

# THUMP

## NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS SEPTEMBER 2023

### Avery, Rhys and Four New Babies Are Rescued Amid Summer Heat Wave

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

We are in the midst of one of the worst seasons for abandoned rabbits in recent memory. On any given day, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab will receive half a dozen emails asking for help finding placement for rabbits: owner surrenders, dumped rabbits spotted outside, accidental litters, and more.

In July, one of these emails came from a woman who'd found a rabbit abandoned in her Yonkers backyard. Attached to her email there was a photo of a beautiful brown lop. We were facing a heat wave with temperatures of over 90, and heavy rainfall was also in the forecast. The hot weather was particularly worrisome for a lop because these rabbits overheat more easily than their up-eared counterparts.

We searched for several days and when we finally found and caught Avery, as we would later name her, she was soaking wet and showing signs of heat exhaustion. We rushed to cool her down and were thrilled to see her improve and begin to eat after only a few hours inside.

There was barely a moment to breathe a sigh of relief about Avery's improvement when she feverishly began gathering huge bundles of hay and clumps of her own fur to build a nest in record time. Not an hour after she set to work, Avery gave birth to four babies in the early morning hours of July 20.

Just as the new babies arrived, Avery's finder called again to say she had spotted

*(Continued on page 2)*

Avery's babies, 3 weeks old.



Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

### Please Help Us In Caring for Lilac

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Lilac.

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Lilac came to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab with an unusual background. Old vet records showed she had broken a back leg as a very young rabbit. Rather than amputating, which is often the recommended intervention for a rabbit with this type of injury, she'd had a pin inserted to stabilize the break and remarkably, the surgery was successful and Lilac regained complete normal use of the leg. Later, when we first met Lilac, she had developed a large trichoblastoma that had grown to the circumference of a golf ball and then ruptured. She was scheduled for surgery to remove the mass, after which she quickly bounced back to her usual fun-loving and playful self.

Having already faced much more than a fair share of veterinary emergencies, we

*(Continued on page 2)*

Foster Parents Make Miracles Happen

Things We Don't Like to Talk About

Having a Rabbit Can Change Your Life

Page 8

Page 10

Page 11

## Welcome to Avery

*(Continued from page 1)*

a second rabbit in the area where Avery had been dumped. We returned and caught Rhys, a large white rabbit with ginger markings, and the presumed father to Avery's babies.

Avery is a very good mother to her babies, who at only 2 months old are almost as big as she is. If they catch up to their dad, they'll soon outweigh their 4.5-pound mom. Time will tell if any of Avery's babies inherit her lop ears; the littlest boy, Pigeon, already spends most

of the time with his ears perfectly parallel to the ground. And surprisingly, each of the six rabbits is a unique color. No two babies are the same, and none are exactly like either parent.

All of the members of this family will soon need foster and/or permanent homes. Please reach out if you are able to foster or adopt and would be interested in meeting them. We would also deeply appreciate any donations made to help support the six spay and neuter surgeries that will take place over the coming months.

## Lilac

*(Continued from page 1)*

were devastated for Lilac when earlier this year, we brought her for an exam and her vet felt a large mass in Lilac's abdomen. An X-ray confirmed there was definitely something present in the region of her reproductive organs, and it called into question whether she had actually been spayed as a young rabbit as her early records indicated she had been.

Exact percentages are not known, but unspayed female rabbits have about an 80% chance of developing reproductive cancers by several years of age. In our experience, nearly every female rabbit we've taken in at over 5 years of age (and many who were younger) has had uterine tumor growth found during the spay surgery. If not caught early enough, it can readily become metastatic. This was one of our primary fears for Lilac, though the mass itself was so unusual and unidentifiable that surgery would be the only way to learn more, hopefully in the process of removing the mass. In preparation for surgery, Lilac received X-rays, blood tests and two ultrasounds.

This already complicated situation shockingly became even more so when Lilac developed a mass at the base of her ear consistent with an inner-ear infection. We started her on penicillin (which must be given by daily sub-Q injection) and waited, hoping to see improvement. Despite all of these serious issues, Lilac's attitude and behaviors have remained unchanged, much to our huge relief. Lilac loves human interaction and running around carrying her toys and even her whole bed, and to this day, she has continued to be the active and playful rabbit that we have always known her to be.

In August, Lilac received a full body CT scan to assess the status of both her abdominal mass and ear infection. The scan confirmed Lilac had developed an abscess in her left ear, which allowed her vet to safely aspirate and remove some

*(Continued on page 6)*

Photos: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Beautiful babies, 10 days old.



Avery shortly after rescue.



# The Bunny Food Critic Roundup

By Megan Hilands

We're heading into harvest season, and I'm sure humans and bunnies alike are starting to think about what yummy treats they are going to devour. From pumpkin spice (for humans) to juicy apples of all varieties (for humans and bunnies), late summer to fall is perhaps the best time for fresh fruits, veggies and other natural delights.

My bunnies have strong opinions on which particular rabbit-safe greens and fruits they prefer to eat. When I serve certain veggies to my bunny Simba, she will sometimes approach them and stare at me as if to say, "This again? Don't you have anything better?" before proceeding to eat. I think she's waiting to see if I will provide something different!

Simba inspired me to present a list of my bunnies' ratings for common foods. Here are rankings from Simba, Nala and Charlie for common dinner greens and fresh fruit treats.

**Cilantro**  
 Simba: 6  
 Nala: 8  
 Charlie: 8

Cilantro is a fresh-tasting staple in the bunnies' diet. While they're not using it to make guacamole as I am, I will often serve cilantro to the buns on "Taco Tuesday" so they can be part of my weekly festivities. Cilantro gets a high mark from Charlie and Nala, who munch it eagerly almost as soon as it's served, but a 6 from Simba as this is one of the veggies that she sniffs a bit before deciding it is worthy of her consumption.

**Kale**  
 Simba: 10  
 Nala: 10  
 Charlie: 10

Kale is the bunnies' all-time favorite green. It's 10s all around for this veggie. They go crazy for it and start running around as soon as they can smell me washing it for them. If kale did not

Photos: Megan Hilands



Simba.



Nala.

**Kale, (continued)**  
 contain calcium and need to be limited in bunnies' diets, I would probably serve it daily.

**Parsley**  
 Simba: 5  
 Nala: 7  
 Charlie: 7

Parsley gets moderate ratings from all bunnies. It stays fresh longer than other greens, and Nala and Charlie think it's tasty, but because it has some calcium and is not Simba's favorite, we do not serve it as often as other veggies.

**Dill**  
 Simba: 8  
 Nala: 9  
 Charlie: 9

This sweet-smelling herb earns high marks all around from the bunnies in our home. Dill is probably the veggie we serve most frequently because of its pleasant taste, reasonable cost, and low calcium content.

**Green leaf**  
 Simba: 7  
 Nala: 8  
 Charlie: 8

All of the bunnies enjoy green leaf lettuce and give it fairly high marks. We serve it fairly often but it is not as readily available as other veggies in our local store.

**Strawberries**  
 Simba: 8  
 Nala: 10  
 Charlie: 6

Strawberries are a bit of a divider for our bunnies. Nala loves them and will eat them right out of my hand. Simba enjoys them, too, but for Charlie they are a bit of a miss. He will eat them but clearly prefers other fruits and veggies. Considering strawberries are a treat food, we prefer to serve Charlie something he would enjoy a bit more.

**Apples (any variety)**  
 Simba: 10  
 Nala: 10  
 Charlie: 10

Apples are so loved by our bunnies that if my husband or I try to eat one ourselves, we have to "share" a piece with all three bunnies. When they hear the crunching sounds of us eating an apple they simply go crazy, periscoping and jumping around until they are served a piece. The bunnies love apples so much that they will hop on our laps and try to steal apples right from our hands and even mouths! As apples are high in sugar, though, they are strictly treats and served in moderation.

(Continued on page 4)

# RHDV2 Confirmed for the First Time in Illinois

By House Rabbit Society

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

In July, the Illinois Department of Agriculture said RHDV2 was detected for the first time in Illinois in a domestic rabbit in Cook County. Prior to this detection, the disease had not been diagnosed in Illinois in either domestic or wild rabbits.

Also in July, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife confirmed RHDV2 in a rabbit on Whidbey Island. This is the first known case of the disease in a wild lagomorph (rabbits, hares, and pikas) in Washington State.

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

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Tillie.

are carriers and can infect other rabbits for at least 42 days or longer as they continue to shed the virus.

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

the U.S. and Mexico. The new strain, RHDV2, emerged in France in 2010.

Indoor-only rabbits are at risk because the virus can be transferred to them by people (on their shoes and clothes), other animals (including dogs and cats, especially if they go outside), and even insects.

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

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

## Bunny Food Critic *(Continued from page 3)*

Photo: Megan Hilland



Charlie.

never encountered a bunny-safe veggie or treat she doesn't like. Nala is the only bunny in our home who keeps trying to walk on hardwood despite the many carpets covering our floors.

Charlie (2 years old) is the athlete of our family and needs a variety of healthy foods to fuel his daily activities. Like Nala, he loves just about every fruit and veggie and enjoys a tasty snack after climbing on the couch.

Simba (9 years old) has the most refined palate of any bunny in our home. She knows what she likes and doesn't want to settle for anything below her standard. Simba's perfect meal would be a kale and apple salad served after a day of running around the house.

### About the Critics

Nala (9 years old) is an adventurous bunny who simply loves to eat. She's



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

## Lurking Lenny

By Samantha Rowan

I was working at the table in my apartment a few weeks ago, minding my own business and (for once) completely focusing on what I was doing, when I had that back-of-the-neck feeling that someone was watching me. It was an odd feeling because apart from Lenny, our senior rabbit, I was alone in the apartment.

I was pretty sure Lenny was under the couch, doing his research or whatever it is he does under there all day, when I suddenly saw him. Lenny was standing next to a bookcase, with most of his body hidden, apart from his fuzzy little face.

“What do you want?” I asked. “Pets?” No, Lenny did not want pets. He grunted and ran underneath the couch and I went back to my work. A couple of hours later (okay, maybe 20 minutes), I decided it was snack time. On my way to the fridge, I caught another glimpse of him. This time he was lurking next to a wall, staring at me in the same exact way.

“What’s going on? Do you feel like you’re not getting enough love?”

Another grunt, another scamper. But literally every time I turned around for the next week or so, I would catch a glimpse of Lenny staring at me, half-hidden, in places where he usually NEVER went. Sometimes all I saw was an eye, part

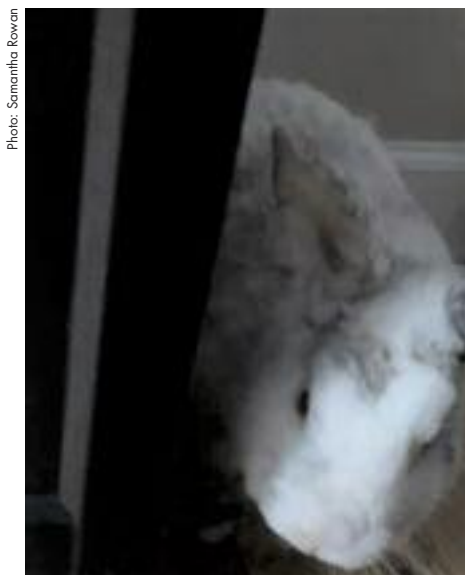


Photo: Samantha Rowan

Lurking or stalking?

of his nose and some whiskers. It was unnerving to say the least, and became even more so when I mentioned it to my husband.

“Did you notice Lenny’s been lurking?” I asked.

He snorted. “I think what he’s doing is called stalking.”

I tried to salvage the situation. “So you don’t think it’s cute?”

“No, he’s stalking you. You’re the prey.”

I hadn’t thought of it that way, but again – even if I was the prey– what could a 6-pound rabbit actually do to me? I decided the best course of action was to continue to observe Lenny, just to see

where he was going to take this. He kept lurking and I kept catching sight of him staring at me from the most ungodly places.

It all came to a head one Friday afternoon, when I stumbled upon Lenny staring at me from behind the couch. I was just getting on a Zoom call with my editor in London. Instead of saying hello, I said, “I think my rabbit is trying to kill me.”

And my editor said, “Lenny? I’ve met him! He’s a sweet little guy. He would never!”

I opened my mouth to protest and then saw Lenny as my editor had seen him – small and white, clean and bright (kind of like the “Edelweiss” song from “The Sound of Music”). Big eyes and clean paws and eager ears. Lenny was probably really just looking for some extra love.

After my call with my editor, I plunked myself down on the floor next to him. Lenny grunted.

“Listen mister, I think you are asking for extra love! And I’m going to pet you,” I said.

I sat with Lenny for a good long time, petting him until he was soft and sleepy. The lurking stopped soon after. I still don’t know if that was a coincidence or not. But I do know Halloween is coming up. Thankfully, Lenny can’t buy a fright mask; otherwise I’d be in trouble!

## Autumn Safety Concerns

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

An outside rabbit? Don’t fall for it! Cool days and falling leaves make us want to savor the last of the pleasures of summer and perhaps share it with our rabbits. However, bringing a bunny outdoors to romp in the leaves is never a good idea,

and even bringing leaves inside for them to play in can be extremely dangerous, too.

### Poisonous plants

Before allowing your rabbit to eat or come in contact with any plant, you should be aware of the plants that are toxic to rabbits. Here’s [the House Rabbit](#)

[Society list](#). Anything brought in can also carry harmful pesticides and fertilizers. Although we see squirrels collecting acorns outside, both acorns and oak leaves are toxic to our bunnies. Many plants found in yards all over our

*(Continued on page 6)*



## Call to Action

Congress is considering a law that threatens animal-rights legislation throughout the U.S. The EATS (Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression) Act would erase the local and state laws currently protecting animals from the worst abuses.

Animal advocates have worked hard to pass state and local legislation in New York that would ban puppy mills, cosmetic testing, foie gras production and other harmful activities. But now, the federal Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression Act threatens all of that.

Here in New York, rabbit advocates and rescuers celebrated a hard-fought victory

this past December when Gov. Kathy Hochul signed legislation to prohibit the state's pet stores from selling dogs, cats and rabbits. The new law, which will take effect in 2024, was supported by animal-welfare groups throughout the state. Rabbit Rescue & Rehab members actively pushed for the legislation by calling and emailing the governor.

Unfortunately, the New York state law, as well as other animal-rights measures in states and cities throughout the country, could be in jeopardy.

The EATS Act is backed by certain businesses seeking to overturn state and

local laws that protect animals from some of the worst cruelty. While this bill is specifically designed to overturn laws affecting factory-farmed animals, its language is so broad that it potentially could endanger recently passed animal-rights legislation in New York City and New York state.

To express your opposition to the EATS Act, please go to the "Action Alert" posted online by [Voters for Animal Rights](#), an animal advocacy group. You can sign your name and send an email to your legislators in Washington.

## Lilac

*(Continued from page 2)*

of the pus to relieve pressure and send for a culture and sensitivity test. It also gave us more information on the abnormalities in her abdomen in preparation for surgery, which was scheduled for later that week.

During surgery, one large mass was removed (and histopathology later confirmed it to be an abscess), but a second large mass was completely entangled and attached to other organs, including her bladder. This mass will never be able to be removed, but as it

has caused her no pain or discomfort, we must hope that it will remain forever unchanged and continue to cause her no issues. Lilac is recovering from this surgery very nicely; she has already returned to her usual playful behaviors and is now on a new antibiotic for her ear abscess. Once she is fully recovered, she will need to have one final surgery to clean the infection from her inner ear and surrounding bone.

Over the past year, Lilac has received X-rays, blood tests, two ultrasounds, a CT scan, antibiotics, emergency veterinary exams, surgery, and culture & sensitivity/

histopathology on her abdominal mass and ear abscess. Lilac's veterinary expenses have already exceeded \$8,000, and she still has one final upcoming surgery. Lilac has been through so much more than a rabbit should have to contend with. We will always do everything that is in her best interest to ensure her comfort and health, but we cannot do it without help. Rabbit Rescue & Rehab relies entirely on donations to afford our rabbits' veterinary expenses, and we ask that you please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support Lilac's care. Thank you so much from all of us at Rabbit Rescue & Rehab and from Lilac.

## Safety Concerns

*(Continued from page 5)*

region are also on the danger list, such as azaleas, many ivies and evergreens, and the bark, twigs, and leaves of cherry trees, to name just a few. Mold found on autumn leaves is also toxic to rabbits.

### Dangers from backyard wildlife

Leaves can harbor fleas and ticks. Perhaps the most deadly parasite is raccoon roundworm: Rabbits who ingest leaves



Raccoons harbor deadly roundworms.

or grass where infected raccoons have visited are at risk.

We never advocate bringing rabbits outdoors because they can easily fall prey to cats, dogs, raccoons and predatory birds. They can be literally frightened to death even if they aren't touched, or severely injured trying to flee. It only takes a minute.

We can enrich our companion rabbits' lives with toys as simple as an empty toilet paper roll stuffed with hay or a pile of junk mail to dig through – safer by far than the outdoor offerings of fall.

# **FOSTER HOMES NEEDED!!!**

**This year is proving to be a record year for Easter rabbit abandonments. We are DESPERATE for foster homes! We are contacted multiple times per day, EVERYDAY, with reports of rabbits seen outdoors; on city streets, in the woods, in shopping centers, in residential neighborhoods, near highways, etc., etc. They ALL need to be rescued. Our email is equally flooded with pleas from people who have found a rabbit(s) outside, were kind enough to take them in but cannot or will not provide them care. They are asking to “relinquish” those rabbits. Many of those rabbits are brought to shelters where they will languish, hoping that a rescue group will somehow be able to get them out.**

**The harsh reality is that there are many, many more rabbits that need help than we have the physical resources for. We do not have a facility of any kind. If we don't have foster homes available, we can't rescue these helpless rabbits and many will suffer and die outside.**

**We can't do any of this without the help of the rabbit loving community. PLEASE HELP.**

**\* fostering is a commitment to care for a rabbit in your home, under our guidance, for as long as necessary. All veterinary expenses are covered by the rescue group.**

[nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com) • [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://information@longislandrabbitrescue.org)

## An Interview With a Rescued Bun, Tara, Who Says Foster Parents Make Miracles Possible

*(As translated by her foster mom, Lisa Nasoff)*

It has been some time (see September 2022 issue of Thump), since we have had an update from Tara. This abandoned newborn bunny was found in a school playground in June 2022. In this issue, our hopping reporter, Ms. Bunny Walters, catches up with Tara, asking those questions we just all want to know the answers to.

**Ms. Walters:** Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Let's dig right in. You have been referred to as a "miracle" bun. How does that make you feel?

**Tara:** I'm glad you asked this question. It embarrasses me to be called a "miracle." I was born a fighter, and was determined to survive. The real miracle is all of the humans who came together to help me – my foster mom, the rehabber, the vets at Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital, and all the wonderful humans of Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group who made donations on my behalf.

**Ms. Walters:** I see you no longer go by the name "Babybun." How and why did your new name come about?

**Tara:** Well, when you hit a certain age, it seems silly to be called Babybun. LIRRG sent a list of names to my foster mom, and her mom loved the name Tara. In the end, I think it fits me, because the personality of a "Tara" is intelligence, creativity and independence. Taras also have a fierce determination and a knack for turning obstacles into opportunities, which speaks to why I survived.

**Ms. Walters:** Getting a bit more personal, I understand you have been spayed? Can you tell us about that experience?

**Tara:** Admittedly, at the time I was not happy about going to the vet. But in retrospect, it was truly for the best. My

Photos: Lisa Nasoff



Tara, fka Babybun, after she was rescued last year.



Tara, all grown up.

hormones were raging! I was not the nicest bun. I would nip and growl at my foster mom. One time I even bit her when she was trying to feed me. Luckily, I have calmed down now, and don't do those things anymore.

**Ms. Walters:** What has been the most exciting thing that has happened since you became a foster bun?

**Tara:** A speed date! It was so much fun to meet a family and another bunny. In the end, the family loved me. But I was so eager, and I guess a little too energetic for their bun, who was rather a shy guy.

**Ms. Walters:** So, do you think after this experience you would be a good bonding mate?

**Tara:** Yes, I think so. I behaved nicely and there was no fighting. My foster mom has another girl bun, and while

we are separated, I do not mind when my foster mom comes in my pen after being in her pen. My foster mom even tries to be tricky and puts tufts of the girl's fur in my litter area, so that I become used to the smell, and it does not bother me in the least!

**Ms. Walters:** How about other pets?

**Tara:** Well, I've been around my foster mom's cat since I was only a few weeks old. We play through the sides of the pen: He will stick his paw in and we play "cat and mouse." He also will lie by my pen and I don't mind. He can act kind of jealous, though, and so we are never left together.

**Ms. Walters:** How do you pass the time?

**Tara:** I love rearranging my pen. I have lots of toys, blankies, cardboard and even my baby bed. I just love constructing and deconstructing!

**Ms. Walters:** Rumor has it that you can be a little possessive of your items.

**Tara:** The rumor is true. I do not like it when my foster mom tries to rearrange my things, or touches my toys. I will give her a good grunt to let her know it!

**Ms. Walters:** Does this mean you do not like being touched?

**Tara:** Oh no! Just the opposite. I love nose rubs, scratches behind the ears, head pats and whole-body pets. I run to my foster mom every time she enters the room, begging for a nose rub or ear scratching. When I'm done playing, I'll sit by her forever, while she pets me. Like most buns, though, I don't like being picked up and held. It just reminds me that I am a prey animal.

**Ms. Walters:** Just a few more questions. Any favorite foods?

**Tara:** Well, I do get VERY excited at feeding time. I love my Supreme Science

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

By Noah the Bunny  
with assistance from Shari Zagorski

Hello and hoppy autumn,  
my human friends!

After my two education events in July, I enjoyed a nice summer vacation. 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, fostering and adoption.

On July 8 we had a program for young children and their families at the Mineola Memorial Library. Our volunteer team did a thorough presentation and the library staff read a story to the children, coordinated a little craft project and provided the attendees with materials to make hay treats for our LIRRG foster bunnies to enjoy! Our mother-daughter team of Amy and Amanda made adorable beaded bunny bracelets to distribute as thanks for donations to LIRRG. Our other volunteer, also named Amanda, helped with the presentation, and

Photos: Shari Zagorski



Team Amanda with bunny bracelets at Mineola Memorial Library.

giggled at my silly antics during our time together.

A week later, we had an event at the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library. Many children and their families attended and everyone really wanted to pet me! I had to take a little break to clean myself after so many human hands touched my fluff. My favorite part of

*(Continued on page 10)*



So many gentle hands petting me at Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library.



Quick timeout for cleaning at Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library.

### Interview with Tara

*(Continued from page 8)*

Selective adult pellets, and the Small Pet Select hay is good, although I am not a big hay eater. For a treat, I like Craisins and Oxbow Simple Rewards. I do not like greens, fruit or veggies. My foster mom has tried many!

**Ms. Walters:** What is your favorite thing about being a LIRRG foster bunny?

**Tara:** Top of the list is the love I get from my foster mom. She makes sure I get everything I need, and am safe and loved. And, of course, the support of the village that is LIRRG.

**Ms. Walters:** So here is a question, and I don't mean to upset you. If your foster mom loves you so much, why is that not your furever home?

**Tara:** When I went on my speed date, my foster mom cried. I mean bawled. She raised me from a newborn, and we have a special connection. However, she just does not have a lot of space in her one-bedroom apartment. I am in her bedroom! She knows I need space to free roam and binky, and because she loves me so much, she is willing to let me go to a furever home where I can have what I need.

**Ms. Walters:** Well, I have no more questions. Is there anything you would like to add?

**Tara:** Yes, thank you for the opportunity. I would just like all the readers to know the importance of foster parents. Without them, I would not be answering these questions, and LIRRG would not be able to rescue my fellow adoptable buns.

**Ms. Walters:** Thank you for bringing this important issue to the forefront. For our readers, please check out the LIRRG website to see how you can help foster a bun in need, or adopt Tara or one of the many other adoptable rabbits.

## The Things We Don't Like to Talk About

By Denise Bertolotti

I am jokingly called the “chief realness officer” for Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group. I’m unafraid to talk about the tough stuff. I typically have no problem broaching the subjects many prefer to avoid. I don’t shy away from the “big talk.” I have four areas of “big talk” for you today.

### Money

We aren’t “supposed to” talk about money with people. It’s awkward. The realness: Rabbits are one of the most expensive animals to own. Few things get me as angry as when I overhear someone yelling at the veterinary hospital staff about an estimate or a bill. This is part of the ownership package. Ideally, our animals would never get sick and high-quality hay would always be on sale with free

shipping. Budget for supplies. Set aside money for an emergency. Explore support options like CareCredit before you need it – and hopefully you’ll never need it. If only we could pay bills in bunny poops...

### Break-ups and lost leases

Family and relationship situations change. Apartment buildings raise rent. Landlords decide to sell. Have the tough conversations now so that figuring out where the bunnies will hop in case of a major life change will be one less thing to worry about. You do not have to follow my plan, but I’ll share it just in case you garner some inspiration. My bunny’s father and I made an agreement early in our relationship: If one of us decides to leave, he/she relinquishes the rabbits to the other. In other words, you can leave, but you’re leaving alone.

When we were renting, we had family members who would take us and the bunnies in, in the event we were without pet-friendly housing.

### Death: human

I wasn’t kidding when I said we were getting real. May we all live very long, fulfilling, peaceful lives. In the event of our exit from this mortal coil, our pets need care. When I wrote my will, I had my attorney include a section designating a specific guardian for “any domestic animals” in my care and a monetary stipend to support the animals’ care.

### Death: pet

I know. You’d rather go back to talking about money. I’m not writing this to ruin your day. I’m writing this so you

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Noah Reports

*(Continued from page 9)*

this event was being held by LIRRG volunteers after the presentation. Since we all volunteer together regularly, I have come to trust them and enjoy their extra cuddles.

During August, my humans sent me and my bun-sibs to “bunny camp” for nine days while they traveled to California for their human son’s wedding. While in San Francisco, my humans met up with my pen pal Alex the Great, a sweet Flemish Giant spokesbunny I’ve messaged online for many months. Back at bunny camp, we all had plenty of activities and love, but I was extremely excited to see my humans an hour after their airplane landed in NY. Since then, I’ve been keeping human mom in close proximity and grooming her quite a bit.

Until next time, this is Spokesbunny Noah signing off!

Photo: Shari Zagorski



LIRRG volunteers at Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library.



## How Has Having a Rabbit or Volunteering Changed Your Life?

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Friends of LIRRG is a Facebook community of over 1,000 rabbit owners and rescue volunteers who live on Long Island. We asked our Friends to tell us how having a rabbit or volunteering changed their lives. Here's what they had to say.

"Owning a rabbit is awesome! I have had so many rabbits over the years, each & every one was dear to my heart & each has their own personality. They

always make me smile & holding them & cuddling with them is so very calming & I feel so content. Could not mention life without one or two. Princess Penelope Godiva is one of my buns." – Susan A.

"About 2 years ago I become a first-time rabbit adopter. I never could have imagined how much love and happiness our little Gizmo would bring into our lives. Having Gizmo really opened my eyes to how much character and

*(Continued on page 12)*



Princess Penelope Godiva.

### We Don't Like to Talk About

*(Continued from page 10)*

can make empowered decisions if/when the time comes. The following was written in conjunction with the LIRRG team:

If your rabbit dies at home, call your veterinarian. The vet may suggest a post-mortem exam (necropsy), or you may request one, if your rabbit's passing was sudden or unexpected. There is usually a fee for this. Some people choose to have this done for closure and answers, and some veterinarians appreciate the opportunity to learn what happened, in effort to help other rabbits in the future. If there is a possibility you would want a necropsy done, you must refrigerate, and not freeze, your rabbit's body in the meantime.

If you decide to euthanize, vet offices have different protocols. While no one likes to talk about this subject, it may be a good idea to ask how your veterinarian does things. Hopefully it includes a pre-anesthetic, which is a tranquilizer that will help your pet relax and relieve all of the pain. This is followed with the euthanasia solution, administered when both pet and owner are ready. You will be asked if you want to be present for this procedure.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



After Ramsey died very suddenly at home, his adopter had his vet do a necropsy.

It is a consolation for many to be present as their rabbit crosses the Rainbow Bridge. Others prefer to say goodbye and then allow the veterinarian to perform the procedure without them. It is a very personal decision. You may be offered the opportunity to spend time with your rabbit's body. If so, it's your choice. Do what feels right in the moment. Most veterinarians not only allow but encourage owners to spend some time with their rabbit after they pass away. Not everyone chooses to do this, but it can be comforting for some. Euthanasia is indeed very sad, but it is a privilege to assist a beloved pet with his or her suffering in this way. It is the final gift of love.

If your rabbit leaves behind a partner, you may consider placing your deceased bunny with the partner to acclimate. Some people feel this is beneficial. Others

feel that the surviving rabbit likely knew before you even did that something was wrong, and has already said goodbye. It is not always practical to do this. Do not worry if you cannot. Most surviving partner rabbits do just fine after the death of a mate, but keep a very close eye on eating and pooping habits just to be sure.

There are three options to deal with your pet's body after he/she passes. Some people choose to take their rabbit's body home and bury him/her. Most people choose to have their rabbit cremated. With private or individual cremation, you will receive your pet's ashes back. With communal cremation you will not. Private cremation costs about double what communal cremation costs, so you may wish to discuss this with your vet beforehand.

Talk to your veterinarian about options and fees now so you have a plan in place, rather than being faced with tough decisions while in distress. You may ask your vet to provide you with a patch of shaved fur to memorialize your rabbit. You may also create a paw imprint with a kit that you bring. Your vet's staff can probably help you.

Thank you for allowing me to be your guide through the tough stuff. Now, get back to doing your binkies!



## Volunteering

*(Continued from page 11)*

personality rabbits can have, as well as how much fun rabbits can be to have in the family. I cannot imagine our family without Gizmo and all the love, comfort and happiness he brings us each and every day.” – Maria A.

“Having Percy join my life has been, in my opinion, so much more beneficial to me than him. He has brought me calm and peace through the many life changes I’ve had and reminds me that no matter what I’m going through, he’s there at the beginning and end of every day. Watching him just being his natural quiet and cute self brings me so much joy, and I have happily embraced being his hoomin with pride. I tell anyone who will listen what an awesome org. LIRRG is and how wonderful it is to have a pet rabbit!” – Erica L.

“I have been rabbit-owned for 48 years & these precious little family members (like Noah) keep showing me patience, and love, and teaching me that we are never too old to learn.” – Shari Z.

“Being a rabbit owner and foster mom has taught me that rabbits are smart, social, and can have completely different personalities. Also, that they are fighters – both of mine were rescued from outdoors and fought the odds to survive. (Pictured are Tara and BunBun.)” – Lisa N.

“Having 3 rescue rabbits (3 times a foster failure, one would think I would have learned my lesson by now) I am amazed at how different their personalities were from each other. Snoopy was grumpy, Budgie was “love me, I want to play” and Bennington is “my way or the highway.” From my 3 rabbits I have learned that the greatest gift a rabbit can bestow on a human is trust.” – Jean M.



Gizmo.



Percy.



Noah.



Tara.



BunBun



Snoopy.



Budgie.



Bennington.

# Why Volunteer?

"I volunteer because our directors do so much for all of the bunnies, and the least I can do is help them out. Also for the bunny cuddles." — CK

"I volunteer because they deserve a second chance at life. Rabbit rescues aren't as popular organizations like cats or dogs have, so I guess less people are likely to volunteer for buns due to lack of awareness, but they need us all the same. This rescue bettered my life, as did the buns. I don't know any other way to show my appreciation and give back. I've made the best of friends here." — LM

"I volunteer because rabbits have changed and saved my life. The best way to honor them is to give back, and help others that are in need. I continue to volunteer because this group is filled with great people, and I believe that we are making a huge difference in the lives of bunnies and bunny owners on long island and I am lucky to be a small part of that." — KG

"I volunteer because I love all the buns. It makes me feel like a better person inside." — CR

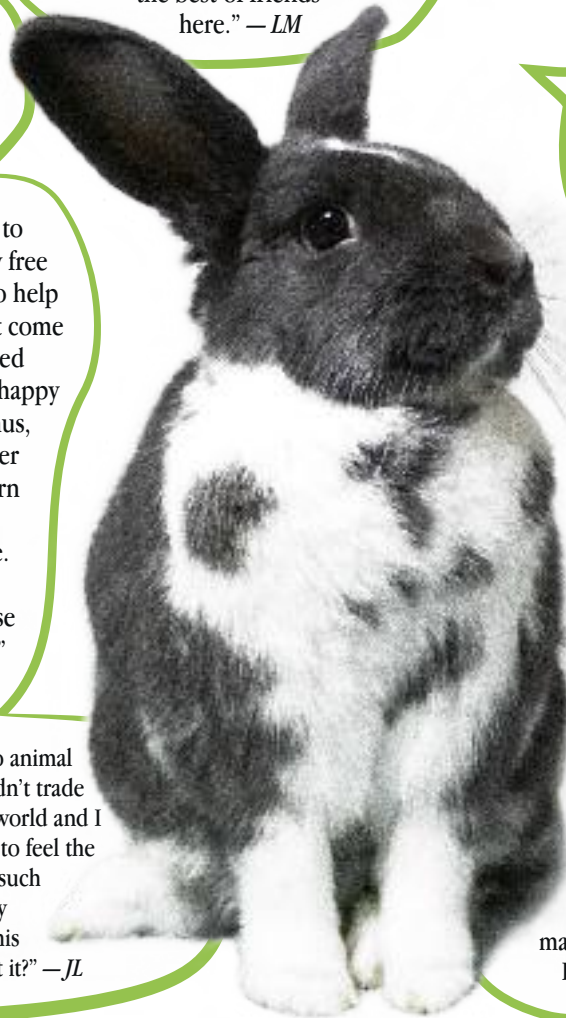
"I volunteer because in a world where everyone is taking away, I like to think by doing this I'm giving something back." — RN

"I volunteer because I want to do something positive with my free time, and have always wanted to help animals. Seeing the bunnies that come from neglected and abandoned situations, turn into trusting and happy rabbits, melts my heart. As a bonus, volunteering has made me a better bun mom. There is so much to learn when it comes to rabbits and the hands on experience is invaluable. I don't think I'll ever stop volunteering with LIRRG because of how amazing this group is." — KS

"I love any and every animal! I volunteer because saving a life makes it worthwhile. Also for the cuddles, I get my weekly dose of cuddles from them. They deserve a chance at a forever home just as any animal." — VR

"I volunteer because no animal deserves to be forgotten. I wouldn't trade my smart little boons for the entire world and I think everyone deserves the chance to feel the love and learn about why they're such awesome pets. And some of my favorite people are part of this group. Who can beat it?" — JL

"I volunteer because I see the impact that mere compassion has on these bunnies, and it means the world to me. Nothing makes me happier than watching the bunnies' personality start to emerge in the couple weeks after their rescue when they realize they are finally safe. Volunteering is such a simple way to make a difference, so I try to do my part. Plus, I just love animals." — SS



[LongIslandRabbitRescue.org/volunteer](https://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org/volunteer)



## Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

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



Jasper.

### Jasper

Jasper, a white and ginger unicorn lop, was found outside as a young rabbit, surrounded by a group of hawks. He was truly found just in time! Now safe in his foster home, Jasper is an outgoing and joyful bunny. He does impressively athletic binkies and especially enjoys arugula. If he's not busy exploring or playing with his toys, he enjoys stretching out and relaxing with human company. Jasper is neutered and ready for his forever home. If you are interested in

adopting Jasper, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Pink

Pink is a sweet Himalayan boy with an affectionate demeanor. He does have a big energetic streak and likes to get in his exercise by running big laps and fluffing up his blankets before settling in for a nap on his IKEA doll bed. He's particularly fond of toys that can be tossed around, and loves all of his pellets, greens and hay. Pink is neutered and



Pink.



Skye.

ready for adoption. If you are interested in adopting Pink, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside

*(Continued on page 15)*



**RRR Rabbits in Foster Care**

*(Continued from page 14)*

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 has a particular affinity for her Oxbow woven grass toys and is content to stretch out and fall into a deep sleep for afternoon naps. If you are interested in adopting Skye, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

**Indigo**

Indigo's puppy-like playfulness is as endearing as his ears are enormous! Indigo arrived at ACC showing signs of terrible neglect. When we pulled him from the shelter, the veterinary treatment he was receiving had already filled an 8-plus-page-long medical record in that short time. He was facing an abscess, severe sore hocks, skin conditions, parasites and more. Today, Indigo has settled in beautifully and gained a whole 3 pounds since he first arrived at the shelter (currently tipping the scales at a magnificent 9.5 pounds!). Now living on cushy, appropriate floor material, Indigo's once infected and painful hocks are growing in nice new fur to protect his wonderfully giant feet. Indigo has been neutered and



Indigo.



Lucy.

is living in foster care. He hopes to soon meet his forever family who will enjoy playtime and cuddle time as much as he does! If you are interested in adopting Indigo, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

**Lucy**

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

**Carmela**

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



Carmela.

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

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

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

### Ezra

Ezra came to us from a family who, although they loved him, struggled to fully care for him.

He may be timid at first, but his bold personality comes out over time. Earn his trust and he'll be open to even more physical affection. Looking for a bun you can train? Ezra comes preinstalled with the tricks "spin" and "up"!

Ezra doesn't tolerate salad or sugary treats in his diet. Additionally, he's not comfortable around young children. Be patient with him, and he'll love you forever.

If Ezra were a human: Ron Swanson from "Parks and Recreation."

### Judy

Judy was found as a stray and brought to the Town of Babylon Animal Shelter in October 2022. Shelter employees cared for her until we were able to take her into our care. She has an old healed fracture on her back right paw, but it doesn't hinder her from running around her foster home. (Judy is Thump's page one masthead bunny this month.)

Judy is a sweet girl who may take time to warm up in new places. She has glorious folds and the softest fur. While she can be cautious at first, with patient humans she enjoys gentle patting. Her future forever family should understand that because of her slight impairment, she may develop arthritis in her joints earlier on in her life. To prevent any further injuries, Judy's environment should be free of ramps and any platforms used for jumping.



Ezra.



Judy.

### Juliette

Will you check yes to Juliette?

This princess bun was being bullied by a cat in her previous home, so she was surrendered to the Southampton Animal Shelter.

She was anxious and afraid when she first arrived, but LIRRG found a foster home for her. Since then, Juliette has bloomed into her beautiful self. While



Juliette.

still shy, she's incredibly curious and playful when around those she trusts. Bring out her stacking cups, and she'll give you a demonstration of how to properly throw them around.

Let her come to you, and she'll give you attention with sniffs and nose bumps.

If Juliette were a human: Jane Goodall



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

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



Butter.



Cake Butter.



Gus Gus.



Dusty.



Joony.



Founding Father.



Bunnyfer Lopez



Casper.

*(Continued on page 18)*



**ADOPTIONS**

**Rabbits at Manhattan NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 17)*



Timmy.



Snowflake.



Terry.



Betsy Bunny.



Swirl's Babies: Swoosh, Twirl, Whirl, Swish.



Jasmine.



Callie.



Dakota.



Polar Bear and Brown Bear.

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



Chase



Wabby Wabbit.



Flopsy.



Ninja.



Sun.



Chewy.



Bennu.



Uranus.

*(Continued on page 20)*



**Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 19)*



Saturn.



Jupiter.



Neptune.



Flo.



Buster Bunny.



Wilson.

**Forever Homes Found!**

We are happy to report that Rompers, Noir, Marcus, Thumper, Oreo, Joseph, Edison, Yeti, Millie, Whiskers, Abracadabra, Wendy Mcbunny, the three ACC planet boy baby buns, Mia, Espresso, Boo, Bubbles, Harlow, Cara and Garnet were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

## The Mystery of Rabbit Poop

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

University of Miami Biology Department  
House Rabbit Society of Miami

Unlike most other mammals, lagomorphs (including domestic rabbits) produce two types of droppings, fecal pellets (the round, dry ones you usually see in the litter box) and cecotropes. The latter are produced in a region of the rabbit's digestive tract called the cecum, a blind-end pouch located at the junction of the small and large intestines. The cecum contains a natural community of bacteria and fungi that provide essential nutrients and may even protect the rabbit from potentially harmful pathogens.

How does the rabbit get those essential nutrients? She eats the cecotropes as they exit the anus. The rabbit's blissful expression when she's engaging in cecotrophy (the ingestion of cecotropes) will tell you that she finds this anything but disgusting. In fact, rabbits deprived of their cecotropes will eventually succumb to malnutrition. Cecotropes are not feces. They are nutrient-packed dietary items essential to your companion rabbit's good health.

A rabbit may produce cecotropes at various times during the day, and this periodicity may vary from rabbit to rabbit. Some produce cecotropes in the late morning, some in the late afternoon, and some at night. In any case, they usually do this when you're not watching (quite polite of them). This might be why some people refer to cecotropes as "night droppings," though cecotropes are not always produced at night. A human face is apparently an excellent and refreshing palate-cleanser, as a favorite activity immediately post-cecotrophy often seems to be "kiss the caregiver." Mmmmmm.

### Normal Intestinal Products

Anyone who lives with a bunny has seen a fecal pellet. These are the small, brown

Photos: Christie Taylor



Normal fecal pellets.



Normal cecotrope.



Runny stool.

"cocoa puffs" that (we hope) end up in the litter box. They should be relatively spherical, somewhat dry and friable, and composed mostly of undigested fiber. Rabbits do not ordinarily re-ingest fecal pellets, though a few bunnies seem to enjoy an occasional fecal pellet hors d'oeuvre with no harm.

A normal cecotrope resembles a dark brown mulberry, or tightly bunched grapes. It is composed of small, soft, shiny pellets, each coated with a layer of rubbery mucus, and pressed into an

elongate mass. The cecotrope has a rather pungent odor, as it contains a large mass of beneficial cecal bacteria. When the bunny ingests the cecotrope, the mucus coat helps protect the bacteria as they pass through the stomach, then re-establish in the cecum.

### Runny Stool: When Things Go Wrong

True diarrhea (unformed, watery feces) is relatively rare in adult rabbits. It can be caused by intestinal parasites, such as coccidia (*Eimeria spp.*), roundworms, tapeworms, or anything that inflames the intestinal lining. Your rabbit-experienced veterinarian will be able to examine a fecal sample (you should probably provide the vet with a fresh sample of both fecal and cecal pellets, if possible) to look for signs of parasitic infection. More often, true diarrhea is seen in infant and juvenile rabbits.

### Diarrhea in Baby Rabbits: A Life-Threatening Emergency

One of the most common signs associated with sudden death in baby rabbits is diarrhea, which can appear very quickly and kill in a matter of hours. Thus, it is of vital importance that any baby rabbit showing signs of lethargy, inappetence (not wanting to eat), or runny stool be taken immediately to an experienced rabbit vet for emergency, life-saving treatment. Delaying even for an hour or two can mean the difference between life and death.

If you cannot find a rabbit-experienced vet, but have an emergency clinic that is willing to accept help from unknown persons on the internet (that would be me), then please print this Emergency Treatment Protocol for Diarrhea in Infant Rabbits. (<http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/squirts.pdf>) This is a protocol I developed while trying to save wild baby cottontails and hares, and it is the only thing I have

(Continued on page 22)



## Rabbit Poop

(Continued from page 21)

found that does save them. I hope no one reading this ever needs it...but I am including the link, just in case.

True diarrhea is more prevalent in baby rabbits than in adults, especially if the babies have been taken from their mother before they are ready for weaning. Sadly, many baby rabbits are weaned too young to be away from their mothers. Instead of being allowed to nurse for a full, normal eight weeks, they are taken away while they are still “cute” and marketable – often as young as four weeks. This can spell death for many of them.

Without the mother’s antibodies, complex organic compounds and the proper pH environment her milk provides to help protect the baby’s intestines, these babies are highly susceptible to over-proliferation of foreign bacteria. One of the most common culprits of runny stool in baby rabbits is accidental infection by the common human intestinal bacterium, *Escherichia coli*. This is transmitted from humans to baby rabbits during handling, since these bacteria are all over us, not just in our intestines. Handling an unweaned infant rabbit without properly washing and disinfecting one’s hands is a good way to transmit these opportunistic pathogens. Even a loving kiss on a too-young baby rabbit’s lips can kill. Until a young rabbit is at least eight weeks old, she should not be taken from her mother, as mama’s milk affords protection against *E. coli* and other bacteria until the baby’s own immune system can handle them.

Another pathogen that can cause diarrhea in baby rabbits is *Eimeria spp.*, the causative agent of coccidiosis. The reproductive sporocysts of these protist parasites can usually be seen in the feces of the host, so your vet may wish to examine the fecal sample of the affected rabbit for signs of coccidial sporocysts.

## Unformed Cecotropes: Mushy or Runny Stool

Perhaps the most common complaint regarding rabbit health is the problem of mushy or runny stool sticking to the bunny’s anal area and creating a nasty, stinky mess. In most cases (in adult rabbits, at least), this mass is made of poorly formed cecotropes that have the consistency of toothpaste, rather than the normal form of bunched, squishy pellets.

The cecum is a delicately balanced ecosystem. If the intestine is moving too slowly, or if the rabbit is getting a diet too rich in digestible carbohydrates and too low in crude fiber, the complex population of bacteria in the cecum can become “unbalanced.” This condition is known as cecal dysbiosis. Cecal dysbiosis means that the beneficial bacteria (e.g., *Bacteroides spp.* and a variety of others, including archaeans) are outcompeted and outnumbered by less desirable inhabitants such as yeast (a fungus, usually *Saccharomycopsis sp.*) or even very harmful bacteria such as *Clostridium spp.*, related to the ones that cause tetanus and botulism.

A rabbit suffering from cecal dysbiosis will produce cecotropes that are mushy, pasty or even liquid. They are usually quite foul-smelling, and often stick to the bunny’s back end in great, nasty clumps. These unformed cecotropes are not a primary disease, however. They are a symptom of a disorder somewhere in the bunny’s system. In order to solve the runny stool problem, the underlying cause must be addressed.

## Common Causes of Runny Stool in Infant and Juvenile Rabbits

### Weaning Too Young

If the bunny suffering from runny stool is a baby, how old is he? If younger than eight weeks, and no longer with his mother, his runny stool problem may be due to his being weaned too young.

Many pet stores will (illegally) sell rabbits younger than eight weeks of age (some as young as four weeks). Sadly, many of these babies are doomed to succumb to intestinal disorders.

Unlike most mammals, baby rabbits have a sterile lower intestine until they begin to eat solid food at the age of 3-4 weeks. It is during this time that their intestines are at their most vulnerable: the babies need their mother’s milk to protect them against newly introduced microorganisms. Without the mother’s milk, a baby starting to eat solid food is highly susceptible to bacterial enteritis (inflammation of the intestinal lining), which can cause fatal diarrhea. Runny stool in a baby rabbit should be considered a life-threatening emergency.

### Intestinal Parasites

Coccidial infection is common in some areas, and some vets will simply treat a baby rabbit’s diarrhea as coccidia, even without a fecal test. Common antibiotics used to treat coccidia include Albon (sulfadimethoxine) and the potentiated sulfas, such as Trimethoprim Sulfa or Bactrim. However, we have found a more recently developed drug, ponazuril, to be far superior to the aforementioned sulfa antibiotics. It eliminates the parasites in a matter of days, rather than weeks.

## Common Causes of Runny Stool in Adult Rabbits

### Mechanical Problems

#### Obesity

An overweight rabbit may produce normally formed cecotropes, but because she cannot properly reach down to grab them as they emerge from the chute, these soft pellets can become squashed under the bunny as she flexes and bends around to get them. Weight reduction is the answer

(Continued on page 23)

## Rabbit Poop

(Continued from page 22)

here, and this is as difficult for rabbits as it is for humans. Eliminating commercial pellets, or at least switching to a high-fiber, low-calorie Timothy-based pellet, can make a great difference. Replace any starchy treats with fresh herb treats. And, painful as it may be, exercise is one of the best ways to burn more calories than bunny takes in. As we all should know, that's the bottom line when it comes to slimming down.

### Arthritis or Other Skeletal Disorders

Similarly, a rabbit who is suffering from degenerative joint problems in the spine, hips, or other areas, may not be able to reach cecotropes easily. He ends up sitting on some of them, and squashing them into his fur. Arthritis can be treated by your veterinarian. Common remedies include various NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), and glucosamine supplements such as Cetyl M or Myristol.

### Dietary Problems

#### Incorrect Diet

Rabbits, like horses and cattle, are strict herbivores. The rabbit intestine – and its normal bacterial flora – has evolved to feed almost exclusively on grass and herbs. Does your rabbit get starchy treats such as oatmeal, crackers, bread or sweets? Some rabbits with very sensitive intestines can suffer from runny cecotropes even from commercial pellets. Fruit, as healthy as it is for humans, can be too much of a good thing for rabbits. The high level of sugar and starch in table fruits makes them too rich for a bunny except as a very small, occasional treat. A diet too rich in digestible starch is one of the most common causes of runny cecotropes in companion rabbits.

### Insufficient Indigestible Fiber

A rabbit should be fed unlimited grass hay, such as Timothy, brome, wheat or oat. Alfalfa hay is too rich in calories and protein for daily feeding. A rabbit who cannot nibble constantly on high-fiber grass or hay may suffer from a lack of tonus in the gut muscles. Normal peristalsis (muscular movements that push food through the gut) may become sluggish. This causes the passage of food through the cecum to slow down, and the normal rate of bacterial “flushing” from the cecum is disrupted, promoting cecal dysbiosis. The high fiber content of grass hay also helps to “dilute” the starch of other dietary items, and helps to provide a healthy intestinal environment. A complete and healthy diet is truly key to preventing intestinal problems such as cecal dysbiosis (and its associated mushy stool).

### Hidden Health Problems

When a rabbit is ill, in pain, or is suffering from emotional stress, a typical physiological response is slowing of the normal peristaltic movements of the intestine. This results in cecal dysbiosis, with all the accompanying problems of runny stool, and possible inflammation of the intestinal lining (enteritis).

Some of the most common causes of intestinal slowdown (and hence, cecal dysbiosis) in rabbits include pain/stress due to: **dental problems, urinary tract disorders, upper respiratory infections and “head tilt.”**

Any of these conditions must be diagnosed and treated by a rabbit-savvy vet familiar with such problems and their appropriate treatment. Until a cryptic health disorder is diagnosed and treated, chronic runny stool will likely persist. Therefore, it's wise to have your messy-bottomed bunny undergo a thorough wellness check,

especially if his diet and weight are normal and healthy.

Once an underlying source of pain/stress is treated, the runny stool often resolves on its own. But if the condition is not treated, it can progress and eventually result in a potentially life-threatening condition, ileus, or GI stasis, in which peristalsis stops completely.

### Keeping Bunny Comfortable in the Meantime

While you and your veterinarian are treating the problems that caused the runny stool, it's still important to keep the bunny clean and comfortable. Dried cecotropes stuck to the rear end are not only smelly and uncomfortable, they also attract flies, and can result in life-threatening fly strike.

To prevent this, be sure to learn how to give your bunny a butt bath – SAFELY. (<http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/buttbath.html>)

Photo: Mary Ann Meier



This rabbit needed a wet butt bath.

Resolving runny stool in a rabbit is not always a simple matter. It may require dietary changes, good husbandry, and sometimes extensive diagnostic work and treatment by your veterinarian. But it will all be worth it for a long life filled with happy, nose-wiggling love and a nice, clean bum.



## Adoptable Rabbits

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo: Kristen Ghiraldi



Swirl's Babies: Swoosh, Twirl, Whirl, Swish.

## 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 2023

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  
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**

**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**