



# THUMP



## NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS JULY 2022

### Now Is Critical Time to Push for Legislation To Get Rabbits Out of Pet Stores in the State

Rabbits out of New York’s pet stores? We are almost there.

The Puppy Mill Pipeline bill recently passed the assembly by a resounding vote of 134-15 after prior passage by the Senate. It took a long time to get to this point, and we are thrilled, but it’s not over yet.

The legislation would prohibit New York State’s pet stores from selling dogs, cats and rabbits. Pet stores would still be allowed to showcase animals available for adoption from shelters, rescue groups and other entities.

Here’s what happens next in the legislative process. For the bill to become state law, it must be delivered to Gov. Kathy Hochul by the end of 2022. She then has 10 days to sign the bill. Once signed, the law will take effect one year later. Therefore, time is of the essence. The quicker this all happens, the quicker the suffering will end.

**Action needed:**

– We all need to contact Gov. Hochul and politely ask her to sign this bill into law. You can contact her by using the link at the end of this paragraph. Please send an email and make a telephone call. If you

are so inclined, send her an old-fashioned note in the mail. Be sure to reference the legislation, S.1130 and A.4283. Don’t be afraid to get personal and plead for the governor’s support. Don’t forget to ask your friends and family to participate or do it for them. Countless rabbits, cats and dogs are counting on us. Here is the [Governor Contact Form](#).

– It is also important to know how your representative voted on the bill. If your representative voted NO, that person is not a friend to animals. Please remember that on Election Day.

There are many new laws that are required and dozens of current laws that need revision to protect animals in the state. We need our representatives to be empathetic to the plight of rabbits and all of the animals that call New York home. The pet-store law is really just the tip of the iceberg.

When New York City passed a similar law in 2016, we hoped that there would be an immediate and massive decline in the number of rabbits that were relinquished to the city shelters. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Since the rest of the state continued to sell rabbits

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Photo: Jane O'Wyatt

Goldie stays cool flanked by two frozen water bottles.

### Help Your Rabbits Beat the Heat

By House Rabbit Society

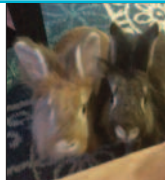
It’s especially important to keep an eye on your rabbit during the warm summer months. Rabbits don’t tolerate heat well and can die from being overheated. Each rabbit will tolerate heat differently, which is why it’s important to keep a close eye on your rabbit.

Heat exhaustion can be an issue for all rabbits, but the fuzzy, overweight, old and very young are at a higher risk. Temperatures above 77 degrees Fahrenheit

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## Rabbits Out of Pet Stores

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in pet stores, the rabbits continued to be dumped at the shelters, in the streets, in the woods and offered for free in ads and on social media. These are dangerous situations for our beloved companions. In the midst of our hopeful anticipation that the statewide ban will indeed be signed into law by Gov. Hochul, we worry that residents of New York will continue to buy rabbits from pet stores in Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. If New Yorkers purchase rabbits in those states and no longer want to care for them, they will be abandoning them in this state.

Cities and states across the country are fighting back against puppy/kitten/rabbit mills – large-scale commercial breeding facilities that maximize profits at the expense of the animals' well-being – by enacting retail pet-store sales bans. No such laws exist in our neighboring states. If you are a resident of Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts or Pennsylvania, please contact your state's elected officials and ask (or beg) them to take up this matter and sponsor a pet-store sales ban bill. You can also present them with a petition with signatures from citizens of your state in support of such a ban. The New York precedent can be used in your campaign.

If you need assistance, ask your local rabbit rescue organizations to help.

The need for this legislation is enormous. Rabbit Rescue & Rehab constantly receives individual relinquishment requests for rabbits, a number that excludes all large-scale surrenders, hoarding cases, and over-reproduction situations that may involve 100+ rabbits in each scenario.

A significant number of these surrender requests come from people who purchased a rabbit from a pet store on impulse, received a rabbit purchased from a pet store as a gift, or were given incorrect information (or no information) about

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## Heat

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are dangerous for rabbits, who don't tolerate heat well and can die from being overheated.

Recognize the signs of heat exhaustion so you can jump into action if needed:

- Fast, shallow breathing
- Wetness around the nose
- Listlessness
- Hot ears
- Tossing the head back while breathing rapidly from an open mouth

These symptoms indicate an emergency and you must take immediate action. Relocate your rabbit to a cool place, dampen the ears with cool water, give him/her cold water to drink, and call an experienced rabbit veterinarian for further instructions.

DO NOT submerge a rabbit in cold water, as this could cause the bunny to go into shock. Even if you don't have air conditioning at home, there are many ways you can try to keep your rabbit cool. Read our warm weather [FAQ](#) to learn more!

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Billi snuggles a frozen bottle. Depending on your bunny, a pillowcase may sometimes be necessary to cover the bottle.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Arnie and Lizzie stay cool on ceramic tiles.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



This marble slab helps Snowball beat the heat.

## I Failed at Fostering, but for Bennington and Me, It's Been a Success

By Jean Mellano

I can't believe I have another rabbit.

For about 12 years I had given two rescue rabbits (Snoopy and Budgie ) their forever home. Snoopy passed on his own terms in 2018 and then it was just Budgie and I. In early 2022, I had to make the tough decision to help Budgie cross the rainbow bridge.

Many friends asked if I was going to get another bunny. Since my health is not great and I am getting older, I was against getting any more rabbits. I also couldn't bear to see another pet gradually lose his quality of life over time. I was conflicted. Having a pet in the house allows me to wake up in the morning and have someone to talk to and nurture. Rabbits, with their funny personalities and crazy antics, never failed to make me smile. I certainly could use more laughter in my life.

Finally, with a lot of trepidation, and weighing the pros and cons, I made my decision. I was adamant that I would not adopt another rabbit.

A few months after Budgie died, my friend suggested we go to the town animal shelter and volunteer to walk some of the dogs. As fate would have it, there were two rabbits there. Each rabbit had been at the shelter for several months.

The shelter is not equipped to handle rabbits. However, the shelter manager has a huge heart and she took on the responsibilities of caring for the rabbits rather than leaving them on the street to fend for themselves. I offered to give her guidance on rabbit care.

I named the rabbits Chester and Bennington in memory of the lead singer for the rock band Linkin Park. Chester was not there the next time I was at the shelter and I was told he was adopted. Poor Bennington was the only rabbit at the shelter, surrounded by the sounds of barking dogs. He would flinch every

Photo: Jean Mellano



Bennington came into my life because we both needed each other.

time someone went to pet him. I realized his chances of being adopted weren't good since he wasn't used to humans. Every day, for almost three months I would visit Bennington and give him some supervised run time and socialization.

After Bennington was neutered, I offered to foster him for a few days so he could recover. I knew that I was walking on thin ice and I would most likely fail at being a foster parent. And that is exactly what happened.

After only a few days in my home, Bennington's personality really came

out. He gave me head binkies when I got up in the morning and did "zoomies" in his pen. How could I bring him back to the shelter? I was bonding with him. Now, when I lie on the floor with him, he will run up to sniff my face and his whiskers tickle my nose.

Bennington is also my alarm clock. At 5 a.m. every day, he starts rearranging items in his pen and clangs his food bowl.

I wasn't looking for him, but Bennington came into my life because we both needed each other. Things happen for a reason.

## Long Island Volunteers Rescue a Curvy Girl Bunny

By Denise Harwood-Giron

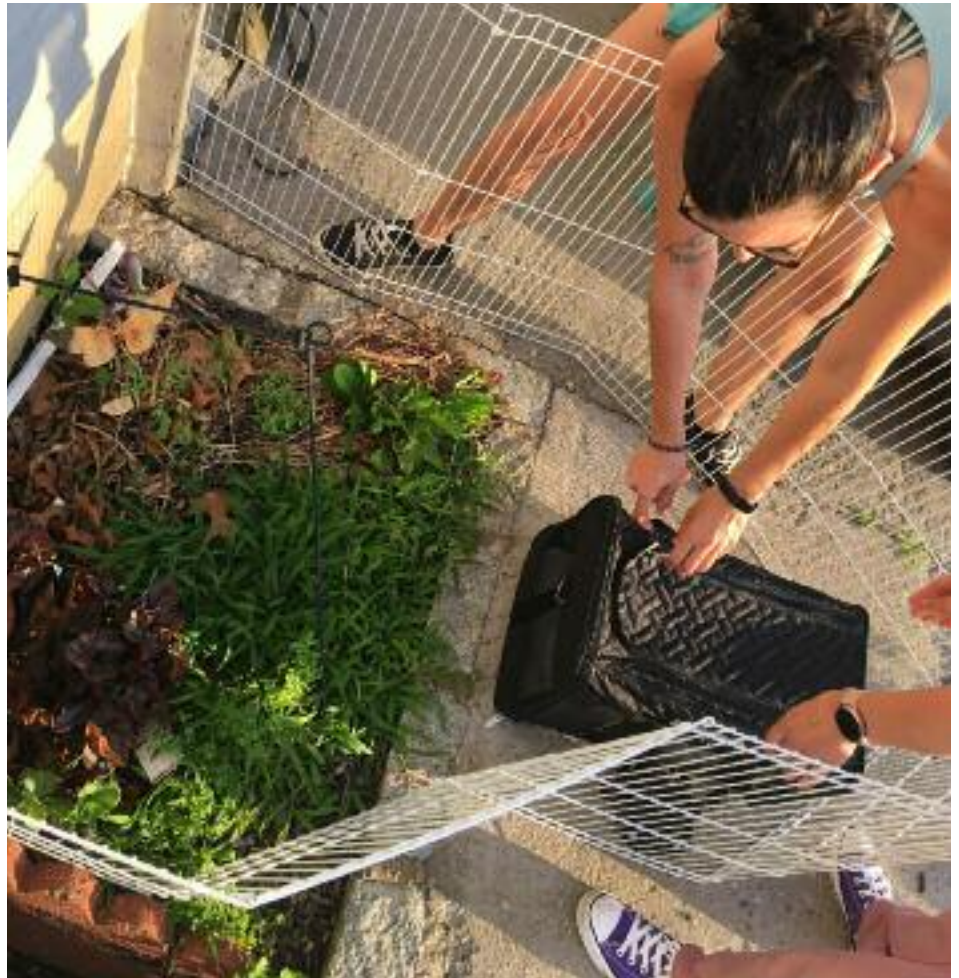
Just a few days before the Fourth of July a co-worker of former Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group volunteer Sharon Piccininni spotted a white rabbit in her yard in Shirley. She lived close to a busy highway and next to a huge fenced-in area that belonged to the water district.

Sharon decided to come out of “bunny retirement” and foster this big white rabbit if we could catch it. LIRRG volunteers sprang into action. Emily Viola, Jess Leggio, Jessica Petchonka and Sharon and I began hunting for the rabbit. We found the rabbit under the finder’s car, stretched out and looking comfortable.

While putting our X-pen barriers around the car, however, the rabbit ran under the steps of the house. We blocked that off and Jess crawled under to scoot the bunny over to Jessica, Emily and Sharon. They closed the X-pen around the rabbit and safely put her into the carrier.

Sharon is fostering the bunny, who was confirmed to be a female – curvy and adorable.

Photos: LIRRG volunteers



Volunteer Emily Viola zips a carrier with the bunny in it.



The lucky bunny is being fostered.



Peeking out of the carrier.



Resting indoors after her rescue.

## My Bunnies' Reactions to My Travel Schedule

By Megan Hilands

It's been a hard few years for humans, but companion animals have no doubt benefited from our increased time at home. I know that even if my bunnies are sometimes far more interested in chewing an applewood stick or their latest bunstruction project than sitting for pets, they value my presence and are happier when I'm around. Bunny people just know that their rabbits love them – whether it be that their buns binky when they see them, help out by grooming (nibbling?) their clothes, or simply put their legs out and flop in our presence.

I had not really appreciated how much my bunnies loved me until I left home in June for work for a few days. In the before times, overnight work trips were a common occurrence for me and my bunnies had quite interesting reactions when I left home. (They are, of course, left in the care of a rabbit-savvy guardian.) Here are a few of the most notable reactions.

### The aloof bunny

My solo bunny, Charlie, was definitely displeased with me after I spent a few nights away in June 2022. Charlie normally acts a bit like a puppy around me. In the evenings he'll follow me around as I go about my routine. He has even waited outside the bathroom for me.

That all changed when I came back home. Charlie did not visibly react when I returned from my trip and seemed as if he was trying to actively avoid me in favor of my husband (who had temporarily become his sole caregiver). It took a day or two for him to act more normally again. I suppose he eventually forgot why he was mad at me!

### The uber-affectionate bunny

I rarely leave my bunnies very long, but due to various commitments (an out-of-town wedding immediately followed by

an international work trip), I ended up being away from them for nearly two weeks in 2019.

I have never seen my bonded pair Simba and Nala act as enamored with me as they did when I arrived back home. They literally ran up over to me when I came in the door with my luggage and started sniffing and grooming my feet. I didn't even have treats for them!

### The taking-out-her-anger-on-her-sister bunny

My bunnies' reactions to my traveling are not limited to when I get back home. Bunnies are obviously quite sensitive animals and sometimes seem to have a sixth sense about when something in their environment is about to change. At times, I've only needed to start packing a suitcase to set off some kind of alarm bell with them.

A few years ago my husband and I were getting ready for vacation when Simba

and Nala randomly started fighting with each other. This wasn't just playful chasing but a big enough fight that we needed to separate and eventually rebond them after the trip. I guess this experience shows how much seemingly small things can set off a bunny's delicate temperament.

Have your bunnies ever acted differently around you when you had to leave home? I'm curious as to others' experiences!



Simba and Nala are fortunately together again.

Photos: Megan Hilands



Charlie preferred my husband Nick after I traveled for work.

## How My Angry Rabbit Won His Battle With the Hay Box

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Lenny waits for his next Zoom meeting after his noisy battle with a big box.

### By Samantha Rowan

I've always believed that Lenny, and the other companion animals I've had in my life, have substantial free will.

To me, this has always meant the ability to roam around the apartment, apart from the magical area below the bed where, as New Yorkers, we store spillover Costco merchandise. We also try not to have objects on the floor that mess with his routine or space.

An error in our home delivery of hay, however, challenged this for us a few weeks back. We suddenly had 20 more pounds of hay than we had room for and had to just store the excess in the floor

next to his cage. At first Lenny seemed to ignore it. Then the situation escalated.

The battle of the box started at almost the same time as a fairly important Zoom work call for my job as a journalist. I tried to ignore the six pounds of fury and destruction as I launched into my interview –

“How has –” I began.

I heard a massive rip, followed by a dig, dig, dig.

“I’m sorry, I couldn’t hear you,” my source said.

“It’s a little noisy here today. I’m sorry. Now back to –”

Another massive rip. I tried to glance down to see what Lenny was doing but couldn’t quite see him and or figure out why he was choosing now to tear up a box. He’s lived with us for nearly nine years and rarely ripped anything.

“Is that thunder?” My source asked.

“No –” I was interrupted by another giant rip. “It’s just my rabbit. He’s tearing up a box.”

My source broke into a giant smile. “I grew up with rabbits! Can I meet him?”

I beamed back. “Of course! Let me bring down my laptop, he doesn’t like to be picked up.”

“Most don’t!”

I brought the laptop down to floor level, where Lenny paused his destruction long enough to nose the screen. My source admired him and cooed a bit, and we went back to our call. After it was over, I closed my computer and went to sit near Lenny. He was still battling the box.

What did he want? And then I realized. He didn’t want the box there. I carried it to the other side of the apartment and somehow made room in the coat closet. And when I came back, Lenny was already lying down in the spot where it had been, fast asleep and exercising his free will to sleep wherever likes!

### Rabbits Out of Pet Stores

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rabbits from a pet store and only later learned that they were not prepared for the commitment or the expense. Upon learning about the special diet and care needs, cost, and commitment involved in rabbit care, many chose to abandon

their rabbits or relinquish them to a shelter rather than stepping up to provide the correct home and care for the rabbit that they purchased.

Should Gov. Hochul sign the bill, New York will be only the fifth state in the country with such a ban. That is a very low number. The pet-store lobby is large

and they have financial resources. We need to beat them by fighting hard for rabbits and the other affected animals. Our motivation is love and compassion.

Thanks to everyone who has fought and will continue to fight. The rabbits are counting on you.

# 9 REASONS TO KEEP YOUR BUNNY INDOORS

- 1)** Outdoor rabbits are exposed to extremes of weather: heat, cold, thunder, lightning, high winds (which can damage or destroy housing). Of these, heat is particularly dangerous: rabbits succumb very quickly to high temperatures, and need to be kept cool in the summer. In extremely cold weather, drinking water freezes and rabbits can become dehydrated.
- 2)** Outdoor rabbits are prone to insect/tick bites and fly strike (flies laying eggs on the rabbit and the larvae burrow into the rabbit's flesh).
- 3)** Outdoor rabbits are exposed to parasites and diseases carried by other animals; e.g., raccoons carry *Baylisascaris procyonis*, which rabbits can pick up on the ground and ingest (by grooming their feet), and which can then migrate to the rabbit's brain, where it is fatal.
- 4)** Outdoor rabbits often become the victims of poisoning from pesticides, herbicides, and/or fertilizers. Even if your neighbor uses them, rain will wash the chemicals onto your property. In many areas, ground and air spraying of toxic chemicals is used because of the threat of West Nile Virus.
- 5)** Outdoor rabbits often are often neglected or forgotten once the novelty wears off. Their food and water may become infested with insects, bacteria, or molds. They do not get the human interaction they need in order to develop trust, and often become extremely hard to handle as a result.
- 6)** Outdoor rabbits are "out of sight," if not "out of mind," and this makes it almost impossible for owners to become adequately familiar with their bunny's "normal behaviors." When you are not thoroughly familiar with your bunny's normal behaviors, it is difficult to recognize subtle signs of illness/injury in time to prevent emergency visits.
- 7)** Outdoor rabbits experience fear from unfamiliar sounds, from which they cannot escape (e.g., lawnmowers, leaf/snow blowers, tree chopping), smells, unfamiliar visitors (e.g. neighborhood children, passersby, etc.).
- 8)** Outdoor rabbits often become the victims of predators (dogs, cats, hawks, raccoons, snakes), and can suffer fatal heart attacks from even the approach of a predator.
- 9)** Outdoor rabbits (especially those housed in hutches) often get little or no exercise. Rabbits that are let loose in a yard for exercise face all of the above dangers, as well as road hazards and the risk of getting lost if they escape from the yard.



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[WWW.RABBITCARE.ORG](http://WWW.RABBITCARE.ORG)

## New RHDV2 Cases Reported in Hawaii, California and Canada

### By House Rabbit Society

The deadly, highly contagious Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease continues to spread in the U.S. and Canada.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture in early June reported new cases of domestic Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type 2 in San Luis Obispo County and Mendocino County.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency in mid-June reported two cases of RHDV2 in a household of domestic companion rabbits in Lambton County, Ontario.

Also in June, the Hawaii Department of Agriculture confirmed RHDV2 in a domestic rabbit in Kula, Maui. This is the first confirmed detection of RHDV2 in Hawaii.

RHDV2 is the first of the rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus strains to affect

both domestic and North American wild rabbit and hare species. The virus has an extremely high death rate and a very short incubation period. As many as 70% to 100% of rabbits exposed to the virus will die within 48 hours to 10 days after exposure. Rabbits who survive are carriers and can infect other rabbits for at least 42 days or longer as they continue to shed the virus.

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease was first identified in China in 1984. There have since been confirmed cases in 40 countries. Beginning in 2020, it was detected in wild and domesticated lagomorphs in the U.S. and Mexico.

The new strain, RHDV2, emerged in France in 2010, and quickly spread to other countries, where it became the dominant strain.

Indoor-only rabbits are at risk because 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.

Vaccinating your rabbits is the most important thing you can do to protect them from RHDV2. Talk with your veterinarian to learn more about vaccination. Forty-four states and Washington, D.C., have authorized use of 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.

## Fun Rabbit Facts

### By House Rabbit Society

Think you know a thing or two about rabbits? Check out the following fun facts about rabbits:

**Rabbits are not rodents.**

Rabbits are lagomorphs. Other lagomorphs include hares and pikas.

**Rabbits can live to be 16 years old.**

A well-cared-for house rabbit that has been spayed or neutered early in life has a life expectancy of 8 to 12 years. The oldest rabbit in the world is 16 (as of 2019), according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

**A rabbit's teeth never stop growing.**

Never ever. And if they are misaligned, it can cause problems.

**Rabbits often purr.**

Like cats, happy rabbits purr when content and relaxed. The sound is comes from teeth chattering softly.

**The gestation period of a rabbit is 28-31 days.**

A rabbit can get pregnant almost immediately following giving birth, so it is possible for a momma rabbit to have more babies within a month of her previous litter, while still nursing her first litter.

**The average rabbit litter size is five.**

While the average rabbit litter size may be five, there is a huge variation and can range from one to 14 kits.

**A group of wild rabbits is called a fluffle.**

Rabbits are very social creatures that always choose to live in groups when given the chance. A warren is the name



Photo: Jane O'Wyatt

Tina.

given to the place where a fluffle lives. Some people also call a group of rabbits a colony.

**A rabbit can have up to 800 progeny a year.**

A single pair of rabbits and their subsequent offspring can produce a

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## How to Litter Train a Rabbit

### By House Rabbit Society

By nature, rabbits choose one or a few places (usually corners) to deposit their urine and most of their poops. Urine-training involves little more than putting a litter box where the rabbit chooses to go. Poop-training requires only that you give them a place they know will not be invaded by others. Here are some suggestions to help you to train your rabbit to use the litter box.

### Does age make a difference?

Older rabbits are easier to train than younger rabbits, especially babies. A rabbit's attention span and knack for learning increase as they grow up. If you have a baby, stick with it. And if you are deciding whether to adopt an older rabbit, or litter train your older rabbit, go for it.

### Does spaying/neutering make a difference?

Yes. Spay or neuter is the most important part of litter-box training for rabbits. They will be much more likely to use the litter box (as well as much healthier and happier).

### What types of litter should I use?

It depends on what's available in your area and your rabbit. Keep in mind the

following as you choose your litter:

- Most rabbits spend lots of time in their litter boxes.
- Rabbits will always nibble some of the litter.
- Rabbit urine has a very strong odor.

House Rabbit Society recommends organic/natural litters, made from alfalfa, wheat grass, oat, citrus, paper, or compressed kiln-dried sawdust. For a listing of safe litters, see this [litter boxes and liver disease article](#).

Place a large amount of hay in each box. It is helpful to put several layers of newspaper or litter under the hay, which should fill the box. Change the hay frequently, since your rabbit will be eating it. This method helps encourage good litter habits as well as encourages hay consumption, since rabbits eat the hay and use the litter box at the same time.

### Cleaning and disposal

Clean litter boxes often, to encourage your rabbit to use them. Use white vinegar to rinse boxes out – for tough stains, let

vinegar soak awhile in the boxes. Clean up accidents outside of the pen with white vinegar or club soda.

Organic litters can later be used as mulch, composted at home, or added to municipal green waste collection. Rabbit poops can be directly applied to plants as fertilizer.

### What kinds of enclosures work best?

Use an enclosure large enough to contain a litter box, along with the bunny's food and water bowls and toys, and still allow enough room for the rabbit to stretch out. Place the box in the corner of the enclosure that they tend to go in. With a litter box in the enclosure, when the rabbit is confined to the enclosure when you're not home, enclosure time is learning time.

### Poops vs. urine

All rabbits will drop poops around their pen to mark it as their own. This is not a failure to be litter-trained. It is very important for your rabbits to identify

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### Fun Facts *(Continued from page 8)*

colony of over 1,300 rabbits within 18 months.

#### Rabbits are crepuscular.

This means they are most active at dusk and dawn, when other animals' vision is poor.

#### Rabbits have a blind spot in front of their nose.

Rabbits' eyes are located on the sides of their head, creating the blind spot directly in front of them.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Dashie and Pippi share two big low-entry litter boxes.

## Litter Train *(Continued from page 9)*

the pen as their property so that when they leave the cage for the bigger world of your house, they will distinguish the family's area from their own and avoid marking it. To encourage this, make the rabbit the king of their space. Try not to force them in or out of it – coax them. Do not do things to their pen that they don't like, or things to them that they don't like while in the pen. The trick to getting rabbits to keep their poops in the cage is to give them ownership of their pen – respect the pen as theirs.

### Can the rabbit have a running space?

Start with an enclosure and a small running space, and when your rabbit is well litter-box trained in that space, gradually give him more space. If you overwhelm rabbits with too much freedom before they're ready, they will forget where their box is and will lose their good habits.

### What's the actual method?

Start with a box in the enclosure, and one or more boxes in the rabbit's running space. If she urinates in a corner of the enclosure not containing the box, move the box to that corner until she gets it right. Don't worry if your bunny curls up in the litter box – this is natural.

Once she's using the box in the enclosure, open her door and allow her into her running space. Watch her go in and out on her own. If she heads to a corner where there's no box, or lifts up her tail in the characteristic fashion, cry "no." Gently herd her back to her enclosure and her litter box, or into one of the boxes in her room.

Be careful – you don't want to make the enclosure or the litter box seem like punishment. A handful of hay in the box makes it a more welcoming place. After she first uses the box, praise her and give her a treat.

Once she uses the box in her room a couple of times, her habits will be on

their way to forming. As she gets better trained in her first room, you can increase her space. Don't hurry this process. And if the area becomes very big, or includes a second floor, be sure to include more litter boxes, so as not to confuse her.

As she becomes more confident and uses fewer boxes, you can start to remove some of her early "training" boxes.

Get your rabbit into a daily routine and try not to vary it. Rabbits are very habitual and once a routine is established, they usually prefer to stick with it.



Photo: Jane O'Wyatt  
Sammy and Bullet in their litter box.

### How many litter boxes?

The more, the merrier, especially if your rabbit is a bit of a slow learner, or is especially obstinate about where she wants her box(es) to go. As her habits improve, you can decrease the number of litter boxes.

### Kicking litter out of the box

Some rabbits love to kick their litter out of the box. You can get a covered litter box (with a hood), experimenting with different litters, or a sifting cat pan with litter under the sifting tray and hay on top, to help solve this problem.

### What to do if your rabbit insists on using another spot?

Compromise. If your rabbit continually urinates in a spot where there is no litter box, put their box where they will use it, even if it means rearranging their cage or moving a table in the living room. It

is much easier to oblige them than to try to work against a determined bunny!

### What are the most common litter training mistakes?

First mistake: Letting the bunny out of the enclosure and not watching her with undivided attention. You can't watch TV or read the paper and expect to keep your mind on what the bunny is doing every second. If she urinates without being "caught" and herded to the litter box, she'll be that much slower in learning what she's supposed to do.

Second mistake: Being in a hurry. Bunnies take time. Perhaps that's one of their special gifts to us in this hectic world. They require that we take time out to sit and watch and do nothing else. Besides getting a well-trained bunny for your efforts, you also get a short period of time each day to watch one of the most charming little creatures on earth explore, skip for joy, and in general entertain you with her bunny-ness.

### What should I do if my rabbit starts dribbling all over her cage instead of using the litter box?

Dribbles usually indicate a bladder infection. Get your bunny to a rabbit-veterinarian who will probably put her on an antibiotic. If the dribbling stops, you know that that was the problem. (Watch out for antibiotics given by veterinarians not familiar with rabbits as companion animals!)

If the "dribbles" are more than dribbles, or if the antibiotic doesn't stop the problem, consider any factors that may be making your bunny feel insecure (new pet, house guests, change in location of cage, etc.), any of which can cause a bunny to mark her cage more enthusiastically.

(This article is excerpted from "How to Litter Train a Rabbit" on House Rabbit Society's website.)

## 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)



Raoul.

### Raoul

How can you look at Raoul's adorable face and NOT fall in love with him? His personality can be described as quirky, just like the unusual off-center black fur by his nose. Since he is a little shy, he will thrive in a calm, forever home with patient human(s). As he was only rescued in January 2022, Raoul is still a bit skittish, but his true personality is starting to shine through. When he feels comfortable in his environment, he just loves to get gentle pats on his head.

### Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Parmesan, Drew, Weston, Jessica, T.J., Emerald and Foxie were adopted since the last newsletter.



Swiss.

### Swiss

Swiss is one of six babies born from Friday's accidental litter in December 2021. A binkyng, baby bun, Swiss will hop and zoom his way right into your heart when he stops long enough to get some gentle pats on his head. He will even take a treat right out of your hand. And he now has begun to gently nudge his foster mom's legs when he is out for playtime, asking for human interaction. He is somewhat shy and a little nervous at first. He is independent, but will run to the front of his pen in the morning, begging for his morning snack! Swiss is a baby, so he is still trying to "find himself" in the world. Could that perfect world be yours?

Facts about Swiss:

- Birthday: 12/10/2021
- Excitable, energetic, gentle, and oh so sweet
- Cat friendly
- Once he settles down after some run time, he will happily flop and enjoy gentle petting



Eden.

### Eden

Abundant natural beauty with a magnificent dewlap seeks paradise, a place to call home. You supply the loving home and she'll delightfully binky her way straight into your heart. Eden is a large and lovely black and white lady bunny. She is as sweet as she is beautiful...and very ready to find her forever home.

Eden can be reserved when first approached, but will come around once you gain her trust. Once Eden warms up to you, she is full of spunky personality and love. She loves to explore, munch on hay, play with stacking cups, and chill in cool areas with her hind legs spread out. This darling will settle down for pets and gentle kisses. Eden would love a home with plenty of space to enjoy. This way, she can show you her lightning-fast binkies and zoomies! Loud noise doesn't bother her but she gets intimidated by big blankets/jackets or boxes in the air near her. She is also not a fan of things in her enclosure being moved quickly. Eden has a glorious dewlap and remarkably beautiful markings. She has top-notch litter-box habits and likes to keep her area clean.

## We Are Looking for Loving Homes:

### These Rabbits Are in Foster Care With Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Skye.

#### Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit and mom to the litter of “colorful” babies (Pink, Green, Blue, Purple and Orange) who all look just like her. 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.

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



Indigo.

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).

#### 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).



Ruby.

#### Ruby

After being brought in as a stray, this young NZW was cleverly named Rabbit Deniro during her stay at ACC, but this true gem of a bunny deserved a more fitting name. So we introduce you to Ruby, an incredibly beautiful, curious, friendly and affectionate large female rabbit. She is a magnificent companion, always interested in what her foster humans are doing and taking breaks between her binky sessions to sit beside them. Ruby deserves a forever home where she will receive lots of attention, time and space to exercise. Ruby is spayed and living in foster care. To inquire about adopting Ruby, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Blue and Purple

Blue and Purple are a young brother/sister pair of 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbits. Blue is the more outgoing of the two, and enjoys being wherever his people are at all times. He loves having his cheeks rubbed and will happily melt into the floor for long petting sessions. Purple is shyer than her brother, but is never far behind Blue and enjoys occasional head pets from quiet, gentle

*(Continued on page 13)*

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

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



Bogeyman.



Admiral Claude Vaughn Johnson.



Eileen.

*(Continued on page 14)*

### RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

*(Continued from page 12)*

people whom she trusts to respect her boundaries. Blue and Purple are a wonderful pair who are very affectionate with each other and spend a lot of their down time closely snuggled up together or grooming one another. Blue and Purple are neutered/spayed and living in foster care. To inquire about adopting Blue and Purple, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### 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



Purple and Blue.

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



Carmela.

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

**Rabbits at Manhattan ACC**

*(Continued from page 13)*



Orion.



Rabbit Pattinson.



Smoothie.



Truffles.



Sienna.

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



Artemis.



Bun.



Peter.



Sonny Boy.



Sherlock Holmes.



Wild Willow.



Toki.



Meo

*(Continued on page 16)*

ADOPTIONS

**Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 15)*



Midnight.



Bunbun.



Prince.



Skip.



Pablo.



Buni.



Sweeney Todd.



Fris Fresh.



Tubby.



## Runny Eyes, Runny Nose: What Do They Mean?

By Dana Krempels

One of the most frequent questions I am asked via the House Rabbit Society's online rabbit health link ([health@rabbit.org](mailto:health@rabbit.org)) is, "My rabbit's nose and eyes are running. Did he catch a cold from me?" Fortunately, your bunny cannot contract a human cold, as the viruses that cause such misery in humans are not contagious to rabbits. (Note that rabbits can serve as vectors for such viruses. If you have a cold, be sure to wash your hands before you pet your bunny, lest you inadvertently share your "germs" with the next person who pets the bunny!)

As many people are all too aware, however, rabbits can suffer from sneezing, runny nose, and runny eyes. The particular cause of this in your bunny may require a bit of detective work on the part of your rabbit-experienced veterinarian, but the following information may help.

### Upper Respiratory Infection ("Snuffles")

Rabbits can suffer from infections of the upper respiratory tract (the sinuses and other parts of the tract that are not actually parts of the lungs), and this is usually manifested as runny nose, runny eyes and sneezing. Unlike a human cold, which is caused by a virus, rabbit upper respiratory infections are caused by bacteria. The condition is commonly called "snuffles."

"Snuffles" is a nonspecific, "catch-all" term used to describe such symptoms without naming the specific cause. Until fairly recently, many veterinarians believed that "snuffles" was almost always caused by the bacterial pathogen *Pasteurella multocida*, commonly found in rabbits (though often without causing any problematic symptoms at all). More recent information suggests that many different species of bacteria can cause "snuffles." Some of the bacteria most commonly cultured from rabbit nasal discharge include *Pseudomonas*

*aeruginosa*, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*, though there are many others.

Because bacterial species (and their different strains) have characteristic sensitivity and resistance to various antibiotics, it is worth your investment to allow your veterinarian to positively identify the pathogen (i.e., disease-causing agent) your bunny has. The best way is via a culture and sensitivity test. This laboratory test is the only way to determine (1) the species of bacteria causing the infection and (2) which rabbit-safe antibiotics will be most effective at killing them.

If your rabbit is sneezing and/or shows signs of nasal and/or ocular discharge, especially if such discharge is whitish and thickened, she needs to be seen by a veterinarian and have a sample of nasal discharge taken and sent to a laboratory for culture and sensitivity testing. Once your vet receives the results of the C & S test, the vet will be better able to prescribe the particular antibiotic (or combination of antibiotics) that should be safest and most effective for your rabbit's infection.

Antibiotic therapy may need to be continued for several weeks, and it should always be continued for several days after symptoms have disappeared to ensure that as much of the bacterial population as possible has been killed. Follow your veterinarian's instructions carefully, and be sure to complete the full course of antibiotics, even if the symptoms go away before the medicine is gone. The reason for this? Even the most effective antibiotics might not kill some of the more resistant bacteria right away. Removing the drug too soon will leave only these particularly hardy individuals to be the progenitors of the new population of bacteria in your rabbit's sinuses, and these will be genetically better able to resist the

antibiotics you have been using (i.e., the population has evolved resistance to the antibiotics). Don't stop the antibiotics early, and don't put off treatment! A seemingly simple condition such as sneezing could develop into a potentially life-threatening problem, such as pneumonia or a systemic infection.

### Lower Respiratory Infection

A rabbit with pneumonia may show symptoms such as loud, raspy breathing, and may point his nose high in the air and stretch his neck in an attempt to get more oxygen. A rabbit in this condition is critically ill, and in need of oxygen therapy at your veterinarian's clinic. Experienced rabbit veterinarians will often nebulize such a bunny with oxygen as well as products to open the airways (e.g. aminophylline) and to loosen the mucus and infective material in the lungs (e.g., acetylcysteine solution, brand name Mucomyst). In some cases, the veterinarian will add appropriate antibiotics to the nebulization mix, depending on what a culture and sensitivity test indicates.

### Foreign Bodies

In some instances, a foreign object (such as a strand of hay, or a bit of food pellet) lodged in the nasal passage has been found to be the cause of runny nose and apparent chronic nasal infection. Sometimes such a foreign body is not visible without the aid of an endoscopic examination by your veterinarian. Once the item has been located, it is usually necessary to anesthetize the rabbit to allow removal of the object without danger.

In other cases, nasal polyps or other growths are found to be at the root of chronic upper respiratory symptoms. But surprisingly, one of the most common culprits causing chronic "snuffles" is undiagnosed dental problems.

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## Runny Eyes, Runny Nose

(Continued from page 17)

### Dental Disorders and Chronic Runny Eyes/Nose

Many people are surprised at how common dental problems are in rabbits, and even more puzzled to learn that such problems can cause symptoms such as runny eyes and nose. This is more often seen in older rabbits, as these have had time to develop molar spurs, or molar root problems that can cause inflammation or even develop into infections that spread to the sinuses.

In some older rabbits, gradual onset of metabolic bone disease results in loss of bone density (osteoporosis), especially in the already light bones of the skull. When this happens, the molar and/or incisor roots can very gradually be pushed into the thinning bone as the rabbit chews.

Because rabbit teeth grow continually, the visible portion of the teeth may appear entirely normal. It is only upon radiography that the root problem becomes visible as an intrusion of the tooth roots into the skull bones. This sometimes has been called “root overgrowth,” though the term is a bit of a misnomer. The roots are not actually “growing” into the skull, but are being pushed there.

A rabbit’s molars are located almost directly under the eye socket. Hence, molar root intrusion into the skull bones can cause occlusion (blockage) of the tear ducts, which run through the skull bones, close to the roof of the mouth, just above the tooth roots. A blocked tear duct will cause tearing and runny eyes, since the tears cannot flow through the ducts and into the back of the mouth, where the duct normally empties. A narrowed duct is more susceptible to becoming plugged with mucus or bacteria. If the duct is not completely occluded, it is often possible



for your vet to flush the ducts and help restore normal flow. Whatever discharge comes out the nose from the flush can be sent to a lab for culture and sensitivity testing.

When molar problems (spurs, root intrusion, abscess) develop, symptoms such as runny eyes can be a clue that something’s amiss. Severe molar root intrusion can also be the cause of retrobulbar abscesses (i.e., abscesses located behind the eye, inside the skull). In some cases, the root has been known to puncture through the bone of the eye socket and into the eyeball itself, causing an intraocular (i.e., inside the eyeball) infection. Such severe problems may require the expertise of a licensed veterinary ophthalmologist, and your own vet may be able to refer you to one in your area, if necessary.

Even incisor (front tooth) roots can be pushed backwards into the skull and occlude the tear ducts. Again, this is usually visible only with radiography. Although your vet may suggest that incisor or molar removal may solve the teary eye problem, there are no guarantees. If the chronic trauma to the area already has caused enough scarring in the bone, even tooth removal may not open a blocked duct. You and your vet should confer to decide whether complete tooth removal, aimed at restoring tear duct function, is worth the risk.

### Alleviating the Symptoms of Runny Eyes and Runny Nose

Runny eyes that cannot be permanently repaired via tear duct flush may cause skin burns and irritation where the caustic tears collect on the skin. It is usually helpful to apply warm washcloth compresses to the affected areas daily, to help soften the dried tears, and then gently rub them away. A fine-toothed, small flea comb may be useful in helping remove softened crusts from the fur.

One excellent way to help a bunny with chronic runny eyes is to allow him/her to choose a spayed/neutered mate from among those at your local rabbit rescuer’s foster home. Bonded bunnies spend a good deal of time grooming each other’s faces, and we know of some bonded bunnies who once had very irritated skin from constant tearing who then became completely symptom-free once they had mates to groom away those tears.

A very clogged nose is definitely a problem, as rabbits are obligate nasal breathers. You can help clear your bunny’s nose temporarily by gently suctioning with a pediatric ear syringe. Ask your vet about using a mild, pediatric antihistamine such as Benadryl to help shrink swollen nasal membranes. Together with a tear duct flush, which also helps flush the nasal passages, these treatments can be very effective at clearing the bunny’s breathing route.

Whatever the cause of your bunny’s problem, the sooner you allow your vet to perform the right tests and prescribe the proper treatment, the better your bunny will be able to breathe easily and be on the road to better health.

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*Copyright – Dana Krempels, Ph.D.  
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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](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com). On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at [nschreibmd@gmail.com](mailto:nschreibmd@gmail.com) or [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.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 with his stuffed toy.

## 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 JULY 2022

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

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

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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:

**M.C. Basile**  
Chapter Manager,  
NYC House Rabbit Society

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

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

**Alex McIe**  
alexlmcie@gmail.com

**Marcie Frishberg**

**Gabrielle LaManna**  
New Fairfield, CT,  
gabbysbunnies@yahoo.com,  
(203) 746-7548

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

**Monica Shepherd, 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,  
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

**Donna Sheridan**  
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group  
Volunteer, hpocus217@yahoo.com,  
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**