

THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS MAY 2023

Rabbits and Us: We Think We Are So Smart As Summer Arrives, Beware of Heat Stroke and Fly Strike

By Robert Kulka

Humankind and animals have had a relationship all the way back to the time of the “caveman.” Historically, animals have been worshiped and revered, as in the ancient Egyptian culture. The sphinx is an obvious example that is often pictured. But the Egyptians had several gods with a wide range of appearances and a myriad of beneficial powers: Bastet, Thoth, Anubis and Horus. These examples illustrate how animals have been represented in their pure form, blended with both human and mythical characteristics.

It comes as no surprise, then, that in modern times we have depicted animals in a variety of ways. We find them in cartoons, advertising, and as substitutions for human characters. Mickey Mouse, Roger Rabbit, Tom and Jerry. Of course, we have the icons of advertising, including the Energizer Bunny, Nesquik Bunny, Blue Bunny and the Geico Gecko. They talk to us, and they make us laugh. They are imbued with a list of characteristics that somehow always seem more believable than if a human were in the same situation. Just imagine a man marching through your home banging a drum. Never gonna happen.

Is it any wonder that we have graduated to the next level in our dealings with our

Photo: Alex Mcle



We should listen to our rabbits with a new open mind and 'look at their souls through their eyes.'

furry friends? This manifests itself as personification and anthropomorphism.

You can get away with personification since it is a mechanism often used in literature to explain things in human terms. The goal is to make the imagery something we can easily relate to in our own experience.

However, the latter, anthropomorphism, is sometimes considered to be at best silly, and at worst a dirty word. After all, how can you say that your animal

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By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Summer can be a difficult time for rabbits because of the hot days and the dangers posed by fly strike, in particular. As the weather turns warmer, remember that rabbits cannot tolerate hot temperatures. Take precautions so that they stay safe and protected from the heat.

Heat stroke

Rabbits can't cope with summer's heat, and they can die from heat stroke. Always keep an eye on your rabbit, especially during the heat of summer. If humidity is high, the heat index can rise to dangerous levels even when the air temperature is only 75-80 degrees.

Ways to keep your rabbit cool during hot weather:

- Set up a fan that doesn't blow directly on the rabbit. Be sure to bunny-proof any electrical cords.
- Run an air conditioner in the room where the bunny stays.
- Fill large plastic soda bottles with water and freeze them. A bunny can relax against or near the bottles to get relief.

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Summer's Coming

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Kelly with frozen water bottle.



Put ice cubes in the water dish.

- Keep your bunny out of the sun.
- Place a large ceramic or marble tile on the floor for the bunny to lie on.

- Put ice cubes in the water dish and make sure there is plenty of water.
- Move the bunny to a cooler part of the house on hot days.
- Mist the rabbit's ears to keep them cool.
- Brush out any loose fur from the rabbit.
- Provide plenty of wet veggies to keep the rabbit hydrated.

Early signs that your rabbit is suffering from summer stress include lethargy, panting and dehydration. Signs of heat stroke include unresponsiveness, being uncoordinated and convulsions. If you suspect heat stroke, dampen the rabbit's ears and body with cool water, but **DO NOT** submerge him/her in cold water as this can cause shock. **GET THE RABBIT TO YOUR VETERINARIAN OR EMERGENCY CLINIC IMMEDIATELY!**

See House Rabbit Society's Heat Stroke page for more information.

Fly strike

Fly strike (maggot infestation) can kill a healthy animal very quickly. Especially at risk are disabled, overweight or aging bunnies that are unable to clean themselves.

Flies seek to lay their eggs in warm, moist areas and are drawn to the odor of

fur dampened with urine and feces. The damage they cause goes beyond the surface as they burrow into the rabbit's flesh, releasing toxins that can cause lethal shock very quickly.

If you suspect fly strike, get your rabbit to a veterinarian or emergency clinic immediately.

See the House Rabbit Society's page on Fly Strike for more information.

Dangers outside

Leaving a bunny outdoors, even for a short time on a nice day, increases the rabbit's chances of getting overheated and also being in contact with flies, fleas and disease-carrying mosquitos.

A rabbit outdoors can be killed (or literally frightened to death) by neighborhood predators including raccoons, dogs, cats and birds of prey – or severely injured trying to escape. Wire cages and pens offer no protection.

A rabbit outdoors can be exposed to poisonous plants, toxic pesticides and fertilizers, and diseases spread by the feces of raccoons and feral cats passing through your yard.

They are also at risk of theft or teasing by humans, and can escape – even from your arms – if frightened.

So Smart

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(bunny) companion looks sad, mad or indifferent to you? Worse yet, we talk to our rabbits in a voice we imagine they sound like, using baby talk. We do this not for them, but for ourselves. It is much easier in our limited intelligence to explain things we encounter in human terms we can understand. And so, if that is the case, then the humble (bumbling) humans can continue to practice that behavior to aid in their grasp of what we think is happening or what we want to have happen.

Think about it. Animals were on this planet long before the evolution of Homo sapiens. They have instinct and intuition and very possibly something of a psychic ability to see things, hear things and anticipate things far beyond what we can. They are unlike us, too, in that they are forgiving and unconditional in their love. They live each day in the now. Who among us can say the same for how we live our lives?

So, the next time you want to attribute your interpretation of what your bunny is doing based on your limited point of view and talk to him or her like a baby,

the rabbit is probably making allowances for your silly behavior. Remember that rabbits were gods and companions to humankind throughout history. They are seemingly much more evolved in ways we are not. Look at their souls through their eyes. Listen to them with a new open mind and realize you just may have something to learn from our sweet, soft, pretty and intelligent bunnies. They allow us to share their world. Unconditionally.

When You Need Them Most

By Samantha Rowan

I regularly travel for work and I just as regularly insist that when I'm away, my husband or son holds the phone up to Lenny, our senior rabbit, so that I can say hello.

The conversation usually goes something like this:

"Lenny, it's mommy! Can you hear me?" I peer into the camera and wave enthusiastically at a rabbit who is either deliberately ignoring me or exercising what I know to be selective hearing. "How are you doing? Are you getting enough petting? Is your water fresh? Do you want to see where I am?"

After a couple of minutes, I usually give up. Of course, I try again the next morning with the same routine and, of course, I don't get a response. You'd think that after 10 years of this (minus two for the pandemic), I'd stop trying to talk to the rabbit when I was away.

On my last trip, however, things were different. I was in Cannes, where I was speaking at a conference and going to a bunch of meetings, and had arrived from London the night before minus my suitcase. It's a long story – in a nutshell, the airline switched our flight to a smaller plane and passengers had to check their bags. And my bag never made it onto the plane.

I'd spent the first day of the conference going to meetings in my casual clothes and dashing into stores to buy what was essentially an entire wardrobe, a full set of toiletries and an unwanted but fascinating analysis of my skincare routine. By the time my husband and son were up and ready to speak, it was almost one in Cannes (almost seven in New York) and I was more mentally exhausted than I'd ever been on a business trip. I'd just changed into my new clothes in a bathroom in a McDonald's (business travel is so glamorous) and was sitting on a bench outside with a sack of French fries when the phone rang.

It was good to video chat with my husband and son, who talked for a bit and then turned the phone to Lenny. It was the time of day where the sun shines brightly into the part of the apartment where Lenny likes to sleep when it is colder out, and I could see him perfectly illuminated, sitting upright with his ears up and watching what was going on. His whiskers looked exquisite in the sunlight.

It was one of those moments where I knew exactly what it would be like to sit and pet him, telling him all of my relatively minor troubles like you do with a pet, and I knew how he'd snuggle next to me and become a little bunny puddle on the floor for as long as I needed him to.

I said, "Hi Lenny."

And for the first time ever on a call, Lenny's ears perked forward. He had heard my voice – and he knew it was me.

"Say something else," my husband said. "He's listening."

"I'm having a kind of hard trip," I said. "But it's all going to be okay."

Lenny looked at the phone and then around, as if he couldn't see where I was but I knew he could hear me because his ears wobbled again.

"I miss you all," I said. "And I'll be home soon."

It was a moment that brought me great comfort. It reminded me of how the bond with your furry companion spans oceans and time zones and, as I looked at Lenny, I could see all of the things that make him uniquely our companion – how he stands, his expressions, the way he holds his head – that make him different from any other rabbit in the world.

I don't expect Lenny to check in like that again – after all, he's got a lot to do in the way that all pets do. But he checked in for me at the time I needed him most.

Photos: Samantha Rowan



Lenny is a good listener.



I showed Lenny this view of Cannes as I chatted with him.

An Ode to My Rescued Easter Bunny

Photos: Megan Hilands



A few minutes after he came inside, Charlie started to inspect his new environment.



Charlie hops on a chair to survey his kingdom.



Charlie really does cuddle with me!

By Megan Hilands

Around two years ago, my husband and I embarked on our first (and so far, only) solo bunny rescue. Armed with a spare X-pen, towels, treats and a carrier that I kept in our home just in case, we arrived at a spot less than a half mile from our house that a post from our Facebook community group had indicated was the known location of a “lost bunny.” This bunny, which we named Charlie, very quickly warmed our hearts and became a beloved member of our family.

I have written about Charlie’s rescue more extensively in a [past article](#) (page 6) for “Thump.” But years later I am still struck by how close sweet Charlie came to an untimely demise. The recent Easter holiday brought back memories of his rescue. I am grateful that Charlie is in our lives but feel angry and disappointed by the circumstances that brought us together. I believe it is my responsibility to spread the word far and wide about what a poor idea it is to buy animals as holiday gifts.

How (we think) we know Charlie was an Easter bunny

We found Charlie around two months after Easter, and our vet estimated that at the time of rescue he was around 4 to 5 months old. That timeline corresponds almost perfectly with that of a rabbit

who would have been bred as an Easter bunny, gifted to a child, and then later discarded when the child either lost interest, or when the unneutered bunny matured and started to exhibit potentially undesirable behaviors like biting or urine spraying.

Charlie was in fairly good shape for a rescued rabbit. Although he was very thin and tried to eat almost everything in sight, including flowers, during the rescue, his fur was relatively clean and he was immediately curious about his new surroundings when we brought him inside.

The first time we witnessed an encounter between Charlie and a child, though, we saw that his demeanor changed radically. Our happy, friendly bunny started thumping wildly when our then 5- and 7-year-old nephews visited our home for the first time. Our nephews are rather well-behaved and are never permitted to be around the bunnies without adult supervision, but Charlie clearly felt afraid just *seeing* children enter his home. Charlie has since adjusted to our nephews and has learned they will not harm him, but his first reaction really does make me suspect he was mistreated by a child. I do not blame that child necessarily, but as bunny lovers know, the proper treatment of a rabbit is very different from the proper treatment of a cat or dog.

More than likely, a child tried to pick up and carry Charlie in his first home – which is of course quite scary for a bunny, particularly if that child was at all rough!

Charlie still hates being picked up (for essential reasons only) – more than any bunny I’ve ever known, even though he loves pets and is very social.

Charlie then and today

For the first six months or so that Charlie lived with us, I thought he was trying to give the Energizer Bunny a run for his money. He settled into our home quite rapidly and seemed determined to never stop sprinting and climbing on things.

At the same time, he has always been very affectionate and intelligent. When I would sit in his pen, even in the early days, he would curl up next to me and sit for pets for what felt like hours. I remember FaceTiming with my mom within a few weeks of welcoming Charlie to his forever home, and she remarked, “I can’t believe he is sitting with you this whole time. How could someone ever abandon a bunny like that?”

While I don’t really understand how someone could abandon *any* bunny, I agreed with her sentiment. Charlie is the kind of bunny a lot of people would search for when looking for a new

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Deadly Virus Spreads to More Areas In California, Texas and Colorado

By House Rabbit Society

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 a high death rate and a very short incubation period. It is continuing to spread.

As many as 70% to 100% of rabbits exposed to the virus will die within 48 hours to 10 days after exposure.

Even indoor-only rabbits are at risk of RHDV2, since the virus can be transferred to them by people, other animals and even insects.

Symptoms of the virus can include loss of appetite, lethargy, high fever, difficulty breathing, seizures, jaundice and bleeding from the nose, mouth or rectum.

The most important thing you can do to protect your rabbits is to get them vaccinated.

In March, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife announced a new

domestic rabbit RHDV2 case in Sacramento County.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has reported more recent RHDV2 cases, all in wild cottontails or jackrabbits so far. And the Colorado Department of Agriculture confirmed two new RHDV2 cases in wild cottontails.

A U.S.-based RHDV2 vaccine was given Emergency Use Authorization in 2021. The Medgene vaccine is available in most states and Washington, D.C., and is safe and effective. So far, Medgene safety-testing studies report only rare instances of swelling at the injection site that resolve within 48 hours. Other possible side effects are a temporary slight fever and/or lethargy for one to two days. To learn more about the Medgene vaccine, visit House Rabbit Society's RHDV resource center at rabbit.org/rhdv.



If you have professional experience in PR, news media, broadcast media, social media or website management and would like to help rabbits, please reach out!

NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

Rescued Easter Bunny

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animal companion. He is a truly special mix of affection and adventure.

Charlie is a little older and calmer now but is still incredibly inquisitive, playful and friendly. He is a good neighbor to our bonded pair, Simba and Nala, who after an appropriate adjustment period don't seem too bothered by sharing their humans and home with Charlie. As long as you don't try to pick him up, he will be your best friend.

Charlie is not afraid to show me what he wants, either. If he wants pets he'll find my hand and nudge it until I start to stroke his forehead.

What we can do

Every year when Easter rolls around, I find myself a little sad, knowing that

families around the country will choose to buy rabbits for the holiday. If you're reading this issue of Thump, you probably already know that rabbits take a lot of care and should only ever be brought into a home as a member of the family, with a responsible adult as the primary caregiver. I feel that the more we spread awareness about proper rabbit care and companionship with our network, the more people will understand just how special rabbits are. Supporting organizations like House Rabbit Society and Make Mine Chocolate are important, but I also feel as if we can all do our part by letting our friends know about our amazing rabbits. Personal connections can be quite powerful when disseminating information.

Legislation is another critical piece of the puzzle. At the end of 2022, the state

of New York joined California in banning the sale of rabbits, cats, and dogs in commercial pet stores. The law does not go into effect until 2024 but will hopefully prompt neighboring states – like New Jersey, where I live – to consider similar bills.

I do not view myself as a politically active person, but I have contacted my representatives in the past to express my support for animal rights and related bills. I feel that although the sheer number of bunnies each spring and summer can be overwhelming, there is progress.

I remain hopeful that one day we might live in a world where domestic bunnies like Charlie are never abandoned and left to fend for themselves outdoors.

Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

By Noah the Bunny with assistance from Shari Zagorski

Hello human friends!

This is Spokesbunny Noah here with an update on my education activities. As many of you know, I volunteer as an advocate for the domestic bunnies out there who need loving homes. My role is to exhibit exemplary bunny behavior while humans pet me and volunteers from Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group teach all about bunny care, rescue efforts and adoption.

We had a flurry of library events prior to Easter, serving as perfect opportunities to dissuade families from purchasing baby bunnies as holiday gifts. It started on March 4 with a doubleheader at Elmont Public Library in the morning and North Merrick Public Library in the afternoon.

At Elmont Public Library, we were in a giant room (think: perfect for bunny zoomies...if only!) with many young children. I sat on a table during the librarian's reading of "The Forgotten Rabbit" and while the Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group volunteers told our guests all about what LIRRG does, how to care for bunnies, and why it's so important to foster and adopt rescued bunnies like me. The children and their families did a bunny-themed craft and each came over to pet me and feed me a little treat of parsley. There was one small girl, eye level with me while I was on the table, who was clearly very happy to see a bunny. She apparently was too young or excited to speak, but her smile, body language and other sounds pretty much communicated how she felt.

North Merrick Public Library's afternoon program was similar in format. One of our LIRRG volunteers read the story and our human squad talked about our favorite topics. A group of volunteer teenagers helped the younger

Photo: Tony Squicciarino



LIRRG volunteer squad at Elmont Public Library.

Photo: Tony Squicciarino



Somebunny loves me at North Merrick Public Library.

children with an art project and one little girl presented her "somebunny loves you" craft to me as a gift. Then the teen volunteers all had a chance to pet me and feed me treats. But the coolest part of this event was that the library created a TikTok reel about my visit!

The following weekend, the Oceanside Library children's room hosted me. They

Photo: Oceanside Library



Making gift toys for the foster bunnies at Oceanside Library.

had a fun area of the temporary library set aside for us. All ages attended this event, so we had the LIRRG volunteers do a rabbit presentation. Attendees asked questions and created bunny toys for the foster bunnies. A whole bag of cardboard toilet paper tubes stuffed with Timothy hay was sent up to our group's

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How Many Neighbors Does It Take to Put Together a Bunny Pen?

By Jean Mellano

In a fine display of genius and tenacity, several adults came together to assemble a new residence for my Bennington Bunny.

Just about every day, Bennington had rattled his pen to get my attention in the morning, hoping I would get out of bed to feed him. When he did this,

however, the pen configuration always changed and it often blocked my desk in the breakfast nook area.

I decided to get Bennington a new enclosure that would inhibit his ability to rattle and redesign his space. Little did I know that the assembly of this is enclosure would require me to ask my

neighbors for some help, and I also didn't realize how much help I would need. I am sure anyone who has purchased furniture from IKEA can relate to this.

The project started at around 11 a.m. The first neighbor who volunteered to help was Herb, who opened the box and

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Spokesbunny Noah

(Continued from page 6)

main foster house for my bunny friends to enjoy! The children who came to this event were particularly gentle and sweet. I truly appreciated getting soft pats on my ears.

After a two-week vacation, our next event was on April 1 at East Williston Public Library in a charming multipurpose meeting room upstairs. Since the weather was rainy, loads of extra humans attended after finding their prior plans were canceled. My human decided to play a little April Fools' joke on the crowd and introduced me as a "paper shredder" that was included in a special offer from Dunder Mifflin. Believe me, I didn't find it funny! Since LIRRG had some new volunteers at this event, I gave them a chance to hold me in a safe manner after the presentation. My bean-bag impression makes it easier for those less familiar with picking up bunnies.

The day before Easter, we had a totally different type of venue. It was like the marathon of education events. Instead of an hour visit, this was six hours of being on my best bunny behavior, including two special presentations. As part of an "Animal Week" celebration at the Center for Science Teaching and Learning in Rockville Centre, several animal rescue groups were invited to set up shop near their museum exhibit. All of the visitors had to pass by the LIRRG display (and me) on their way to the

Photo: Shari Zegorski



Spokesbunny Noah getting cuddles from LIRRG volunteer at East Williston Public Library.

dinosaurs. It was a great outreach effort for LIRRG and rescue groups in general. The best part of the day was when I got to be a little girl's special birthday present! She and her family had met me at the Oceanside Library the month before and apparently for her sixth birthday, all she wanted was to spend the day with ME!! Her family came to volunteer their help at the event and we gave the birthday girl a special bunny T-shirt. As an added bonus, I sat on her lap and she mushed me so gently. I'm not sure who was happier!

Since Easter, I've had a bit of time off to relax. In May, we have events at the Bryant Library in Roslyn and the Lindenhurst Memorial Library, and in July at Mineola Memorial Library and Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library.

Photo: Tony Squicciarino



Noah giving a birthday snuggle at the Center for Science Teaching and Learning.

I'm super binky excited about my newest coming venture – to be LIRRG's spokesbunny at vegan events in Oceanside. Plant Daddy's Kitchen, a plant-based food wholesaler, is partnering with Long Island Vegan Pop Up to host several vegan markets on Friday nights this summer.

It's always fun meeting humans and hopping to new places representing LIRRG.

I know I'm only one little bunny, but the more humans I can reach and educate, the greater the chance of helping to save another bunny. Please feel free to join me if you can.

Until next time, this is Spokesbunny Noah signing off!

Morus and His Alopecia

Our page one masthead bunny, Morus, has a condition called alopecia. This intermittent condition, believed caused by a partial hairless gene, causes the skin on his back to get red and crusty when the fur is gone. It comes and goes, and the volunteers at Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group have taken steps to make him comfortable. He LOVES to flop and roll, so his cute shirts can potentially protect him from abrasion. We're

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Photo: Kaitie Starr



Bald spots on Morus's back.

How Many Neighbors

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inventoried the parts. (That was a project in itself.) He then told me to call his wife, Kathy. Herb said she had the knowhow to complete the job.

Kathy came over and, after spending about 30 minutes trying to get one stubborn screw to turn, she joined Herb in collecting the packing materials so that they could be tossed. By then, it was time for lunch. When we resumed at 2 p.m., we weren't even close to finishing Bennington's new abode. Herb, Kathy and I couldn't get past setting up three panels out of 10 and we were fading fast.

It was time to call in the big gun: Ted. We were now about four hours into this project. Ted and I went back and forth several times trying to decide which poles and connectors were required and where they needed to go. After many discussions, Ted and I finally were on a roll and figured out where and how the parts needed to be assembled. Ted asked me to call his wife, Phyllis, so she wouldn't be sitting at home wondering what happened to her husband. Around 3:30, Phyllis came over and when we lost a part, she pointed us to where Ted or I had misplaced it.

Photos: Jean Mellano



Ted makes progress, and the pen takes shape.



Phyllis offers her encouragement.

Ted had ukulele practice at 5 and was reluctant to leave without finishing the project. Phyllis just rolled her eyes because Ted never likes to leave a project unfinished. I assured him my cousin



Bennington inspects his new home.

and her husband (Terry and Allan) were stopping by the following day and they could help me finish. There were still about four panels left to be installed.

Between Terry offering suggestions on how to position the parts and Allan's frustration trying to line up the poles, panels and screws, there were some tense moments at the end. But Bennington finally got his new pen.

Maybe if we had read the instruction book in the beginning, the project may not have taken so long or required so many helpers. I sure hope Bennington appreciates that it took five neighbors plus two relatives of mine and about six hours to complete this task.

Morus

(Continued from page 8)

experimenting with his diet, too, to see if certain foods might lessen alopecia flare-ups.

Morus tends to overgroom his bald spots and make them worse, so his shirts help provide protection for his skin. The skin on his hocks is also affected, and so we have given him stylish socks to wear. Thankfully, he loves his colorful socks because there is almost no fur on his hocks.

Morus is looking for a home, and he treats his genetic condition as just a minor nuisance. He is an active bun, always on the prowl for fun. His adopter will be rewarded with hours of entertainment. Contact LIRRG to learn more:
information@longislandrabbitrescue.org

Photo: Karie Scarr



Watch Morus here: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CsmlknhuY78/?igshid=ZWQyN2ExYTkWZQ==>

Thank You, LIRRG

They've noticed buns abandoned, unhealthy and unloved
They stepped up to the challenge and properly educated us.
'Bunnies can't live in cages, outside or without love.
They usually don't like to be picked up for your kisses or your hugs.'
Bring your bunny for their checkups. Make sure they eat and poop.
Your bunny demands attention with a little nosey 'boop.'
The work may seem endless, overwhelming and just too much,
But the bunnies they save are thankful to know compassion and gentle touch
They work with the grumpy buns, the spunky and the scared
To show not every human is negligent. Some of us care.
So thank you to the founders, the volunteers and the friends,
It's because of you our bunny families have 'happy tales' in the end.

– Gabbi Campbell 2023

We Love You Forever, Puddle

By Lauren Eddings

In October 2018, I went out on a catch for a rabbit in Centereach, Long Island. We quickly contained a big beautiful girl who had been on the streets for six months. Upon bringing her home, the perfect name came to us when she flopped down and looked like a puddle of bunny. My husband, Justin, and I like to foster as many of the rescued rabbits as we can, and so Puddle became a temporary resident at our house in Huntington.

With big pink ears, beautiful eyes and eyelashes to boot, this 9-pound rabbit captured my heart on day one. As enamored as I was by her, Puddle didn't feel the same about us. Puddle was a loafy, lazy-looking bunny who loved her cardboard box chalets, hop and flop, and treats. She never moved fast except for when you approached her, and then she made it abundantly clear that if you had no food she had no interest.

While Puddle's looks dazzled everyone, her lack of affinity for people didn't draw in many adopters. She didn't want pets in any form. A year went by, then two, then three, then four. Puddle watched many rabbits come and go from our home. Her position as longest-standing foster earned her the rights and privileges of acting like she lived here. She had the biggest, room-sized pen, and quickly let any bunny-newcomer explorers know that her space was not for them to hang out in. She had an exceptional tolerance for our cats, who were frequent visitors to her space. She learned to love us when banana or any snacks were involved. Her best companion was as a stuffed pony that she licked and moved around the pen.

Last year, Puddle began to have some medical difficulties. She got bloat and survived three times. She had a large mammary tumor removed. She fought each time and she came back seemingly invincible to it all. In early April, she had a great checkup at Catnip & Carrots

Photos: Lauren Eddings



Puddle inspecting her name.



Stretching out at home.



Exploring a paper bag.



Puddle with her pony.

Veterinary Hospital. The next day she spiked a fever. She came home from a short hospitalization and then the fever was back, and with that came the bloat. While I had hoped so hard this fourth time would be like all the others, after three days, it was clear there wasn't any more fight to be had. On April 12, we made the decision to let Puddle pass as peacefully as we could.

While technically, she was a foster, for the past 4½ years, we were home for Puddle. Truth be told, while no adoption papers were signed, we knew this rabbit wasn't leaving. She was the most lovable,

albeit unlovable, rabbit and she made a forever footprint in this house.

We love you forever, Puddle Alphabet Eddings.

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

For Information on Adopting Any of Our Rabbits, Contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com



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.

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.



Lucy.

Lucy

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

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 people whom she trusts. 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.

(Continued on page 13)

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



Emmett.

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

Emmett

Emmett was rescued in February of 2022 when he was left on the side of the road in a cage with another rabbit. He can be a bit of a princess, dumping his food bowl over and throwing it across

his pen. Overall, he's a sweet guy who will let you pet him and has the most beautiful baby blue eyes.

Tara

Miracle bun Tara was rescued from a playground as a newborn in June 2022 by her foster mom. Despite her rough beginning, she grew into a clever, feisty, independent and loving bun. Tara loves her toys, cardboard and blankies, but can be very particular with the arrangement of her things as well as with her litter box (she prefers her business done on one side and her hay on the other). She loves nose rubs, head pats, behind-the-ear scratches and whole body pets. This adventurous girl loves to climb and will require a higher X-pen or dog crate. If you're looking for a bun filled with personality, energy and love, Tara is the perfect girl for you.

Chamomile

Chamomile was rescued from the streets during winter and is an active, independent and sometimes cautious bun. She has great litter-box habits, but does get overexcited for meal time – she will grunt and lunge when food is around and she is in her cage, but will settle down if you pet her head. Once she settles for pets she will stay for a long time. With such a diverse personality, Chamomile surely is lovable and would be the perfect addition to any home.



Tara.



Chamomile.

Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Mackenzie, Marcus, Charlene, Ashton, Olivier, Neve, Faline, Antonia, Ziggy and Lola were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

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

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



Olei.



Penny Proud.



Jr.

RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 11)

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.

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 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.



Timmy.



Purple and Blue.



Carmela.



Paco.

(Continued on page 14)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Manhattan ACC

(Continued from page 13)



Baby.



Robin and Heartwood.



Beauty.



Fudge.



Lola.



Daffodil.



Rompers.

ADOPTIONS

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



Muffin.



D.J. and Suki.



Lou.



Fluffy.



Dinkles.



Tokyo.



Rosie Puff.



Snugs.



Crumb.

(Continued on page 16)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC

(Continued from page 15)



Kirishima.



Belize.



Snowflake.



Jet.



Jackolantern.

Gastrointestinal Stasis, the Silent Killer

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

University of Miami Biology Department
House Rabbit Society of Miami

It's an all too familiar story. "My bunny stopped eating, and then she just died."

When we ask for details, we often learn that not only did the bunny stop eating, but she had been producing extremely small or even no fecal droppings, or showed symptoms of "runny stool." True diarrhea (unformed, liquid fecal matter) is uncommon in rabbits. The runny stool sometimes misidentified as "diarrhea" in rabbits is more often composed of unformed, almost-liquid cecotropes.

Rabbits produce two types of pellets: fecal pellets (left in the litter box) and cecotropes (soft, pungent, normally shaped like a cluster of grapes and reingested by the rabbit to obtain essential nutrients). Liquid or mushy cecotropes can result from an imbalance of the normal bacterial and fungal flora of the cecum (the bunny's intestinal "fermentation vat"). The floral imbalance can be caused by a number of factors, such as the wrong antibiotic (oral penicillins and lincosamide antibiotics can be very dangerous to rabbits for this reason) or a diet too rich in digestible carbohydrates and too low in crude fiber. Often, however, it is caused by a slowing of the normal peristaltic muscular contractions that push food and liquids through the intestines. The slowdown or cessation of peristalsis of the intestine is known as gastrointestinal (GI) stasis or ileus.

What Causes GI Stasis?

A rabbit's intestine can become static for a variety of reasons, including (1) stress, (2) dehydration, (3) pain from another underlying disorder or illness (such as gas, dental problems, infections, or

urinary tract disorders) (4) an intestinal blockage or, (5) insufficient dietary crude fiber. Left untreated, the slowdown or complete cessation of normal intestinal movement (peristalsis) can result in a painful death, in a relatively short period of time. If your rabbit stops eating or producing feces for 12 hours or more, you should consider the condition an emergency. Get your bunny to a rabbit-savvy veterinarian immediately.

An intestinal slowdown can cause ingested hair and food to lodge anywhere along the GI tract, creating a potential blockage. Also, because the cecum is not emptying quickly enough, harmful bacteria such as *Clostridium species* (related to the ones that cause botulism and tetanus) can proliferate, their numbers overwhelming those of the normal, beneficial bacteria and fungi in the cecum. Once this overgrowth occurs, gas emitted by the bacteria can cause extreme pain. Some *Clostridium species* also produce potentially deadly toxins. It is the liver's job to detoxify these poisons, at a high cost to that all-important organ. Damage to the liver can be a serious – even life-threatening – side effect of GI stasis.

How Can GI Stasis Be Detected?

Symptoms of GI stasis include very small (or no) fecal pellets, sometimes clinging to the bunny's bottom. In some cases, very small fecal pellets will be encased in clear or yellowish mucus. This potentially serious problem (enteritis, an inflammation of the intestinal lining) should be treated as an emergency.

With GI stasis, the normal, quiet gurgling of the healthy intestine may be replaced either by very loud, violent gurgles (gas moving around painfully) or silence.

Photos: Christie Taylor



Normal fecal pellets.



Normal cecotrope.

The bunny may become lethargic, have no appetite and may hunch in a ball, loudly crunching his teeth in pain.

GI Stasis and the "Hairball" Myth

Sometimes, a rabbit suffering from GI stasis is diagnosed as having a "hairball." In reality, an apparent hairball usually is a result of GI stasis – not the cause. A vet who has not palpated many rabbit abdomens may be unfamiliar with the normal, sometimes "doughy" feel of the healthy rabbit stomach. A "doughy" stomach is usually cause for concern only when accompanied by an empty lower GI and symptoms of abdominal discomfort.

Like those of most herbivores, the stomach and intestines of a healthy rabbit are never empty. A rabbit may eat relatively normal amounts of food,

(Continued on page 18)

Silent Killer *(Continued from page 17)*

almost up to the time the GI tract shuts down. Because of this, the stomach may contain a large bolus of food when stasis occurs. Unlike the typical cat hairball, which usually consists entirely of hair, a mass misidentified as a “hairball” in a rabbit is usually composed mostly of food held together by hair and mucus. Such a bolus, even if it is dehydrated and unable to pass out of the stomach when initially found, usually can be broken down slowly with plenty of oral fluids and even enzyme supplements, if the vet deems them necessary. However, if the mass is there as a result of chronic GI stasis, simply treating the mass without addressing the GI stasis will be unproductive in the long term.

If you suspect that your bunny is experiencing GI stasis, you must take him/her to your rabbit-experienced veterinarian without delay. Tell the vet your suspicions. S/he will probably listen for normal intestinal sounds and palpate the bunny’s abdomen. The vet also may wish to take radiographs (X-rays)

to see whether the various parts of the digestive tract contain normal ingested matter, feces or foreign objects – or are empty and gassy. The appearance of the digestive tract will help the vet determine whether there is an obstruction and, if so, where it is located.

If a true intestinal obstruction (almost always accompanied by severe bloating and acute pain) is present, the use of intestinal motility drugs could make the situation worse by pushing the blockage into a narrow area where it completely obstructs the intestine. However, if the mass is not causing an acute, complete blockage, medical alternatives to surgery should be considered first. A gastrotomy – surgical opening of the stomach – may be performed to remove a gastric obstruction, but rabbits who undergo this procedure have an abysmally low survival rate. Those who survive the surgery itself often succumb a few days later to peritonitis or other complications, even when under the care of the most practiced, skillful rabbit surgeon. Surgery on the rabbit GI tract should be considered only as a last resort.

Can GI Stasis Be Successfully Treated?

If your vet has determined that there is no intestinal obstruction, there are several treatments s/he may wish to use to help your bunny in distress. As always, do not perform any of these procedures or try to administer any of these medications without the supervision of a veterinarian experienced with rabbit disorders and treatments.

Treatments and protocols for stasis are subject to constant revision and improvement as new information becomes available. As a result, it is important to use the [rabbit.org link](http://rabbit.org) on the House Rabbit Society website to access the most recent, updated version of the treatment information provided for stasis. When you scroll down, you will find treatment information under the following topics: Mechanical Treatments, Nonprescription Supportive Measures, Prescription/Veterinary Treatments, Pain Relief, The Road to Recovery, Backtracking to the Cause, and Prevention.

Photos: Jené O'Wyatt



Tina.



Peri.



Tillie.

Adoptable Rabbits

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

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

On **Long Island**, contact information@longislandrabbitrescue.org.

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

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

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only. Please contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com to make arrangements.

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

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

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

Photo: Kristen Ghroldi



Chip.

Donations

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

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to www.longislandrabbitrescue.org.

THUMP MAY 2023

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
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
bunnytorts@gmail.com

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

Laura George, DVM

Long Island:

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

Mary Ann Maier
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group
Volunteer, altitude8@yahoo.com,
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

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

Jennifer Saver, DVM