enough rabbit rescue groups or shelters that take rabbits, or rabbit-loving homes, to make a dent in the homeless rabbit population as it is.

Petco’s proposal had sparked anger and disbelief. “For a large corporation to ‘order’ rabbits from breeding facilities to be sold as ‘easy, caged animals’ will lead to the abandonment, neglect and death

of thousands of more rabbits each year. Further, we have been involved in campaigns to expose poor living conditions for animals in the stores,” RRR said.

RRR also called out Petco for selecting baby male rabbits for sale. “What will become of the female bunnies born at breeding facilities? All rabbits are fragile,

Petco’s proposal had sparked anger and disbelief.

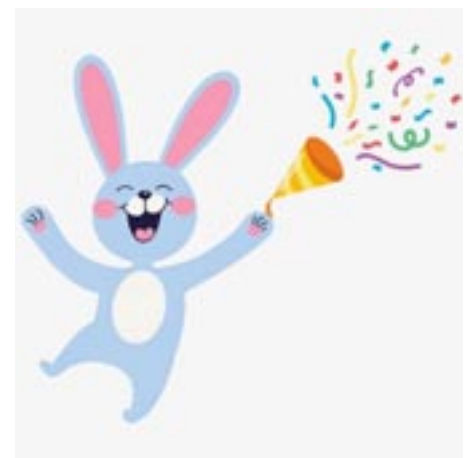
but babies are particularly vulnerable. Many won’t survive transport and many more will die sitting in cages in Petco stores. They won’t receive veterinary care. As they die, more will be ordered like mere stock to fill shelves.”

RRR voiced concern that purchasers would lack information about rabbit care: “Petco employees aren’t well-versed in proper rabbit care, so purchasers won’t be educated. That baby rabbit will soon become a hormonal teenager that will 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, lack of commitment, lack of veterinary funds, and indifference.”

To make matters worse, RRR said, the Petco stores involved are in the South, where the rate of animal abandonment and shelter euthanization is high. “There are few rabbit rescue groups in states like Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi and South Carolina. We all know someone who has rescued a dog from a facility in the South. While we have a huge problem in the Northeast, the conditions in Southern shelters can be brutal. We can speak for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, Long Island Rabbit Rescue

Group and other area rescue groups and shelters when we say that we can’t keep up with rabbits in need in our area – and we would never be able to help rabbits in other states.”

A statement from Rabbit Rescue & Rehab to Thump readers said, “Today, instead of asking you to help us fight against Petco, we ask that you take a moment to thank them. Please use the email addresses below, post a comment on their social-media platforms and/or make a call. We sincerely hope that Petco will one day cease selling all live animal species, as no companion animal should be subjected to the risks of impulsive purchases and neglect. Please do not hesitate to ask them to discontinue the sale of ALL animals in your note of gratitude on behalf of rabbits.”



Petco contact information:

Corporate headquarters 877-738-6742. Press 5 and when a staff member takes the call, ask to leave a message for CEO Joel Anderson or otherwise leave a general message.

Email:

To reach the CEO:
Joel.Anderson@Petco.com

To reach customer service:
customerrelations@Petco.com

Rabbits and Alfalfa

(Continued from page 1)

instead produces seeds in capsule-like pods late in the growing season. Alfalfa is often a richer and more vibrant green color when held next to most grass hays (though color can vary quite a lot), and the smell is different, too. Alfalfa has a more robust earthy and sweet smell, while grass hays generally smell a little milder and lighter, like a freshly cut lawn.

Who should be eating alfalfa?

Alfalfa is fed to rabbits who are very young, elderly, or ill/malnourished. The excess protein and calcium found in alfalfa supports bone and muscle growth in baby rabbits from as soon as they're ready to begin eating solid foods after birth up until about 6 months of age. During this time, nursing moms should be free to eat the alfalfa as well, to nutritionally support them during lactation up until the babies are weaned. Pictured to the right, you can see Avery's babies happily digging through some alfalfa at around 6 weeks of age (and you can read Avery's story in a previous issue of Thump). Alfalfa was the first food these babies wanted to try when they were ready to start exploring solid foods, even before they showed interest in their specially formulated "baby" pellets.

A rabbit that is aging or ill may struggle to get adequate calories to maintain its weight or to support its recovery. In these cases, your vet may recommend adding alfalfa to your rabbit's diet, generally in addition to what he or she is currently eating. Rabbits love alfalfa; it is sweeter and softer than a lot of grass hays, and rabbits almost universally see it as a special high-value treat. Pictured in column 3 is our rabbit Lilac, who has been battling an ear abscess for over a year now, and in 2023, underwent several significant diagnostics and procedures to remove other abscesses and attempt to correct complications from previous surgeries (you can read Lilac's story in Thump). Lilac is also an older rabbit, and has been doing amazingly

Photos: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Alfalfa.



Babies Paddington and Sapphire (and Pigeon, partially out of view) eating alfalfa mixed with timothy at 6 weeks old.



Timothy hay.



Lilac eats alfalfa to help maintain her weight.

well, to our great relief. An important permanent change to Lilac's diet has been the addition of alfalfa to keep her motivated to eat as much as possible and help maintain her weight.

I bought a bale of timothy hay from a feed store and it has some alfalfa in it! Should I feed it to my rabbits?

It depends. How much alfalfa is in your bale? A couple pieces scattered throughout an entire flake of hay shouldn't be a problem for most rabbits, and may even encourage foraging behaviors so that your rabbit will ultimately eat more grass hay. That said, rabbits with certain medical conditions should be a little more careful. For our RRR sanctuary

rabbits, we would pick out by hand any pieces of alfalfa before feeding the hay to rabbits with compromised kidney or liver function, or who otherwise may be particularly sensitive to the excess protein or calcium content.

If you purchase a bale of hay and find that it contains a visible amount of alfalfa without even picking through it, or that you've been given an alfalfa mix or even an entirely alfalfa bale by mistake, this should be returned or donated to your local rabbit (or large animal) rescue group that has an appropriate use for it. Don't feed this even temporarily to your rabbits or attempt to "use it up" before replacing with the correct hay. Beyond

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Rabbits and Alfalfa

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being nutritionally inappropriate, a sudden dietary change of this degree can cause gas and gastrointestinal upset.

This issue can be avoided entirely by purchasing hay through companies that cater specifically to small animals and produce a very consistent product. While high-quality baled hay can be a great option for homes with many rabbits or to be split among several rabbit homes, it's more likely to contain other plants, including alfalfa, and requires a closer eye for inspection before feeding.

What about pellets that contain alfalfa?

If you've perused pellet ingredient lists, you may have noticed that many of our recommended pellet brands do contain alfalfa meal. Some alfalfa in pellets is perfectly safe, though it should be noted that this is one reason we caution that excess consumption of pellets is unhealthy and can lead to obesity and illness. A carefully measured portion of pellets should be fed and close attention should be paid to the nutritional information of the chosen pellet brand. Choose a pellet with "at least 22% crude fiber, no more than approximately 14% protein, about 1% fat and about 1.0% calcium," according to Dr. Dana M. Krempels. While many pellets list alfalfa as the first ingredient, more and more, companies

are producing versions of their rabbit pellets with timothy as the first ingredient.

Most rabbits' favorite pellet is the original adult pellet by Science Selective. (That's the big "puffy" pellet you may have heard called a "cheese doodle" because of its shape.) Rabbits love this pellet and we do, too, because of its high appeal that makes for a great treat in place of something like sugary fruit. At 14% crude protein and alfalfa meal as its first ingredient, we prefer to feed these pellets as treats rather than as the bulk of most rabbits' meal pellets. They also make a great "test" pellet to see if your rabbit is feeling unwell; if a rabbit turns away a Selective pellet, you know something is not right. Science Selective's relatively new "House Rabbit" line is a good alternative that is made without alfalfa.

I've been instructed to feed alfalfa by my vet, so what's next?

If you find yourself the parent of a rabbit who requires alfalfa as part of his or her diet, you may now be wondering what to buy and where to purchase it. Most of the major small animal hay companies sell alfalfa, and some of our favorites are:

High Desert
Oxbow
Small Pet Select
Rabbit Hole Hay

Once you've acquired your alfalfa, think about a proper storage location. In our experience, alfalfa is even more sensitive than grass hay to moisture that causes mold growth. Alfalfa must be kept in a cool and dry environment with good airflow; just as with grass hay, you don't want to keep it in an airtight container. Stagnant air traps moisture and increases the risk of mold growth. Fabric bags or cardboard boxes are both more suitable than plastic containers, and elevating your box on a pallet or shelf helps to avoid contact with moisture.

It is always a good practice to inspect anything you feed to your rabbits. In the case of alfalfa, look for white, black or yellow mold spots and discard the entire batch if any is found. Alfalfa has a strong sweet and earthy smell and shouldn't smell moldy or musty, which could indicate that the alfalfa is spoiled.

We feed rabbits the alfalfa the same way we do grass hay, by placing alfalfa directly into the litter box atop a bed of grass hay to fill out the box and create a comfortable surface for the rabbit to stand on. Sometimes we'll place extra servings of alfalfa around the pen, but generally, rabbits like to eat their hay where they use the bathroom, and we find this is where they'll consume the most alfalfa, too. As always, daily litter box cleanings are a must to keep hay fresh and the rabbits' environment clean and sanitary.



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.

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

By **Brigitte Dix**
Director, Cottontail Cottage
Wildlife Rehab

A Call for Compassion: Why Glue Traps Should Be Banned in New York

As a wildlife rehabilitator, I've dedicated my life to caring for injured, orphaned and displaced animals. Every day, I witness the incredible resilience of wildlife, and each animal that comes through my doors tells a story of survival. However, there is a tragic fate that far too many animals face, one that can only be described as a slow and agonizing demise: the use of glue traps.

Glue traps are marketed as a simple solution for controlling rodent populations, but they come with devastating consequences for countless innocent animals. While their purpose may be to catch pests, the reality is far more heart-wrenching. When an animal steps onto a glue trap, it becomes ensnared, often struggling desperately to free itself. In this struggle, animals may injure themselves further, tear at their own flesh, or succumb to dehydration and starvation. The very idea that we, as a society, would allow such cruel devices to exist is a profound moral failing.

In New York, where urban wildlife coexists alongside human populations, the impact of glue traps extends beyond the intended targets. Birds, squirrels, raccoons and even beloved pets can fall victim to these sticky death traps. I have personally seen the aftermath of glue trap incidents: a young raccoon with its leg immobilized, a bird whose feathers are matted and torn, and a terrified rabbit that had been caught in a trap meant for mice. The pain and fear etched into their eyes haunt me long after they are in my care.

One of the most heartbreaking aspects of glue traps is the suffering they inflict on sentient beings. Animals are not nuisances; they are part of the intricate tapestry of our ecosystem. Each one plays

a role, and their lives matter. In our quest for convenience, we have lost sight of our responsibility to treat all living creatures with kindness and respect. The suffering caused by glue traps is a reminder of the disconnect between our actions and the lives we affect.

Moreover, glue traps are ineffective in the long run. While they may capture some rodents, they do not address the root causes of infestations. Instead of relying on inhumane methods, we should be focusing on better practices for rodent control, such as habitat modification, sanitation and humane trapping methods. Education and awareness can empower communities to seek solutions that do not involve suffering.

As a wildlife rehabber and animal lover, I urge the citizens of New York to advocate for the ban of glue traps. We have the power to create change, to send a message that compassion must guide our actions. By banning these traps, we can protect not only the wildlife that enriches our urban landscapes but also the integrity of our shared environment.

I invite you to join me in this important cause. Write to your local representatives, share your thoughts on social media, and educate your friends and family about the horrors of glue traps. Together,



Bird found stuck on a glue trap that was left in a garden to kill bugs.

we can pave the way for a more humane approach to wildlife management in New York.

As we move forward, let us choose empathy over indifference, compassion over cruelty. Every small action can lead to monumental change, and together, we can ensure that no more animals suffer the tragic fate of cruel glue traps. In doing so, we will not only save lives but also reaffirm our commitment to coexistence with the beautiful wildlife that surrounds us.

Please take important action to get torturous glue traps banned in New York state.

Even if you have done this before, please do it again. Don't forget to ask your friends and family to participate as well. Thank you.



Flying squirrel that was found stuck on a glue trap.

A Delicate Balance

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Many rabbit parents are unaware that everything else your rabbit ingests affects the quantity of hay that he eats. If he is eating too many greens and/or pellets, he will eat less hay. If he's not well hydrated, he will eat less hay.

Getting the quantities of "other" foods correct can be a very delicate balance, so your adjustments must be continual.

This can be particularly difficult when rabbits live together. It is not uncommon for one rabbit to eat most of the pellets or greens. Therefore, it requires a bona fide time commitment to keep track of each rabbit's hay consumption.

There is no easy way to gather this important information. You must spend the time to learn each rabbit's preferences and how much each is consuming.

We often use the size and quality of fecal output as another means to check on hay consumption. Unfortunately, if you have two rabbits that have similarly sized fecal output, this tool won't be useful.

Sometimes, having a second litter box can be helpful, but only if each rabbit tends to use one box almost exclusively. To be sure that you are well informed, commit your time to garnering everything about each rabbit's specific behaviors and preferences.

Photos: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Green, holding brother, Orange, in a headlock.

Avery and Waverley foraging together.



How to De-Fur Your Home

By Megan Hilands

You can usually find pet parents in the wild by looking closely for one tell-tale thing – stray fur. It seems to be almost a universal truth that pet hair will cling to just about anything, and I personally feel that my bunnies' fine, soft fur is especially good at sticking to places where I would prefer it not to be.

As nice as it is to admire our bunnies' lustrous coats, most of us will at some point wonder why bunny fur is so good at sticking to so much! As I type this, I see two strands of bunny fur on my computer keys. Earlier I noticed what I suppose you could term a literal dust bunny in the corner of my office. No matter how diligent I am with grooming my three bunnies, weather changes inevitably mean it's shedding season, and it's more than likely the amount of time I spend cleaning my home will increase as a result.

I find bunnies' fur to be quite different from hair of other animals. The fine hair combined with stray pieces of hay seems to form an especially destructive dust cocktail that wreaks havoc on most traditional vacuum cleaners. I think I've had to toss three away that broke from this mixture, even though I was diligent about cleaning the tubes and filters regularly.

While I'm certainly not an expert, I feel I have picked up a few tricks for de-furring my home. Here are my favorite strategies and products for keeping stray fur at bay.

Limit vacuum tubing

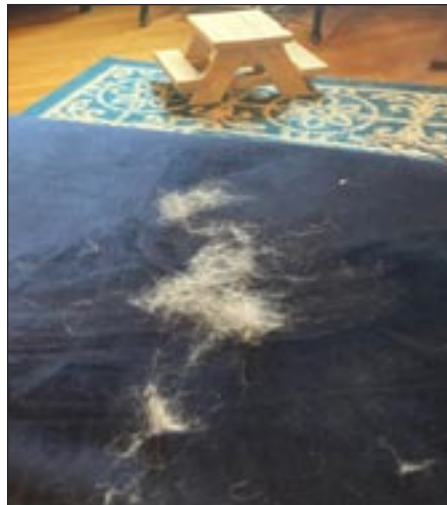
At this point of my life, I've tried most kinds of traditional vacuum cleaners on bunny fur, and most, frankly, come up short. I have purchased expensive pet hair vacuums in the past, only to find they eventually clog in some inaccessible part of the machine, rendering them almost useless. About a year ago I thought I'd figured out the vacuum puzzle and found a relatively cheap Bissell vacuum

Photos: Megan Hilands



Charlie loves to flop and nap on the carpet but he always leaves fur behind.

that could be completely disassembled. Each week or so I took apart the vacuum's tubing and scraped out excess hair with an old metal coat hanger. My love of this vacuum was short-lived, though, as it, too, eventually broke. I now believe traditional vacuums with hoses and tubing might have met their match in my bunnies, and the fewer tubes the better where bunnies are concerned.



Bunnies are cute but the fur they shed can be a little excessive.

Think outside the vacuum

At my wit's end, I randomly purchased a machine my mother had in my child-

hood – a sweeper. This seemed to answer some of my prayers. Nowadays you can find sweepers with some suction power, and most importantly they have NO tubing at all. I've had a re-chargeable Shark sweeper for a little over a year now, and frankly love it. While it's not as effective at removing bunny fur entirely as a traditional vacuum might be, the sweeper has a dust bin that can easily be removed and dumped after each use. It appears (at least so far) to be almost impossible to clog as well.

Get robotic

It would not surprise me if the inventor of the robotic vacuum had similar concerns about tubing as I do, as these clever machines are similarly tube-free (and thus almost clog-proof)! I have a Coredy robotic vacuum that I really enjoy for helping to keep the hair level down in my house. Similar to my sweeper, the vacuum has a dust bin that's easy to remove and empty. The robotic vacuum can also roam my home while I'm doing other things like working on my computer or watching TV (though it is a bit loud). I admit I find the robotic vacuum most effective when I use it with a remote

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The Big Move to Queens Animal Care Center

By Animal Care Centers of NYC

Over 200 animals were transported from the Brooklyn ACC to our new Ridgewood, Queens, location in July.

The end of July was quite a whirlwind for the staff at ACC and our friends at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Together, we moved 77 dogs, 111 cats, 33 rabbits and two guinea pigs to new and improved animal housing in sun-filled rooms at our newly constructed Queens ACC. It is at 1906 Flushing Ave. in Ridgewood.

In addition to the ASPCA, we must thank the community of fosterers who helped alleviate stress on 45 dogs during the transition from Brooklyn to Queens. The whole shelter made a smooth

transition thanks to the collaboration among so many caring New Yorkers and our partners. We could not be more grateful for all the support.

The Queens Animal Care Center is now open to the public for adoptions. Please [visit our website for directions and hours](#). To see all pets available for adoption, visit nycacc.app.

Click this link to check out the videos of [the big move](#).

Meanwhile, the city's shelters have had a difficult summer. Shelters across the country are struggling. Intake remains constant and adoptions continue to wane. Access to affordable vet care, the cost of housing, and even the cost of food have affected families' ability to keep their

pets. The financial pressures that lead people to surrender their pets are the same ones preventing potential adopters from adding a pet into their home.

In August, over 1,000 new animals came into Animal Care Centers of NYC. This is in addition to the 800 animals that were already in ACC's care at the start of the month. All of these animals require care and support from a dedicated team of shelter workers. In order to keep up with this demand, ACC is hiring additional staff, recruiting new volunteers, partnering with influencers to encourage adoptions and working with families to try to keep pets in their homes.

For ways you can help, visit nycacc.org.

De-Fur Your Home

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control, though – otherwise, my model seems to roam my home fairly randomly.

Get manual

I am not ashamed to admit I found one of my favorite cleaning tools from an Instagram ad. Given that I post about my bunnies quite a bit, it should probably come as no surprise that I receive a lot of targeted ads related to them. One

was for a carpet scraping device from a company called Uproot Clean. At first, I was quite skeptical a tool like this would be as effective as it claimed. “How is that thing different from a simple broom?” I thought. However, it was relatively inexpensive so I decided to gamble and order one. The gamble paid off, and I use the scraper directly on the carpet in my bunnies' pens every few days. They love it because it doesn't make as much noise as the sweeper or vacuum, and I love it as it gets most of the fur

out of the carpet without damaging any expensive mechanical equipment. I also find it oddly satisfying to get all of that gunk out of the carpet.

While my home is not exactly fur free, the levels of hair in my home have certainly gone down quite a bit with these tools, and I haven't broken a vacuum in quite some time now. Hopefully these methods and tools will help other bunny parents as well.



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 and we now have a huge problem on our hands, as one volunteer can't help any longer. 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

What Is Your Advice for First-Time Rabbit Owners?

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 to provide advice for first-time rabbit owners. Here's what they had to say.

“If it can be chewed, it will be chewed.”
– Denise B.

“1. Hay in the litter box is KEY. It keeps things cleaner! Trust me. 2. Don't underestimate the CHEW, as Denise said. 3. If the rabbit can be bonded, and it is possible financially and spacially, get two buns.”
– Kristin G.

“My advice: Find a rabbit-savvy vet and get established as a regular patient ASAP. Ask them what you should do if it is outside of their regular business hours and/or during holidays. Then write all of this information down so you can refer to it in an emergency when you might not be able to think straight.”
– Amy M.



Emily Vee's bunny Ellie.

“Aside from ‘choose adoption’ (obviously): Learn your bunny's normal behaviors so that you know as soon as they don't feel well.”
– Emily V.



Lauren Brown's foster bun Edge.

“Do your research before making the decision to adopt. Bunny care is involved and takes a routine, a routine your bunny will rely on. You will need to carve this time out on top of the time you spend with your bun socializing. They are social, routine-oriented creatures that have a lot of love to give. Make sure you're well informed!!”

Photo above: Adoptable Edge showing some leg, hoping to steal some hearts (both human and bunny alike).—Lauren B.

“Be part of a rabbit support group like LIRRG so you'll always have support, whether it's a question about behavior, medical advice or even just to share funny stories.”
– Jessica P.

“Adopt. Adopt. Adopt. Especially go in with an open mind. I went in with a specific bun in mind and fell in love with a totally different one. They all need a home; give them all a chance.”
– Victoria R.



Michelle Zemen's Sweet Pea and Bugsy.

“Bunnies do great in pairs. If you want to adopt a pair already bonded that is great. It takes time and patience to bond bunnies who don't know each other but it is worth it. They take care of each other. Your bunny will still love you, too. You will get double the love.”
– Michelle Z.

Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

By Noah the Bunny with assistance from Shari Zagorski

Hello my human friends!

My summer was very exciting! I was invited to participate as the Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group spokesbunny for a summer science camp. Center for Science Teaching and Learning (CSTL) in Rockville Centre held four camp sessions, and my job was to go once during each two-week session for an afternoon to educate and entertain the campers. Just to clarify, my job as a spokesbunny includes sitting calmly and looking adorable, allowing LIRRG human volunteers to pick me up comfortably and show off my fluffy feet, my floppy ear or sometimes even my incisors, and letting all of the children pet and touch me.

At my first visit to CSTL in early July, I met two groups of campers. The first had younger children ages 5 to 8 and the second group had 9- to 12-year-olds. We were invited into a classroom with tables and chairs and a nice cool air conditioner to keep me comfy. My human set up a pen with my litter box on my travel rug, but I preferred sitting on my special towel up on a table so I could more easily see what was happening in the room. With almost 40 children at each class, it was challenging to keep them all engaged, but the LIRRG volunteers enthusiastically talked to the youngsters about what domestic rabbits are like, what we eat, how to care for us, and why we are so much fun as family companions. There was plenty of time for questions and I was amazed at how curious some of the children were and the interesting questions they asked. As the campers were leaving, each had a chance to feel my soft fluffy coat.

For the next session two weeks later, we arrived at the same classroom. When the first group came in I noticed that some

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Photo: Shari Zagorski



Trying to help with social media.

Photo: CSTL



The Bunny is the Boss!

Photo: Shari Zagorski



Enjoying Amanda's cuddles.

Photo: Shari Zagorski



Everyone has a chance to touch me.

Photo: CSTL



Mom snuggles.

Photo: Shari Zagorski



Grandma teaching the campers.

Spokesbunny

(Continued from page 10)

of the youngsters smelled familiar. They were repeat campers from the first session and even remembered my name! What impressed me the most was that the repeat campers were able to remember so much of what the volunteers taught them from the prior session and eagerly shared information with the new children.

After I returned home from my first two afternoons at camp, my bun-bro Puff wanted to know what I was up to and he seemed curious about my experiences. I explained to him that a spokesbunny should have a sense of adventure, love humans of all sizes and scents, and stay calm even if surroundings are noisy or smell funny.

Puff must have been truly intrigued because he surprised our human mom one morning by appearing under the kitchen table. For context, in five years Puff had never set paws off his carpets and grippy mats, yet he actually crossed the smooth tiled floor to sit under that table! After he overcame the floor fear, Puff started hopping across the wood floors into the living room and found adventure on top of the sofa, under the chairs, and exploring every corner he could reach. My previously timid little bun-bro learned to find our human mom to beg for treats and he really blossomed as a bunny! Our human mom said that perhaps I'm a "bunfluencer" and suggested I should coach other timid bunnies to help them live their best bunny lives.

For the third camp session I invited Puff to join me and help do the presentation for the youngsters. With his new perspective on bunny living, Puff seemed excited about being a spokesbunny for the first time. My friends, Puff was absolutely amazing! He sat calmly in his pen and ate lots of hay and even entertained the children

Photo: Sarita Berkenblit



Puff's debut with the LIRRG volunteer team.

Photo: Tony Squicciarino



Showing Puff's spotted cottontail.

Photo: Shari Zagorski



Puff found that exploring is fun!

Photo: Tony Squicciarino



Puff getting comfortable at his first event as spokesbunny.

while he licked himself. With fur as white as snow, Puff spends a lot of time keeping himself fastidiously clean. He let our human mom hold him and show off his fluffy feet and spotted tail and the campers enjoyed learning about Puff's red eyes and albino traits. Puff was such a hit at camp that he joined me for the final week as well, to the delight of the repeat and new campers.

At all four camp visits, I was happy that my human Grandma joined me as a Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group volunteer and made sure I was always safe and that the children touched me gently. My friends Amy and Amanda also helped out at most of the visits, and although I'm told that they do it for the fluffy hugs, it's not clear who enjoys the cuddling more since they are so sweet to me.

I'm wondering what autumn adventures await me... and Puff?!?

Until next time, this is Spokesbunny Noah signing off!

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

For Information on Adopting Any of Our Rabbits, Contact 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.



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.

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.

(Continued on page 13)

RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 12)

Indigo

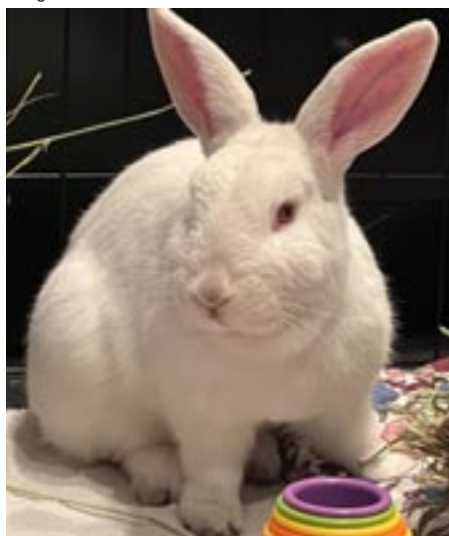
Indigo's puppy-like playfulness is as endearing as his ears are enormous! Indigo arrived at ACC showing signs of terrible neglect. When we pulled him from the shelter, the veterinary treatment he was receiving had already filled an 8-plus-page-long medical record in that short time. He was facing an 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.



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.



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.

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



Eden.

Eden

Serene and beautiful like the place after which she was named, Eden will capture your heart. She has been described as sweet, reserved and lovable. Once she's familiar with you, she'll be sure to entertain you with nightly binky performances. Eden is a foodie at heart, loving all kinds of food and enjoying her hay often. Perfect litter-box habits and a quiet demeanor make her a great roommate. She prefers to be in a home with lots of space for her to explore, and she'd prefer any children that share her space to be at least 13. Eden doesn't mind some noise and could handle living in a more urban area, but she does ask for slow movements whenever you're in her space. If Eden were a human: Marie Kondo.



Flora.

Flora

As her name might suggest, Flora is sweet and beautiful. One of the eight Botanical Babies born to rescue bun Andrena, Miss Flora is affectionate, curious and exploratory. She wants to know what her humans are up to at all times, and she's been known to try climbing out of her enclosure to say hello. Flora has blossomed into an extroverted, social bun, and as such, she'd thrive in an environment where she can receive a lot of attention. If Flora were a human: Rapunzel from Disney's "Tangled."



Ginkgo.

Ginkgo

Meet botanical babe Ginkgo, an Aries bun with super-soft fur who'll make you want to pet him for days. Ginkgo is a people-person, and he loves attention.

Give him a home full of love and playtime, and he'll thrive. If Ginkgo were a human: Keanu Reeves.

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

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



Mimi.



Lulu.



Spot.



Shortround.



Oreoman.



Matilda.



Twitch.



Racoon.



Goobie.

(Continued on page 16)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Manhattan NYC ACC

(Continued from page 15)



Elle.



Albie.



Trunks.



Baby Spot.



Stanley.



Beady.



Benito.



Lucy.

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



Snowball.



Bob.



Little Bunny.



Cinnabun (1).



Cinnabun (2).



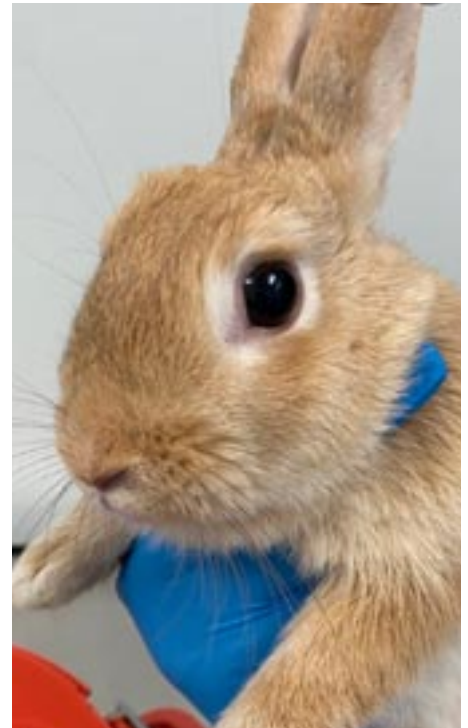
Cinnabun (3).



Julie.



Buffy.



Miffy.

(Continued on page 18)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Queens NYC ACC

(Continued from page 17)



Buster.



Chelsea.



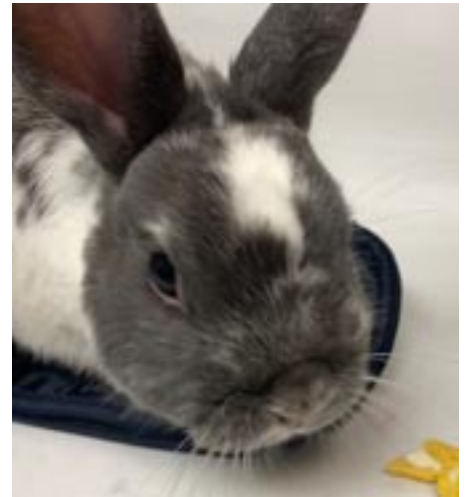
Rascal.



Pearl.



Rascal Jr.



Speckles.



Fluffy.



Eucalyptus.



Flan.

(Continued on page 19)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Queens NYC ACC

(Continued from page 18)



Honeybun.



Cashmere.



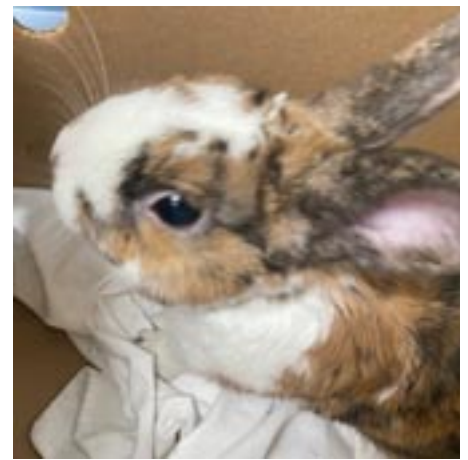
Zipper.



Pumpkin.



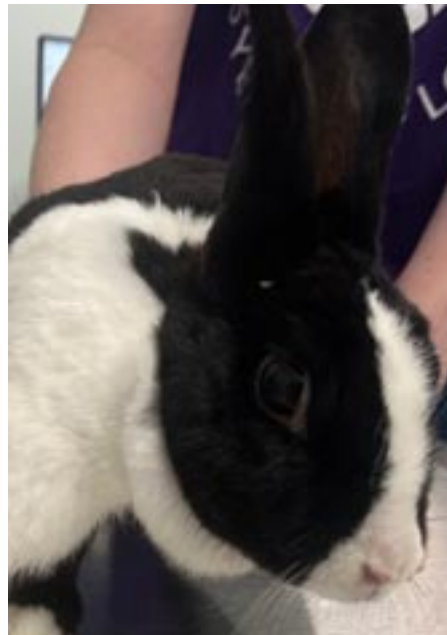
Pastel.



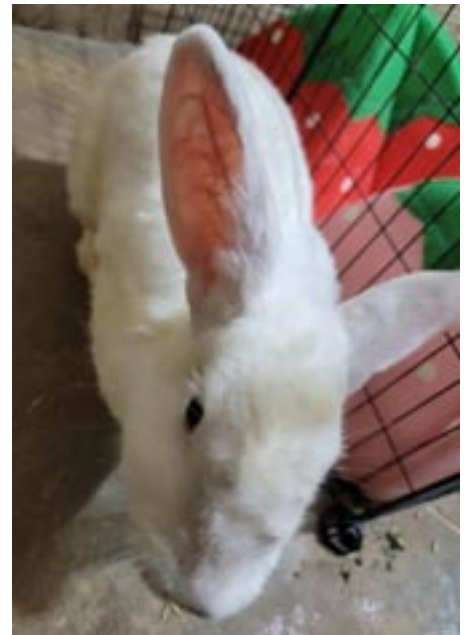
Cookie.



Little One.



Moon Pie.



Snow.

(Continued on page 20)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Queens NYC ACC

(Continued from page 19)



Sorbet.



Libo.



Umber.



Confetti.



Floppy.



Thumper.



Honey Buns.



Eve.

Forever Homes Found

We are happy to report that Nutmeg, Edison, Nina, Pedro, Hiphop, Paige, Squiggles, Casper, Sassafrass, Ms. Chungus, Oreo, Marshmallow, Ada, Edge and Buster B were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

What Do Rabbits See?

By Dana Krempels

Many house rabbit “parents” are curious to know what the world looks like to their lagomorph companion. Why does it seem difficult for my bunny to find food right in front of his face? Why is my bunny so easily startled or frightened if I enter the room holding a box or a grocery bag? Can my rabbit see colors?

The first thing to remember is that a rabbit’s visual system evolved under evolutionary pressures completely different from those which “designed” your eyes. We human primates, like our simian cousins, have forward-placed eyes which confer binocular vision and depth perception. This is essential for an animal originally designed to leap through the trees. Also, we have excellent color vision, a trait which helped our ancestors to find ripe fruit and tasty flowers in the forest canopy.

On the other hand, the rabbit visual system is designed – not for foraging and locomotion – but to quickly and effectively detect approaching predators from almost any direction. The eyes are placed high and to the sides of the skull, allowing the rabbit to see nearly 360 degrees, as well as far above her head. Rabbits tend to be farsighted, which explains why they may be frightened by an airplane flying overhead even if their human companion can barely see it. (It could be a hawk! Run!)

The price the bunny pays for this remarkable field of vision is a small blind spot directly in front of his face, but forward-placed nostrils and large, spooning ears compensate for that minor loss of predator-detecting space. For an animal to have binocular vision, the field of view of both eyes must overlap to some degree. The central blind spot in the rabbit’s field of view precludes a three-dimensional view of nearby objects. When your bunny cocks her head and



Tori.



Watson.

seems to be looking at you “sideways,” she is actually looking as straight at you as is possible for a bunny. As far as we know, she does not have a primate’s level of depth perception at such close range.

What about color vision? In general, vertebrates have two different types of photoreceptor cells in their retinas: rods and cones. Cones confer high resolution, and, if more than one cone type is present, they also confer the ability to perceive various wavelengths of light as distinct colors. For example, we humans have three different categories of cone –

(Continued on page 22)



Ms. Einstein.

What Do Rabbits See?

(Continued from page 21)

their maximum sensitivities in the red, blue and green regions of the spectrum. The differing sensitivities of each cone type enable us to perceive different (visible) wavelengths of light as the colors of the rainbow.

Behavioral studies published in the early 1970's indicate that rabbits do have a limited ability to discriminate between some wavelengths of light, perceiving them as different colors. Evidently, they can discriminate between the wavelengths we call "green" and "blue." Although rabbits may not perceive green and blue the way we do, they can tell them apart. This means they have limited color vision, probably conferred by two different categories of cone cells (blue and green).

The other type of photoreceptor, the rod cell, confers high visual sensitivity in low light situations, but relatively poor resolution (i.e., a "grainy" picture). The rabbit retina has a much higher ratio of rods to cones than the human retina has. Although a rabbit can see better than a human in low light conditions, his low light image has much poorer resolution (clarity) than the daytime images formed by your cone-rich, primate retina.

Now you may wonder: "Can my rabbit see me clearly, or am I just a big blur?" As you read this page, you are focusing on the letters with a very tiny part of your retina called the fovea. This is a minuscule, cone-shaped depression in the retina, lined wall-to-wall with high resolution cone cells.

Rabbits, too, have small retinal areas with more cones than rods. However, this area centralis is not indented, and it has far lower cone density than our fovea has. The image formed by the area centralis is relatively "grainy" compared to the one formed by your fovea, but it serves the rabbit well. Using this image, your voice, body movements and scent

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



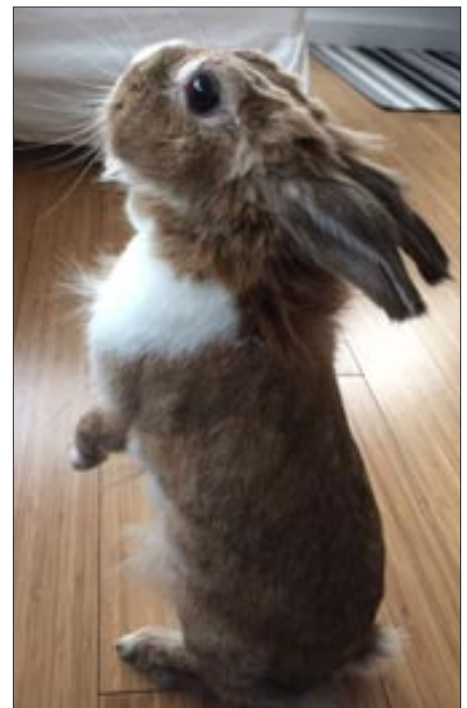
Buggles' head-tilted view is the result of *E. cuniculi*.



Teandra aka Little T.



Squeaky.



Emily.

as cues, your rabbit can recognize you (his favorite human) – as long as you're not carrying a scary box that completely changes your familiar shape!

Knowing a little more about how another creature sees the world allows us to

come one step closer to understanding its behavior – and modifying our own to make life happier for everyone. Remember that the next time your rabbit gazes at you with those deep, ancient eyes.

*Copyright – Dana Krempels, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer; Director of
Undergraduate Studies
Department of Biology,
University of Miami*

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.

On **Long Island**, contact 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). 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 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

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to rabbitrescueandrehab.org, www.longislandrabbitrescue.org and the House Rabbit Society main site, www.rabbit.org.

If interested in volunteering for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Lulabelle.

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.

THUMP SEPTEMBER 2024

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

Editor: Susan Lillo

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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
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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
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333 Great Neck Road
Great Neck, NY 11021
(516) 482-1101

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