



**NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS SEPTEMBER 2021**

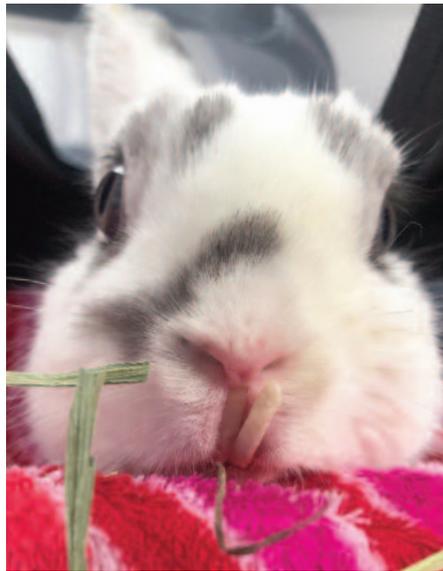
**RRR Needs Your Help with Surgery Costs For Young Newcomers Dari, Julian and Jolie**

2021 has been a daunting year filled with a shocking number of outdoor abandonments, surrender requests, and pleas for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab to pull rabbits from overflowing shelters. Emails and calls to take in singles, pairs or even one *or more* full litters have been a daily occurrence, amounting to hundreds of rabbits each month. Our team has worked tirelessly to help as many of these rabbits as we possibly can, and among those we have taken in are several rabbits in need of extensive and costly veterinary care.

Three of our recent newcomers are Dari, Julian and Jolie, all very young bunnies who have begun the process of diagnosis and treatment, and who will each have significant expenses for medications, surgeries and visits to veterinary specialists going forward. We are happy to introduce these three wonderful bunnies, and ask that you please consider making a donation to support their care.

**Dari**

RRR was contacted by Animal Care Centers of NYC about Dari, a very young dwarf rabbit, on the same day that she was surrendered to the shelter. We were told she was in urgent need of vet care



Dari.

for advanced dental disease, and we were shocked to see Dari's maloccluded incisors had grown far outside of her mouth, with one of her lower incisors pushing up into the bottom of her nose. Not once had she ever been taken to a vet before she was dumped at the shelter. When Dari ate, she struggled to scoop pellets into her mouth around the sides of her incisors, and with each bite she tossed her head in the air as that one

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**When I Bring My Rabbit to Work, Lenny Dominates Our Zoom Calls**

By Samantha Rowan

I've never physically brought my rabbit to my job but anyone who has worked with me will tell you that Lenny always looms large in my mind. His presence was always felt in story meetings in the office prior to the pandemic, usually when I'd ask the reporters on my magazine

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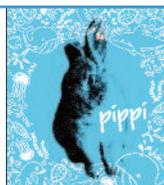


Lenny.



**How to Create A Safe, Indoor 'Home Base' For Your Bunny**

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## RRR Needs Your Help

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bottom tooth hit her nose when she closed her mouth.

We agreed to take Dari into our care and had her incisors trimmed that same day, giving her immediate but unfortunately temporary relief. Dari's incisors are so badly maloccluded that there will be no chance of them aligning better as they grow, even with a proper diet. She will need to have her incisors fully removed in order to avoid regularly trimming them under anesthesia for the rest of her life. Rabbits with severe malocclusion do very well without incisors. Dari will need her greens cut into small pieces, but will otherwise live a completely normal life after removal of her incisors!



Dari and her twigloos.

Dari is a wonderfully sweet little rabbit weighing around three pounds. She enjoys all of her toys that can be pushed around, but has a particular affinity for twigloos. We've given her quite a collection of them after seeing how much joy it brings her to be under them, running around them and hopping up and down from them (Dari's bunny parkour). She especially likes to flip them upside down and then hang out inside them (we like to call them her twig "boats" in this orientation). It has been a huge relief to see Dari's growing excitement for mealtimes now that she can eat without discomfort, and we look forward to providing her with a permanent solution so she'll never experience that discomfort again.

### Julian

Julian came to us as a baby with minimal use of his back right leg, which drags behind him and rests at strange angles relative to his body. X-rays show



Julian.

that poor Julian suffered significant trauma to this leg, and it is horrendous to think of the pain he must have been in without any veterinary attention or pain relief.

Julian's X-ray showed two significant fractures; one in his pelvis, and the other in the growth plate of his knee. The fracture in Julian's pelvis damaged the acetabulum (the hip socket) badly enough that, though it was healed by the time we met him, his femur no longer has a socket to fit into. His broken knee had healed as well, but first had rotated about 90 degrees. The combined effect is that Julian's leg has little stability and swigs loosely from the hip, and his foot is pointed perpendicular to his body.

Because of the severity of Julian's injuries, we are left without the option to surgically reconstruct a joint to provide stability at the hip. Julian's vets have therefore recommended amputation. While the surgery itself is a significant and daunting procedure, rabbits often do extremely well on three legs in a home environment tailored to their needs. Well-padded floor materials help to prevent sore hocks from developing when bearing additional weight on a single back foot. Ensuring that the whole environment is ground-level so the bunny cannot jump up or down off of furniture or other objects also protects against injury.

Considering the awful trauma and pain Julian has been through in his young life – we suspect he came to us at less than four months old – it is remarkable that he is such an outgoing and personable, puppy-like little bunny. He loves to play stacking cup games in his foster home, and he is trusting enough to fall sound asleep flopped in the middle of a room with his whole belly showing.

### Jolie

When we took in Jolie, she was suffering from an undiagnosed and rapidly worsening eye condition. Her right eye was enlarged, bulging and opaque from corneal edema. Her eyelids couldn't quite close over the size of her eye, and so the threat of further trauma to the eye and inability for it to stay lubricated were also concerns. At her first vet exam, it was determined that Jolie has glaucoma and that she had likely already lost all of her vision in that eye because of how high the pressure was. We were referred to a veterinary ophthalmologist to determine the cause, identify whether any related conditions were present, and to create a plan for treatment.



Jolie.

At Jolie's specialist visit, the ophthalmologist determined that her glaucoma is congenital; a malformation in the angle formed by the cornea and iris prevents fluid from draining properly and causes intraocular pressure to increase. And sadly, he confirmed that she is already completely blind in that eye.

Jolie is a very young rabbit; she is still growing! Rabbits with congenital

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## RRR Needs Your Help

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glaucoma generally show symptoms before they're two, and can begin showing symptoms at just a few months old. Jolie was prescribed twice-daily medications to reduce the pressure, treat the edema, and lubricate the eye in order to stabilize her condition. The ophthalmologist gave two options for her long-term treatment. The first is enucleation, to remove her eye completely. The other is an intraocular injection that has the potential to stabilize her condition long-term and circumvent the need for the major enucleation surgery.

Her current medications are doing a great job of bringing her relief and temporarily managing the condition, so she will remain on them until her spay in October, and after her recovery we will revisit the

ophthalmologist to make a determination on her glaucoma treatment.

Just like Dari and Julian, Jolie is an exceptionally outgoing and personable rabbit who loves people and playtime. She is extremely athletic; her home base is made up of 48-inch-tall pens following an escape attempt out of a shorter one. She eats a truly incredible amount of hay every day, which we absolutely love to see, and while we maintain constant awareness of her inability to see on her right side so that we don't startle her, you would never know about her vision loss by watching her active and confident personality.

Dari, Julian and Jolie all have significant future surgery costs, as well as costs for their medications, exams and for all three to be spayed/neutered. RRR relies entirely on donations to cover all of our

veterinary expenses and to be able to rescue abandoned rabbits, especially to help those who are injured and sick, and who require extensive veterinary care and treatment.

Please consider donating toward our veterinary expenses for Dari, Julian and Jolie, to help give them the relief and comfort they deserve after the difficult and painful starts that they have had. Donations can be made to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab through [Paypal](#).

We extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters who make it possible for us to help rabbits in need.

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

## Lenny

*(Continued from page 1)*

what they thought Lenny was doing at that exact moment or share another picture of Lenny sleeping, eating, lounging, sniffing something or knocking over some of our son's toys when they were trying to tell me about whatever story they were working on.

When the pandemic happened and I was suddenly spending a lot more time with Lenny, I think it's fair to say that this discourse (which some would call inane prattle) increased significantly. Team meetings now included me taking my laptop down to floor level and angling the screen so that the reporters could see Lenny's bemused, fluffy face.

"Say good morning to Lenny!" I'd say. "Do you see how nicely he tore up the notes that I dropped on the floor? I think he doesn't like that story I was working on." Or, "Did I tell you that Lenny has been spending a few hours every day underneath the sofa? I think he's working on a special report or project. He will tell me when he's ready."

I did notice, however, that both the team and the rabbit often had the same indulgent, patient expressions on their faces.

I got a taste of my own medicine earlier this year when I gave notice at that job and prepared to move on to another opportunity at a different company. As is tradition at my old shop, outgoing editors will receive what we called a goodbye magazine, a one- or two-page effort that looked like our publication but was focused on the person who was leaving.

Apparently, my intense love for and ability to project things onto my rabbit did not go unnoticed. Here is a snapshot of some of the comments in the goodbye magazine, which were all centered on my successor, Lenny!

– Despite Lenny being a rabbit, the pet possesses certain qualifications that Rowan showed as a leader – tough to crack, determined to get the story right and loves a good snack.

– Lenny's big ears make it easy for him to hear everything that is going on, a necessary qualification once back in the office.

– Lenny is said to have secretly been developing his skills over the past 15 months with Rowan working from home.

– While to the naked eye it seemed like Lenny was always sleeping, he was busy memorizing the style guide or trying to figure out where the next Christmas party will be.

The goodbye newsletter was unveiled at my goodbye Zoom call and I laughed so hard that my stomach hurt, which was a nice feeling and a rare one given everything that is going on. The hilarious part to me was that I actually said almost everything that they'd put into the stories, and included some of the many pictures of Lenny that I'd send them over the years. In fact, there had apparently been a small debate over which snaps made Lenny look the best!

I started at my new company in July and have already introduced Lenny via Zoom amid widespread admiration (he is a very handsome, fluffy rabbit), and have started to share the gospel of bunnies to my co-workers. Sooner or later I think they'll start to appreciate what I already know: that a rabbit is a perfect pet!

# What Multi-Pet Homes Can Do to Help Protect Rabbits As Deadly Virus Spreads

By House Rabbit Society

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type-2 is a highly contagious and deadly disease affecting both wild and domestic rabbits. In the 2020-2021 North American outbreak, officials report a death rate of about 90%, which is why strict precautions must be taken, including vaccination. Even indoor-only rabbits are at risk.

If you have other pets in your house, take these precautions:

- Keep cats indoors so that they can't bring in the virus from outside.
- Walk dogs on a leash to ensure they don't directly interact with wild rabbits (alive or deceased). Consider having dogs wear booties outside and washing their paws off when they come inside.
- Designate separate areas in your home for dogs and block off their access to areas with rabbits.
- Use a monthly flea treatment on pets in outbreak areas and for any pets in the

home that go outside. Never use Frontline on rabbits.

- Don't feed cats or dogs raw or freeze-dried rabbit meat. If there is virus in the rabbit meat, it could be spread to pet or wild rabbits by the dog or cat poop.

RHDV2 can also be transferred to indoor-only rabbits by people (on their shoes and clothes), and by insects.

As of now, there have been confirmed cases in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Wyoming, as well as in Canada and Mexico. Previously, in 2018-2020, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Washington state had an RHDV2 outbreak.

For anyone living in an area with current spread of RHDV2, House Rabbit Society recommends vaccinating your rabbit and continuing to take biosecurity precautions. As the disease is in the wild rabbit population and the natural

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Ben.

environment, we do not expect the virus to go away. People with rabbits will need to vaccinate their rabbits annually and take biosecurity precautions from now on.

To learn more about RHDV2, including a map of current outbreaks, vaccination information and suggested biosecurity precautions, go to [rabbit.org/rhdv](http://rabbit.org/rhdv).

## Home Sweet Home for Bunnies: How to Create a Safe Habitat

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

An appropriate home for your rabbit begins with a safe, indoor, "home base."

Cages and hutches found in pet stores are too small and should be avoided in favor of a pen-style setup.

A good home base will be large enough for your rabbit to move around, stand up, and lie fully stretched out, and will also provide sufficient space for the essentials: a litter box, hidey-house, food and water bowls, toys, and other comfort items like beds and stuffed animal friends.

It is crucial for rabbits to have sufficient traction, so floors must be carpeted or covered with non-slip rugs. And remember,

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Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



'Home Base' is a well-furnished puppy pen.

# House Rabbit Society's Executive Director Resigns

House Rabbit Society's board of directors said that Dr. Anne Martin is resigning as HRS executive director.

"We truly thank Anne for the many contributions she has made helping rabbits since joining us eight years ago, and plan to continue her work," the HRS board said.



Dr. Anne Martin.

Beth Woolbright, HRS board secretary and a founding board member of HRS, is acting as interim executive director.

The HRS board said, "We will be conducting a national search for the new executive director as we continue our mission of rescuing and providing education about rabbits."

## Safe Habitat

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rabbits also need lots of out-of-pen exercise time in a safe, bunny-proofed home every day!

## Puppy Exercise Pen: Home Base

A puppy exercise pen is recommended to have as your rabbit's home base. One pen consists of eight 2-foot panels that create a 4-foot by 4-foot square. The pen should be at least 36 inches tall, and up to 42 inches or higher if the rabbit is a jumper.

## Litter Box

Select an appropriately sized "cat-type" litter box for your rabbit. The size should be large enough that your rabbit can lie down comfortably inside the litter box. Avoid "corner" litter boxes, as they are not large enough for even the smallest rabbits. The bottom of the litter box can be lined with newspaper sections, and then an unscented, non-clumping, and non-clay-based litter can be added for additional absorbency, if desired. Options include compressed paper pellets, wood pellets or paper pulp. Whether you choose to add litter or not, the entire litter box must be topped with a thick layer of fresh, quality, Timothy hay to allow urine to pass through and keep the rabbit's feet completely dry. Your

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Lola peeing in her litter box.



Arnie in his accordion tunnel.

rabbit will eat from this hay, too! That means that your litter box must be very full of hay, much more than only what your rabbit will eat since some of the hay will become soiled and your rabbit will only eat what is clean.

## Hidey-House

A hidey-house is essential for your rabbit to feel safe and hidden within her habitat. A clean cardboard box without stickers, tape, staples or other hazards that is large enough for the rabbit to stand and stretch out in will make a great hidey-house. The house must either be very tall so the rabbit cannot jump on top of it (and then jump out of her pen), or else have a peaked roof that the rabbit cannot jump onto.

## Water and Food Bowls

Hanging water bottles aren't a sufficient source of water for your rabbit. Use a bowl instead. It is more appropriate for the way a rabbit drinks, and will encourage more frequent drinking. Choose ceramic or glass food and water dishes for easy cleaning and to prevent growth of bacteria. A flat, wide water bowl will help prevent your rabbit from tipping it over. Most bowls sold specifically for rabbits are too small; look for a water bowl that holds about three cups.

# Our First Rescue in New Jersey

By Megan Hilands

Almost a year ago, my husband and I moved from Brooklyn to a much larger living space in northern New Jersey after our jobs went permanently remote. Following the move, it crossed my mind more than once that we now had space for a third bunny, but with the combined threats of RHDV2 and Covid-19 we were not in any particular hurry to adopt.

That all changed in late June of this year when I saw a post on our new town's community Facebook page: "Did anyone lose a bunny? Seems pretty friendly." Having some experience with rabbit rescues, I knew very well that there was a slim chance someone had lost the little guy, and that most likely he had been purposely released into the wild. The location where he was last seen was just a few blocks from our home. Understanding how dangerous it is for domestic bunnies to be left defenseless outside, especially with high temperatures in the 90s that week, I realized I had to act. My husband and I gathered a spare pen and carrier that I knew I'd kept for a reason, along with treats and a towel, and headed to the location.

## The Rescue

After looking around for just a few minutes, more than one person asked if we were looking for "the bunny." Several neighbors had been keeping an eye on him throughout the day in hopes that the owner (or in our case, rescuer) would come to find him. When we arrived, he was lying comfortably under a car in a private driveway. We carefully tried to coax him out and noticed there were several containers of water and pieces of lettuce surrounding the car. That's when the homeowner, a very kind woman named Lorraine, came out to greet us. She had been feeding the bunny all afternoon and was planning on putting him in a space in her garage at nightfall if no one claimed him. The poor little guy must have been starving. He was eating everything in sight

including clover and grass and looked quite thin.

The actual rescue was fairly easy. Lorraine helped us guide him into her yard, all the while feeding him pieces of lettuce. Within 15 minutes we had him enclosed in the pen, and then I scooped him into the carrier. I left my phone number with Lorraine in the off chance someone would come looking for him, but I knew it was more for her peace of mind than anything else and that it was highly unlikely he would be claimed.

## Settling In

Once we got "the bunny" home, we set him up in our guest bedroom and decided to call him Charlie – he's an English Spot mix and has a marking that looks like a lovely Charlie Chaplin mustache. We both sat with him for a few minutes, during which he inspected us and grunted a few times. He accepted head pets, and ate what was possibly his first helping of hay, given that he seemed unfamiliar with it at first. Whoever posted about Charlie was right – he was surprisingly friendly considering that he must have been scared and confused about what was happening.

Charlie quickly settled into our home and hearts. We only fleetingly considered taking him to a rescue. Realizing that so many places are overrun and we had the capacity to care for him, we felt he belonged with us.

Charlie is without a doubt one of the most adventurous and affectionate bunnies I've ever met. He loves to climb on us and cuddles up right next to us for pets. He even started to groom us within the first week of living here. He is also extremely agile and clever. He can easily open the door of an X-pen if we forget to fully latch it, and can jump out of a 40-inch pen (which we've covered with a sheet for now). He's even jumped to the top of a desk! Sign this bunny up for the Olympics!

Photos: Megan Hilands



Charlie right after we got him inside. He was curious about his new surroundings right away.



Charlie after a few weeks with us.

Luckily, Charlie received a clean bill of health from Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital. Despite being found outside, he is (and was) very clean. The little guy was 4 pounds at the last weigh-in and is estimated to be around 6 months old. It's hard to say how big he might get. He's definitely grown a little since we took him in and his ears are very large. We have his neuter surgery scheduled very soon, and this should help to

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# From Rabbits to the Gulf Stream: Small Ways To Fight Global Warming and Support Our Planet

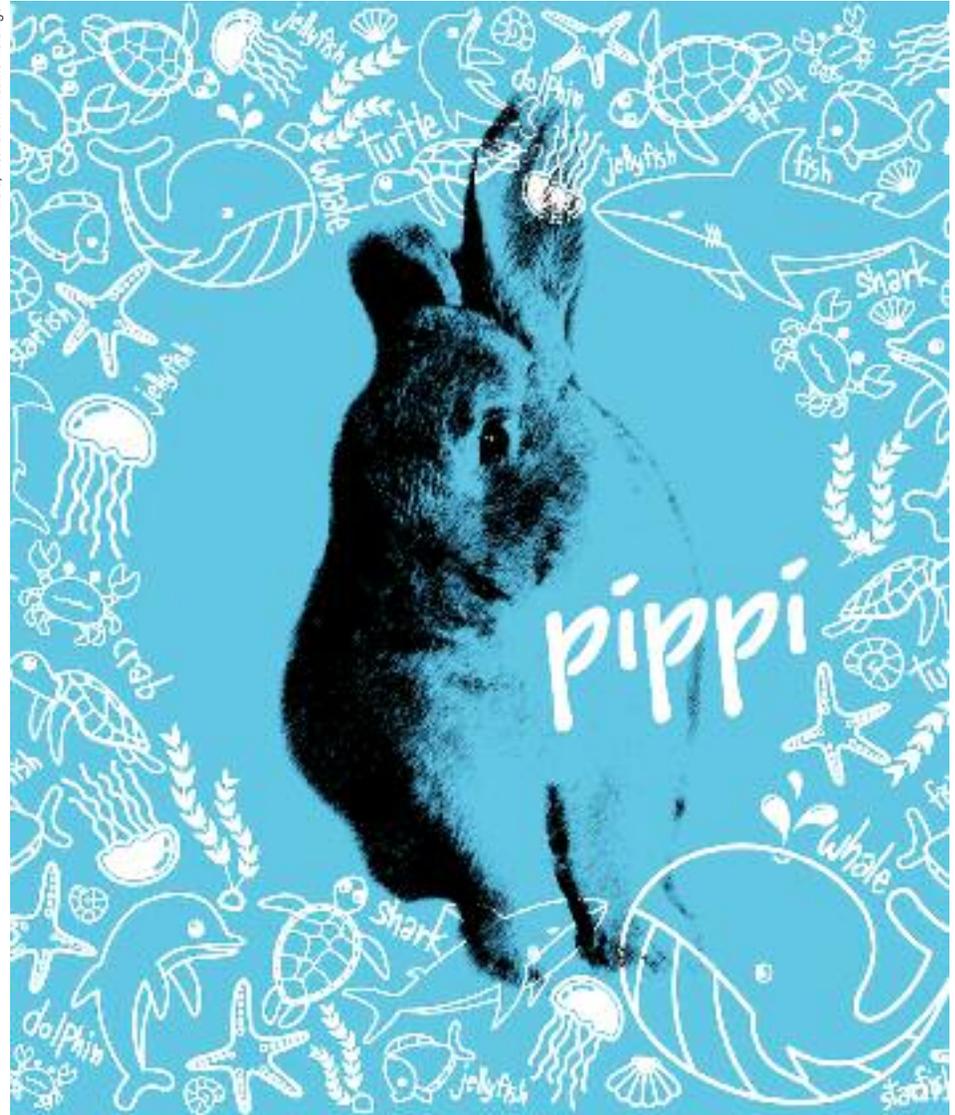
By Amelia Wilson

After the longest, loneliest, and most desolate year-and-a-half of our lives, my family and I were finally able to reunite this summer. We had all had our “jabs” (excepting those under 12) and were ready to relax in the North Woods of Minnesota near the Boundary Waters – a place we had been returning to year after year since 1981. The cabins are bona fide log cabins from the 1800s situated on a small island in the middle of a pristine, unspoiled lake. There are few human occupants on or near our summer spot – though wood ducks, bald eagles, beavers, and pretty much everything in between a dragonfly and a black bear are in abundance. The howls of wolves and mournful songs of loons fill each summer night sky.

What does this have to do with rabbits? A lot. Because this summer, our isolated island was very much *not* isolated, but instead catastrophically linked to the entire planet – which has seen the hottest year ever recorded. Fires raged in the Boundary Waters, swallowing the sun and making it hard to breathe. Eight years without snowfall had parched the region. Snow refills the underground water stores which replenish the lakes, rivers and tributaries. What were once lakes were now bogs; lagoons were now puddles; and entire wetlands had disappeared. Our island wasn't even an island anymore; it was a peninsula.

The planet has tipped. Climate scientists say that the Gulf Stream (part of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, or AMOC) is nearing a complete shutdown – driven entirely by human activities. The AMOC is the main circulatory system of the entire planet. Its shutdown is almost guaranteed, which is irreversible and will end most life on this planet. Already humans are responsible for driving mass extinctions around the globe. Up to one million plant and animal species will

Photo/Illustration: Nadine Heidinger



In our home we have become conscious of the ways rabbit companionship is not only affected by climate change, but contributes to it.

disappear in the next several decades without immediate and drastic action, according to the most comprehensive report to date on the state of our planet's ecosystems by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

I believe that we all bear responsibility for trying to prevent environmental collapse. We must be deliberate in our daily choices, and center the environment in each decision we make. Perhaps as people – as gardeners, as cooks, as consumers, as commuters, as rabbit owners, as whatever we are in that

moment – we have only small, incremental ways in which we can work toward a stable future. But we must take these steps, urgently and immediately.

In our home we have been increasingly conscious of the ways rabbit companionship (“ownership” feels wrong) is not only affected by climate change, but contributes to it. For years we emptied spent litter and hay in plastic garbage bags destined for the city dump. We ran the A/C all the time in the summer to keep the rabbits cool. We ordered toys, cleaners, tunnels, pellets

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## Small Ways

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and even hay over the internet – all of which would arrive at our front door via gasoline-hungry airplanes and delivery trucks. The hay itself was grown specifically for animals on land that was converted from natural habitat or forests to agriculture. We want the best for them – but the question that dominates now is, “*is this best for them?*” Rabbits cannot thrive if we cannot thrive, and we cannot thrive without environmental stability.

So what do we do? I don’t have all the answers, and indeed in our own household we have not corrected all the ways rabbit care contributes to global warming. But we have made small adaptations to our routine – and theirs –

that I want to recommend now. I believe that adopting even one or two of these suggestions can not only reduce rabbit-attendant waste and carbon emissions, but contribute to a permanent shift in our thought process about how we interact with the planet.

First, we use litter that is made from 100% recycled material and is completely compostable. This enables us to take our spent hay and litter to the farmers market each weekend where city-run and NGO nonprofits will accept biodegradable materials for converting into compost that is then donated to local farms and community gardens. Soon New York City will resume its curbside composting program, making this step much less onerous for many. [You can sign up here](#) if you haven’t already.

Next, for the waste that cannot be composted – such as soiled newspaper – we have shifted to compostable garbage bags made of potato starch. Before we would purchase hay that would arrive in thick plastic bags; we have switched to Small Pet Select hay that comes in large cardboard boxes without plastic – which can later be broken down and recycled by the city. Yes, it still comes on delivery trucks (we are looking for local distributors), but it is possible to offset your carbon contribution through some delivery companies. Carbon offsets are not “throwing money” at a problem, but are federally and internationally managed programs that take your small contribution and invest it directly into land restoration and planting of trees, while funding research and development of green energy.

Finally, we have stopped buying little toys and what-nots that frankly Pippi and Dashie don’t need or interact with much. An unbleached paper towel roll provides hours of chewing and tossing fun, and is a great way to reuse the item.

The harder piece for us has been the use of A/C. We are renters in a beautiful brownstone in Brooklyn. Our landlady also lives in the building and is an extremely conscientious, thoughtful person; together we are researching the viability of putting solar panels on her roof in the hopes of becoming a renewable energy home.

James Baldwin said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” He was talking about racial and social justice – but his words resonate deeply as we confront the greatest challenge our species has ever known. Together we must act swiftly and decisively, even in the tiny world of rabbit care, if we are to save them and ourselves.

Photo: Nadine Heidinger



Pippi and Dashie.

## Frasier and Olaf Made Me Understand That I Was Destined to Be a Rabbit Mom

By Aviva Reschke

I have loved animals for as long as I can remember. Growing up, I wanted a dog more than anything. I begged my parents to get me a dog but despite being animal lovers themselves, they just didn't want the responsibility that came along with having a pet. I loved animals so much that when I was 16, I spent a summer volunteering at the Humane Society of New York. It became problematic when I wanted to bring half the animals home with me. Even as a teenager, my parents would still not allow me to get a pet. They told me I had to wait until I got my own place.

Shortly after I got married, I moved from New York to California. My husband liked animals just as much as I did but we weren't ready for the responsibility that came along with owning a dog. Cats were not an option as my husband was very allergic to them. He suggested we adopt a rabbit. My initial reaction was that he was out of his mind. I didn't have anything against rabbits but there

Photos: Aviva Reschke



Frasier with me at my 30th birthday.

was no way I was letting one into my home. They probably smell and poop everywhere, I thought. Plus, they eat hay. I was not about to turn my home into a farm!

My husband continued to coax me into considering a rabbit and over the next few months I started researching house rabbits. I learned that they can be litter-box trained and make excellent indoor pets. I also learned that they can be as



Baby Derek and Frasier.

smart and affectionate as dogs, but don't need to be walked. Furthermore, you don't need to wash them because, like cats, they groom themselves. I was now more open to the idea of adopting a rabbit.

On a warm spring Sunday in April 2013, we went to the Petco in Dublin, Calif., where East Bay Rabbit Rescue was hosting an adoption event. There were about 20 rabbits to choose from, but I knew after seeing the first one that I need not look any further. He was white with black spots down his back, black circles around his eyes and tall black ears. As I approached his pen, he came running up to me and let me pet him. I knew immediately that this was the rabbit that was meant to come home with us.

We named our rabbit Frasier. Frasier was the most peaceful, gentle and loving rabbit. Although he loved being the center of our world, a couple of years later he happily helped us welcome home our new baby, Derek. Frasier would sit next to Derek while he was in his bouncy seat and never flinched when Derek reached to grab his fur. When he was having his tummy time, Derek would try so hard to keep his head up so that he could watch Frasier zoom across the

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### Our First Rescue

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resolve his habit of occasionally peeing in corners around his room. He is very well-behaved otherwise, especially considering his hormones are probably raging at this age.

We don't hold out too much hope that he will bond with our existing pair of bunnies (Simba and Nala the Lionheads), but we love having Charlie in our lives. He's been a source of joy and laughter in our home during the sometimes stressful pandemic times, much like the real Charlie Chaplin was for his audience.

Photo: Megan Hillands



Charlie will often hop next to me or on me and demand pets!

## Rabbit Mom

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room. The two of them had a very special bond and loved each other.

I moved back to New York in December 2017 after my divorce and Frasier came to live with me and Derek. We moved in with my mother initially while I got back on my feet. She welcomed me, Derek and even Frasier with open arms. While she never let me get a pet growing up, she now loved having Frasier around and became very attached to him as well. My mom always made sure to bring home a special treat for him from the grocery store – usually cilantro, parsley or a banana. She referred to herself as Frasier’s Savta (grandmother in Hebrew).

Frasier quickly became accustomed to his new surroundings. He especially loved being in a home that was fully carpeted and that came equipped with a staircase. Unfortunately, a few short months after moving back to New York, Frasier suffered a bout of GI stasis and passed away. I was devastated! I had never lost a pet before. I remember coming home expecting to see him, but he wasn’t there. I felt a lot of guilt over his death for a long time. I thought I could have seen the signs earlier, taken him to the vet sooner or done something different that would have resulted in him still being here today. I mourned him for a very long time and still miss him very much.

It took nearly three years after losing Frasier to feel ready to adopt a new

rabbit. In October 2020, I contacted Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group and after going through a thorough screening process and interview, I was approved for adoption. I looked at the rabbits up for adoption on the LIRRG website and was told to pick one or two rabbits that I was interested in meeting. While the first rabbit I met was very sweet, he was not the right fit for my family. I was very eager to bring a new bunny home, but knew it was better to wait for the right rabbit to hop along as opposed to making a hasty decision.

I waited very patiently for over two months and on Dec. 26, I received an email from LIRRG informing me that they had a new rabbit up for adoption that I might be interested in. Attached to the email was a picture of a large handsome caramel-colored rabbit with big ears. His name was Devon.

I met Devon the following week and it was love at first sight. My son and I decided to change his name to Olaf after the cheerful snowman in Disney’s “Frozen.” We learned very quickly that Olaf is a sweet, playful and affectionate bunny, and he loves to binky! He adores his humans and always wants to be near us. When we eat, he sits under the dining table. When we watch TV, Olaf stretches himself out right at our feet or sometimes joins us on the couch. He even follows me into the bathroom every morning – I am working on his understanding of privacy and respecting boundaries. Olaf has been a great addition to our family, and we are so lucky to have him. I have come to the conclusion that while I may love all animals, it is very clear that I was destined to be a rabbit mom!

*Writer’s Note: I want to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Long Island Rabbit Rescue and East Bay Rabbit Rescue along with all the other rabbit rescues whose volunteers work endlessly to ensure rabbits end up in safe, loving homes and live the kind of life they deserve.*

Photos: Aviva Reschke



Derek and Frasier enjoying snack time together.



Derek and Olaf cuddling before bedtime.



Olaf flopped comfortably at home.

## Let's Talk About Our Favorite Foods!

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Friends of LIRRG is a Facebook community of over 1,000 rabbit owners and rescue volunteers who live on Long Island. We asked our Friends, "What's your rabbit's favorite food?" and here's what they had to say.

"Peanut goes crazy for the forage blends from One Ear Up!" – Denise B.

"Diego loves fennel!" – Rachel S.

"All four bunnies – Cuddles, Cleo Fiona, Lily and Pez – love Selective Naturals' 'Big Noodles' as treats!" – Angela C.

"Aria goes crazy for her pellets. And some 'nana AKA banana." – Gayle R.

"Budgie always waits patiently for his pellets." – Jean M.

"Trixie loves her garden sticks from Selective Naturals and her Rabbit Hole Hay." – Heather F.

"Noah LOVES parsley! (He hears the fridge door opening from across the house)." – Shari Z.

"Cilantro, Cilantro Cilantro! (Albert). Also, bok choy, forage mixes, plantain, hay, compressed hays and dehydrated dino kale stems. He loves dino kale, too, but I think he likes the dehydrated stems a little more. Kiki loves rose hips, rose buds and banana, parsnip root, dandelion greens, carrot tops, beet tops. Kiki is a hoover and passionate about all food, all the time. She loves everything Albert loves and will lie, cheat and steal to get what she wants. Oh, my gosh. I almost forgot. Dried willow branches with the leaves on them. That's their No. 1 favorite right now." – Jordana B.

"Cilantro, arugula and Oxbow pellets for Theodora and Roosevelt; anything and everything for Aegon and Daenerys." – Danielle S.

*(Continued on page 12)*



Peanut.



Diego.



Cuddles and Cleo Fiona.



Lily and Pez.



Budgie.



Trixie.



Noah.

## Favorite Foods

*(Continued from page 11)*

“Wally LOVES banana! We used to ask ‘Does Wally want banana?’ Now, all we can get out is ‘Does Wally...’ before he comes running for his piece of banana.”

– Deb V.

“Banana, arugula, anise for Ramsi and Tilly.” – Julie M.

“Olaf loves his carrots!” – Aviva R.

“Hershey’s favorite is watermelon!”

– Duaa B.

“Mason goes CRAZY for these Kaytee hay bowls! They are seriously like ‘bunny crack’ to him! So much fun to watch him destroy! I wish I had a picture of him eating one, but, alas, I don’t! Also: KALE! His absolute favorite green.

That, and arugula! Such refined tastes!”

– Lisa B.

Princess Penelope Godiva: “Banana!”

– Susan A.

“Ruby says, ‘Best day ever. I got a new box. My favorite food is basil, especially when I steal it off the plant when no one is looking.’” – Bea G.

“Oreo loves bananas. Luna loves strawberries. They both go crazy for Dr. Brown’s salad hay (we take out the treats), cilantro and basil.” – Lisa F.



Roosevelt and Theodora.



Olaf.

“Ellie loves bananas and kale, but her favorite has to be dill (...though she eats it too quickly to get a photo!)” – Emily V.



Ruby.



Oreo and Luna.



Ellie.

“Lola loves dandelions, and Theo wants anything sweet...but they both go bananas for ‘nanas.” – Natasha P.

## Questionnaire on Dental Health

A veterinary student at the Royal Veterinary College at the University of London is circulating a questionnaire for a rabbit-focused research project. The questionnaire examines the welfare, behavior, health and general quality of

life for rabbits with and without known dental problems.

If you currently own or have owned a rabbit in the past six months, you can participate in this anonymous survey. It takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Here is the [link](#).

Please note that the survey contains several photos of rabbits with overgrown teeth that may be upsetting to some.

## Bonded Bunnies Join Their Human Family On Road Trip to Help Animal Rescue Group

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

In July, Jacklyn Lahav packed up her husband, three human children, two rabbits and one cat on a road trip from Brooklyn to Tennessee. Their mission: a month of volunteering at Odd Man Inn Animal Refuge. Odd Man Inn is in the process of relocating from Washington state to Tennessee, accepting the surrender of over 160 rescued farm pigs there. The Lahavs dedicated a month of their summer to help this group.

We asked the youngest Lahavs to share their thoughts about traveling 800 miles with a bonded pair of rabbits, Teddy and Maddie. Here's what they shared about their experience:

"When we drove to Tennessee, the rabbits came with us. We had to give them calming meds and put them in a crate. They had hay and bedding, and every two hours they would have the whole middle row of the car to exercise and pee, poop and drink. They were really good during the two-day trip, but I can't say every rabbit will."

– S. Lahav, age 12

Photo: Jacklyn Lahav.



Teddy and Maddie.

"With my experience with the buns in the car I felt like they felt uncomfortable but knew that they couldn't do anything. When the buns got back, Maddie immediately went to eating hay, drinking and sleeping (She sleeps a lot and she's old). Teddy, however, was sensitive and

hid under the couch for at least an hour. He was making sure no one will take him in the car again. So to wrap things up, I think younger buns are more sensitive to car rides."

– M. Lahav, age 10

## Hop On Up to the Mountains

By Shari Zagorski (with help from four bunnies)

Summer was winding down and we were ready for a break.

We had missed last year's vacation due to the pandemic, so it was definitely time to get away to the mountains. But what to do with our four bunnies? Shadow and Mittens are fully bonded so operate as one unit, and Puff and Noah are still in the bonding process. We recently adopted Noah and he's quite attached to his new family.

So we did what any crazy bunny family does. We made a list of all the things we would need and started packing for four bunnies. The inn where we stay is bunny-friendly but not overly spacious, so we needed to make some accommodations for that. Plus, the ride was about 275 miles up to the Adirondacks, so meals for humans and bunnies needed to be coordinated appropriately.

Our list started off with figuring out how many X-pens we could manage to fit in the trunk – and still enough for

each of the rabbits to be housed and have a special play area. Next on the list were small carpets and waterproof tablecloths to protect the flooring underneath the rugs. A few thin airline blankets and some clothespins provided secure roofs for our little jumpers. Since real estate was at a premium, we opted to take smaller water dishes and fill them more frequently during the day. Most importantly, we took their familiar litter boxes from home all filled

*(Continued on page 15)*

## Volunteers Visit Libraries to Teach Rabbit-Care Basics

By Amanda Shapiro

Over the last couple months, I have been lucky enough to participate in two Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group events.

The first one was at Mineola Memorial Library for one of their Amazing Animal Saturdays. At the event, other volunteers and I taught people about rabbit care while also raising money for the bunnies at LIRRG.

A couple weeks later, I volunteered at the LIRRG table during the Brentwood Public Library Pet Fair. At this event, in addition to educating about rabbit care and getting donations, we also were able to have a kids table where children were able to enjoy rabbit coloring pages, do word searches, and learn about rabbits with fact match sheets.

While we weren't able to have rabbits at either event because both took place outside in the warm weather, they were still fun, gave people a better understanding of how to take care of rabbits, and inspired future rabbit fosters and adoptions. Hope to see you at future events!

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Amanda Shapiro and Ashley Smit at Brentwood Public Library.

## Rabbit Event in Mineola Was Win-Win for Everyone

By Karen Goodovitch-Rosenthal

I read that people were needed to go to Mineola library to help with an education program about rabbits and adopting them. I didn't know that much but I decided to go with my husband.

I got more than I bargained for. I got to meet a few fellow Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group volunteers and talked to people coming out of the library about my experiences with my bunny. There were people who had fostered and, after we all gave out brochures, were thinking of adopting. There were a few people who purchased little rabbit items and gave donations. The event was a win-win for everyone. It was beautiful day and I was with amazing people.

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Tony Squicciarino, Karen Goodovitch-Rosenthal, Shari Zagorski, Amanda Shapiro and Laura Brielmeier at Mineola Memorial Library.

## 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)

### Colita

Colita: big, beautiful and playful! She was rescued from a family whose young child accidentally hurt her when left



Colita.

unattended. Colita healed just fine, thankfully. Despite her rough beginnings, she absolutely loves people. Volunteers describe Colita as a kisser who demands attention. She is a very friendly bunny with a puppy personality, and a big head. She likes to stand on her hind legs, reaching for attention and love! Colita will be the perfect rabbit for someone who has lots of time to play with her – gently, of course!

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Hop On Up

*(Continued from page 13)*

with hay, ready for munching as soon as we arrived.

Since tap water up there is a bit different and could have affected their digestive systems, we purchased jugs of bottled water. Also on the list were vinegar and paper towels and lots of hay. And finally, an emergency kit was packed up, plus a few combs for grooming.

When it was time to load up the carriers, we made sure everybody had a nice fluffy towel for the trip. The carriers were then secured in the back seat, which was leveled off with a blanket, and the individual carriers had bungees holding them to the rear seat.

During a few rest stops, the bunnies enjoyed hay snacks, as well as water and parsley to hydrate them. The car's air conditioner was left on and somebody stayed with them in the car at all times.

Upon arrival we set up their X-pens and each bunny happily hopped in to eat some hay and drink some water. During the first few hours we monitored all of them for droppings and to be sure they were drinking and eating. We kept Noah and Puff side-by-side even on their

Photos: Sheri Zagorski



Mountain air flops for Noah!



All passengers were secured in the back seat.

vacation as they are still bonding, but they had time to play together as well.

As a family we all had a relaxing time and knew that our bunnies were safe



Noah chilling on his human brother Zach's lap.

and secure the whole time because they were with us. And that mountain air resulted in some pretty dramatic flops!

## Rabbits from LIRRG

(Continued from page 15)

Facts about Colita:

- Rescued August 2020
- Estimated age upon rescue: 4 months old
- Playful, Energetic, Active, Social/Attention-Seeking/Outgoing

### Eeyore

Eeyore was rescued on a busy road in Nassau County. He is cute, soft, very friendly and small! Eeyore's personality is shy and deep...soulful and unique. He's breathtakingly handsome, but completely unaware of it. Some might think he is just being humble. But really he has just has no clue what a looker he is.

He is a smart, chill bun – a beautiful wallflower who will blossom with the company and stability of a forever family. With an introverted homebody, he could just chill and be himself. With the attention of someone who is social and extroverted, he may gain the confidence to really zoom around the house!

Facts about Eeyore:

- Rescued October 2020
- Estimated age upon rescue: 8 months
- Calm/Gentle

### Inga

Inga was abandoned in an overgrown area of land in Suffolk County. She was left to survive among the bushes, thorns and poison ivy. Inga was very scared upon rescue, but she quickly got comfortable with the safety and love of indoor life.

She's a true beauty. You can detect a sparkle in her eye, as if you're seeing the gears turning, or maybe she's got a secret, is in on a funny joke, or has a little bit of magic inside her.

Inga is ready to bring her sparkle to your home, if you promise to love and care for her forever.



Eeyore.

Facts about Inga:

- Rescued April 2021
- Estimated age upon rescue: 1 year
- Always happy to see you
- Sweet/Loving/Very Playful

### Juliette

Juliette was being bullied by the family cat in her previous home and was surrendered to the Southampton Animal Shelter. She was nervous and terrified when she arrived at the shelter, so LIRRG stepped in when a foster space was available and she has been blossoming ever since. A once scared rabbit is now happy, energetic and playful. A volunteer describes Juliette as shy, but very curious and playful. She loves to throw around her stacking cups and if you sit on the floor with her, letting her come to you, she will start to explore, nudge and get to know you. Juliette arrived at LIRRG in March of 2021, and was estimated to be 1 year old.

### Faline and Freya

Faline and Freya were born from an accidental litter on April 8, 2020. These beautiful girls are a bonded pair who live peacefully together. Daily head pets required! They are looking for an experienced rabbit adopter who can keep up with their antics. Their foster mom



Inga.

describes these sweet girls as very active, playful and independent. Faline and Freya are kid-friendly for ages over 6, and are both dog- and cat-friendly bunnies.

### Aria

Aria was rescued with 17 other rabbits from a cold, wire outdoor hutch in Manorville. Upon rescue, she was understandably frightened. Her bossy personality is coming through as volunteers give her lots of extra love and attention. She is learning to trust humans again and is ready to make your home her own. By taking things slow and sitting with her or lying down in her area, allowing her to investigate and approach you, you are sure to earn her trust. This special girl has perfect litter-box habits. She is also incredibly playful. Her favorite toy is her stacking cups. If you hide treats in them, she'll take them out one by one to find them, then wait for you to put them back together. She is not accepting of pets, but is perfectly content when you let her be her fabulous, vibrant self. Aria is more of a watch-and-be-entertained, no-touch bunny.

## Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Leia, Tea, Velvateen, Rocket, Snow, Ning, Penelope, Glen, Ember, Thea, Birch, Carlton, Jade and Elvis, Sutton, Archer, Faiza, Yin and Usagi were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

## We Are Looking for Loving Homes: These Rabbits Are in Foster Care



Eevee.

### Eevee

Eevee is an adorable little brown lop and quite the ball of energy. Eevee would do wonderfully in a home with lots of open space to stretch her legs and to show off her athletic binkies. She loves to stay nearby and keep tabs on what her humans are up to, and will nudge you to a new spot on the floor if she thinks there's a better place for you to be sitting (she usually has a better place in mind!). Eevee will occasionally settle for petting, but often prefers a playful and interactive relationship with less touching. She likes to keep busy – there is no such thing as too many toys. This wonderful little girl is spayed and ready for her forever home. If you are interested in adopting Eevee, 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 a good partner for another rabbit. She



Carmela.

has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carmela, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### 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.



Skye.

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

### 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 more shy than her brother, but is never far behind Blue and enjoys occasional head pets from quiet, gentle people who 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

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## ADOPTIONS

### Rabbits in Foster Care

*(Continued from page 17)*

Blue and Purple, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Pineapple and Sugarplum

Pineapple and Sugarplum are a beautiful pair of large Lionhead sisters who were born in the shelter as part of a litter of five babies, before we took the whole young family into our rescue. Their mother, two sisters and brother have all been adopted and now it's their turn. Pineapple is black and white, while Sugarplum is all black – and both have amazing manes of hair! These girls are shy at first but have tons of energy and are a joy to watch as they exercise –



Purple and Blue.

running and binkyng with reckless abandon! They have been spayed and are living in foster care. If you are



Pineapple and Sugarplum.

interested in adopting Pineapple and Sugarplum, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

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

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

By Kirsten Ott

#### Portia

OMG, get ready for Portia! This big New Zealand White is badass: powerful, willful, bold and high-energy. Even her dewlap is badass! Portia was made to rule her own country, not sit in a shelter cage. When you pay her a visit, she'll practically body slam you to demand affection, but as you stroke her head she will calm down – at least for a few minutes. Portia is a lot to handle, but she will immediately win over anyone who wants to be owned by a domineering rabbit.



Portia.

#### Indigo

Indigo is a gorgeous California boy with a gentle, mellow personality. This big guy loves to be petted, and it's hard to resist his incredibly soft coat. He currently has sore hocks, probably a result of neglect, so he would do best in a bunny-savvy home where his people can get him treated and monitor his giant feet. Apart from that, Indigo is a stunning bunny, with a chocolate nose and big, beautiful pink eyes.

*(Continued on page 19)*



Indigo.



Murphy.



Rabbit Deniro.

**Rabbits at ACC**

*(Continued from page 18)*

**Murphy**

Murphy is a young New Zealand White who has got the energy of an F5 tornado and the charm of the 1964 Fab Four. In other words, he's a little rascal who will keep you smiling as he wears you out. Murphy is a great catch for someone who is prepared to keep up with him! He is a total extrovert, loves people, will ham it up to get your attention...and he loves petting, too! Part of his craziness can almost certainly be chalked up to hormones, so he'll settle down a bit once he is neutered – but he'll still put on a show any chance he gets.

**Rabbit Deniro**

Rabbit Deniro is a young New Zealand White female who will melt your heart. This little girl is incredibly sweet-natured and starved for affection. She adores being petted, sweetly closing her eyes while she soaks in the love. She is sure to get very attached to her forever people, and will need a home where she can get lots of attention. Rabbit Deniro is almost certain to grow significantly larger – her big feet, big poops, and broad nose suggest she'll be at least a medium-large girl when all is said and done.

**Lucy**

Lucy is a large New Zealand White with boundless energy. This girl is downright rambunctious and quite feisty – in order words, she is a handful! Lucy would do best in a rabbit-savvy home, because right now she's very defensive and cage-protective. She needs people who can give her space to expend all that energy, settle her down, and help her develop trust. Once she's in a good home, she's sure to make herself the center of attention!

**Deborah Jane**

Deborah Jane is a beautiful young New Zealand White with a super sweet disposition. This girl is medium-sized



Lucy.



Deborah Jane.



Mario.

now, but may still grow a bit – she could end up being a large rabbit. Deborah Jane is very curious and engaged – she seems to have one ear cocked in your direction at all times as she sizes up your every move. Though she has somewhat sorrowful looking eyes, she generally comes across as a cheerful, contented soul. Deborah Jane's gentle demeanor and comfort with people suggests she'd be a good choice for a first-time rabbit home.

**Mario**

Mario is a ridiculously cute young boy with an extroverted nature. This little guy is curious and totally unafraid – he'll run right up to you to give you a few good sniffs. While he'll let you handle him a bit, he's far more interested in playing and exploring than in affection. That is certain to change somewhat as he matures. Mario is a small- to medium-sized bunny right now, and will probably get a bit bigger; the one part of him that has already reached full maturity is his fabulous mustache!!

**Cinnabun**

Cinnabun is a medium-large female with a very impressive dewlap. This girl probably has some Dutch blood, as suggested by a crooked vestigial triangle on her forehead. She certainly has the typically sweet Dutch personality – she's very sweet, well-socialized, and easy-going. When you offer to pet her, Cinnabun will put her head down and let your hands lull her to sleep like a baby. Because she's so chill, Cinnabun would be a good choice for a first-time rabbit home.

**Jamie**

Jamie is an adorable little black and white Dutch mix with an adorable Dutch personality to match. This cutie is super sweet – he seems a bit wary at first, but will flat himself down for maximum petting in no time. The Dutch triangle that's supposed to cover most of Jamie's face just manages to cover his little nose, making it extra boop-able. Jamie would do best in a quiet home, and would probably be a good partner for another rabbit.

**Dexter**

Dexter is a small bunny who might be half chipmunk – those CHEEKS! This adorable guy is very curious but a bit nervous when he first meets you. He'll let you pet his forehead, and those squishy

*(Continued on page 23)*

## Pre- and Post-Operative Care of Rabbits

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

University of Miami Biology Department  
House Rabbit Society of Miami

Any surgery can be physically and emotionally hard on both you and your companion rabbit, since there's really no such thing as a surgery that is 100% risk-free. I hope the following information will help you and your rabbit get through either emergency or elective surgery with maximal safety and minimal stress.

### Pre-Operative Care

1. Be sure to schedule surgery with a veterinarian who is very familiar with the rabbit's unique anatomy and physiology, and who has had a great deal of experience and success with rabbit anesthesia and surgery. You might wish to start with House Rabbit Society Veterinarian Listings.

(<http://rabbit.org/rabbit-veterinarians-state-listings/>)

Veterinarians specializing in "exotic" species are often rabbit-savvy. But before you commit to surgery, make sure. The House Rabbit Society has an excellent site on how to find a good rabbit vet that should make this easy.

2. If possible, schedule the surgery so that you can bring your bunny home with you the same evening. Spending the night in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by strange people and the sound and smell of potential predators, can add unnecessary stress and lengthen your rabbit's recovery. Very few veterinary hospitals have 24-hour monitoring staff, and your bunny will probably not be watched for at least part of the night if s/he stays in the hospital. Home, where he can be monitored lovingly and regularly, is almost always best.

3. If your rabbit is bonded to another rabbit, it is important to *bring them to the hospital together* so that the mate can offer moral support in the pre-operative waiting period and during recovery. It also will help prevent the dreaded un-

bonding phenomenon that sometimes occurs when one member of a bonded pair comes home smelling of Strange and Scary Hospital. The last thing you want your bunny to suffer after surgery is violent rejection by his/her own mate! Unfortunately, this goes for bonded groups, too. It is best to bring everyone in for moral support and to prevent post-operative social rejection.

If your rabbit is bonded to another rabbit, it is important to *bring them to the hospital together* so that the mate can offer moral support.

4. **DO NOT FAST YOUR RABBIT FOR ANY PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME (SUCH AS OVERNIGHT) PRIOR TO THE SURGICAL APPOINTMENT**, even if the person scheduling your appointment tells you to do so. Receptionists giving such instructions often recite the rules for dogs and cats, not realizing that the rules are different for rabbits. **Some vets now recommend removing food and water a couple of hours before surgery simply so the stomach is not hugely full. A very full stomach can interfere with breathing when a bunny is in supine position for surgery.** Here are the reasons why some (inexperienced with rabbits) clinic staff might suggest fasting, and why these reasons do not hold true for rabbits:

a. Some surgical anesthetics can cause nausea. One of the reasons veterinarians fast most animals pre-operatively is the risk of vomiting during surgery or recovery. This can cause accidental aspiration, the breathing of liquid into

the lungs, which can be fatal. However, rabbits lack the vomiting reflex, and are physically almost incapable of regurgitation. In rabbits, the risk of aspiration due to vomiting is negligible.

b. Feeding your bunny before surgery helps the gastrointestinal (GI) tract remain active, which will speed recovery. Rabbits who become inappetent (i.e., not wanting to eat) after surgery are more difficult to "jump start" back to normal eating habits. Even relatively brief periods (24 hours) of anorexia can result in GI stasis and some liver damage in rabbits.

c. Some veterinarians may be concerned that food in the intestine will interfere with their obtaining a correct body weight, necessary for calculating the proper dose of injected anesthetic. This should not be a concern with rabbits because:

- Under normal circumstances, the intestine of a healthy rabbit is never empty, and should not be. Rabbit GI passage time is relatively lengthy (approximately 12 hours), so to get the intestine completely empty would take a very long time. Also, since an anorectic rabbit can begin to suffer liver damage in relatively short time when the GI tract is empty, it is not advisable to fast the rabbit before surgery.
- If the veterinarian is using isoflurane or sevoflurane, the gas anesthetic of choice, body weight is not an issue, since the gas is administered through the respiratory tract. Even though isoflurane gas is more expensive than injectable anesthetics, it is worth the extra cost to ensure a safer surgery and faster recovery.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Although intubation allows much more precise administration and monitoring of gas anesthesia, and is safer in case of an

(Continued on page 21)

## Pre- and Post-Operative Care

(Continued from page 20)

emergency cardiac or respiratory arrest during surgery, please be aware that intubation of rabbits is a delicate procedure requiring a great deal of practice and expertise. If your vet is NOT experienced with rabbit intubations, it is probably much safer for the isoflurane to be administered via mask. You might wish to ask your vet about this before you schedule the surgery.

- Injectable pre-anesthetic doses are not likely to be affected by the slight difference in weight of a rabbit with a full intestine.

5. Take a bit of your rabbit's normal food (pellets and hay) along as well as a small bag of favorite fresh herbs. Ask that the foods be offered to your bunny after the anesthesia has worn off. The sooner bunny starts nibbling after surgery, the quicker the recovery.

**Don't hover. A bunny after surgery may feel groggy and unhappy, and not in the mood for cuddling.**

## Post-Surgical Care

### Pain Management

— Any surgery, including a neuter or (especially) a spay, will make bunny sore for one to several days.

— Pain management in rabbits is critical to uneventful recovery.

— Most experienced vets routinely administer analgesics such as metacam/meloxicam, Banamine (flunixin meglumine), buprenorphine, tramadol, etc., before or shortly after surgery, so

the bunny will be as comfortable as possible while waking up.

— Ask the veterinarian about this before scheduling surgery. If no pain medications are going to be given to your rabbit, you should probably seek a different vet!

— Before bringing your bunny home, ask your vet about follow-up pain management at home, when the initial dose wears off.

### Post-Surgical Monitoring and Care

#### 1. Warmth

— Immediately after surgery, keep your bunny warm and quiet.

— Provide a warm water bottle or other heat source (that can't leak, burn or cause injury) wrapped in a soft towel for bunny to lean against or move away from, at his/her discretion. **DO NOT** use any type of electrical heating source that could be an electrocution risk, should bunny chew on it!

— Rabbits will tolerate a soft, light blanket better than a heavy one.

#### 2. Post-Surgical Contact and Handling

— Don't hover. A bunny after surgery may feel groggy and unhappy, and not in the mood for cuddling.

— Unless you know that your rabbit wants cuddling, it's best to let him/her recover quietly and without more human interruption than is necessary to ensure that all is well.

#### 3. Post-Surgical Monitoring for Trouble

— Be sure to carefully (and gently) check the sutures daily for a few days after surgery to be sure the bunny isn't chewing them.

— Many vets use subcuticular (under the skin) sutures that cannot be chewed out, and may even put a line of surgical glue over the incision for extra strength. Ask your vet about this before surgery, so you will know what to expect.

— Be alert for excessive bleeding (a bit of oozing is not unusual, but outright bleeding is a cause for concern)

— Excessive redness or signs of infection such as swelling or pus are not normal.

— If you see anything that causes concern, call the vet immediately for further instructions.

### The Healing Process

If all goes well, your bunny will start to perk up noticeably by the second day after surgery. Healing begins quickly; adhesions (normal tissue repair) usually start to form within 24 hours of surgery in rabbits. In the case of spay/neuter, a male will usually recover more quickly, since a neuter is less invasive than a spay.

— A male is usually ready for normal activity within a few days of surgery.

— A female might take a bit longer to recover from a spay.

Recovery time will depend on the type of surgery, the surgeon's technique, the surgery itself, and any complications.

#### 1. Post-Operative Preventive Care

— Under normal circumstances, rabbits do not require post-surgical antibiotics to prevent infection.

— Except in very unusual cases, an E-collar ("Elizabethan collar" – that plastic cone around the neck that prevents suture chewing and makes your companion look like a satellite dish) is not necessary for a rabbit, and will cause more stress than it's worth.

— If your bunny does try to damage her incision and ends up wearing an E-collar for a day or two, you will have to hand-feed cecotropes, since s/he will not be able to reach them for normal ingestion.

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## Pre- and Post-Operative Care

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### 2. Monitoring the Poop: Signs of Recovery or Trouble

— It is not unusual to see a few soft or mucus-covered stools after surgery. Fecal pellets should return to normal within a day or two, once your bunny has regained normal eating habits.

— If you continue to see mucus in the fecal matter beyond a day or two, or if fecal production stops, consult your veterinarian immediately.

— If your rabbit hasn't eaten anything within 24 hours of surgery, contact your veterinarian.

— Monitor the output of fecal pellets closely. If fecal output slows or stops after surgery for more than 36 hours, your bunny may be suffering from ileus, an uncommon but serious post-surgical complication. If this happens, refer to *Gastrointestinal Stasis: The Silent Killer* for emergency information.

(<http://rabbit.org/gastrointestinal-stasis-the-silent-killer-2/>)

### Post-Surgical Social Interaction

— Keep your rabbit quiet for a few days after surgery, but try to maintain normal feeding and bonding times.

— *There is no reason to separate bonded pairs or groups as long as the bunnies interact calmly.*

— A post-surgical bunny will usually manage his/her own activity quite well, and knows not to “push it” too soon.

— If your bonded pair continues to mount or play too roughly after surgery, then it might be necessary to physically separate them for a day or two to avoid injury. *This is almost never necessary.*

— However, if you must separate the bunnies, be sure they can see, smell, and touch one another even if they don't have full physical contact.

— Remember: the rabbit who has undergone surgery needs the emotional support of his/her mate for an uneventful recovery. Allowing them to be in contact reduces the chances that they will fight upon full re-introduction.

### Post-Surgical Nutrition

— Offer your rabbit a heavy ceramic bowl of water, even if you usually provide a sipper bottle. A rabbit needs to drink after surgery, but often won't do so if s/he has to “work” for water. A well-hydrated bunny recovers more quickly and feels better in the process.

— If your bunny is reluctant to eat after surgery, offer a favorite treat. Fragrant herbs such as basil, parsley, dill and mint seem to appeal to a bunny recovering from surgery.

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## Fragrant herbs such as basil, parsley, dill and mint seem to appeal to a bunny recovering from surgery.

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— Rabbits seem to prefer healthy foods such as fresh greens and hay while they are recovering, rather than starchy treats, which is all for the better.

— If your bunny does suffer complications from surgery that cause him to stop eating, you may need to hand-feed for a few days afterwards to help get the GI tract back to normal. Ask your veterinarian for advice about whether this is necessary. Products made specifically for recovery feeding include Critical Care (Oxbow Hay Co.) and Critter Be Better (American Pet Diner). Or you can make your own recovery food:

- Pour warm water or chamomile tea over a 1/4 cup of pellets in a bowl

- Allow to sit for about five minutes, letting the pellets “fluff”
- Add additional water or chamomile tea and mix well to make a pudding-like slurry

Always use any type of recovery food “slurry” with caution:

- Never force too much. Allow bunny time to chew and swallow.
- Use a wide-bore syringe or plastic dropper with the narrow tip cut off to safely administer.
- If the tip is too narrow, larger bits can get stuck. Forcing a stuck chunk through the tip can cause a huge blob of food to enter the mouth too quickly, and could cause aspiration.
- Squirt the food into the mouth sideways, behind the incisors, not straight back.
- NEVER try to force feed an animal who is not swallowing normally. Consult your veterinarian immediately if this is the case.

### Special Notes for Neuter Surgeries

The de-sexing of a male animal is known as a castration, or neuter. It involves removing the testicles and some associated structures. (Some tubules and other structures are left behind, as they are located in the lower abdomen.) The purpose of neutering is to remove the main source of testosterone and to permanently stop the production of sperm. While testosterone has its subjective benefits, it also has its risks: it suppresses the immune system, increases aggression, and generally shortens the lifespan of the individual producing it. For this reason alone, your male bunny may live a longer, more peaceful life if he is neutered.

— Although most rabbit-savvy vets perform pre-scrotal neuters, in which

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## Pre- and Post-Operative Care

*(Continued from page 22)*

the scrotum is not cut, a few old-fashioned practitioners still remove the testicles directly through the scrotum. If your male bunny has undergone a scrotal neuter, he may be very sore and swollen (which is why the pre-scrotal method is preferred; ask your vet beforehand, so you will know what to expect.)

— A sitz bath in a dilute solution of Betadine (about 1 tablespoon of povidone iodine per cup of lukewarm water) can be very soothing to a bunny who has undergone a scrotal neuter. But wait until a day after surgery to do this, to allow some recovery from anesthesia and the stress of the surgery itself.

— NOTE THAT MALES MAY HAVE VIABLE SPERM FOR SEVERAL WEEKS POST-NEUTERING! Do not place your male with an intact female until a minimum of three weeks after his neuter surgery! Some males can retain viable sperm for even longer.

The key to success in any elective or necessary surgery is good preparation and attentive care afterwards. A rabbit-savvy veterinarian can make this process as anxiety-free as possible, and will give you all the advice you need for follow-up care.



Squirrelley.

## ADOPTIONS

### Rabbits at ACC

*(Continued from page 19)*

cheeks, and it'll gradually calm him down. Dexter's healthy, shiny coat is an eye-popping combination of jet black and bright white – and highly pettable.

### Joe

Joe is an adorable young bunny who's half crazed with excitement 24/7. This little guy is in constant motion, sniffing and climbing on everything – i.e. extremely hormonal. He'll settle down post-neuter

surgery, though he will probably always score above average on the Rabbit Energy Scale. Joe is all white except for a large patch of light brown fur over his right eye that looks like a giant, and very cute, birthmark.

## 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 [nshreibmd@gmail.com](mailto:nshreibmd@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).**



Sammy.

## 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 SEPTEMBER 2021

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

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

Masthead Logo Designer:  
Mary Ann Maier

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

## Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

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

### Manhattan:

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

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

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

### Westchester County:

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

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

### Long Island:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

**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

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**Gabrielle LaManna**  
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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**