

# THE HUMP



NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS JANUARY 2024

## Happy New Year From All of Us!

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

This has been a busy year for us at RRR. We faced an unprecedented number of outdoor dumps, including several multirabbit rescues and significant medical challenges with several of our beloved sanctuary rabbits.

Many new wonderful bunnies arrived into our care, including a litter of four born right after mom Avery's rescue. And, of course, we are so thankful for all of our adopters and bunnies who found their loving forever families (and joined our RRR family) in 2023.

Our donors and supporters enable us to continue helping rabbits and are indispensable for all we do. Thank you so much to all who have donated to help our rescue efforts.

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



One of Avery's baby boys, Pigeon, has been neutered, and he's looking forward to finding his forever family in 2024.

Photo: Hara Weltz



Leo and Milly were bonded recently.

## Bonding: Finding a Friend for Your Rabbit

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Rabbits are social creatures and there is nothing cuter than seeing a cuddling pair of rabbits grooming each other. They are clearly relaxed and happy and benefit from living in pairs or groups. Despite their love of companionship, you can't just put two together and expect them to get along. Before attempting any introduction, the rabbits should be spayed or neutered.

### Choosing a mate

If you already have a rabbit, then a rescue group can arrange for him to meet the rabbits that are available and see how they get along, and then guide you through the bonding process. If you already have

*(Continued on page 2)*

## What Bunnies Can Teach Us About Human Relationships

By Megan Hilands

In the many years I have lived with bunnies, I have come to believe that in a number of ways, bunnies and humans are really quite similar. We obviously differ in major ways such as size, general fragility, and digestive systems. On the other hand, though, humans and bunnies can both have incredible variations in personalities, are both social creatures, and are generally in better health when they eat their fiber and vegetables. More importantly, we both seem to have the capacity for real affection and attachment, which is why a bonded bunny pair's relationship with each other is so special. In my opinion, one can easily draw parallels between the rabbits in a bonded pair and a long-term human romantic relationship. In honor of the upcoming Valentine's Day season, here are some of the top lessons I have learned from bonded bunnies that also apply to humans.

### 1) It's fine to disagree, as long as you make up eventually

Even though they love each other and are clearly deeply bonded, my pair Simba and Nala do seem to get into little tiffs from time to time. Perhaps one of them gets annoyed that the other

*(Continued on page 3)*

Why You Should Avoid Puppy Pads

Page 4

Remembering Sweet Lenny

Page 5

Psychology of Litter-Box Skills

Page 6

## Bonding

*(Continued from page 1)*

a pair living separately, the rescue group can help you try to bond them also.

Rabbits rarely fall in love at first sight, but indifference is a good first sign of a potential pairing. A quick bonding can take two weeks while a more difficult bond can take months. It takes patience and commitment and it's easy to get discouraged.

Male/female bonds tend to work best, but same-sex bonding can work. Size, age and breed are not important factors in choosing a mate, as all combinations can work. You are more likely to have a successful bond if both are adults.

### The bonding process

You should wait at least a month after spaying or neutering your rabbits. After the rabbits have healed and their hormones have died down, set them up in side-by-side cages. They should never be able to touch noses through the cages before they are safely bonded. Fights can break out, seemingly out of nowhere, and damage (both physical and emotional) can occur if they bite each other's noses. The physical wounds could potentially abscess, and the grudges or resentments at being bitten could set your bonding efforts back.

When both buns have completely recovered from surgery, it is best to do bonding sessions in a neutral room with no furniture to hide (and fight) under. Rugs for traction and litter boxes for time-outs and pee breaks should be present.

Keep bunnies living caged, side-by-side with three inches of space between the cage bars – no touching. Don't let one bun exercise in the same room where the other is confined (to prevent resentment forming). Switch their soiled litter boxes if you like, to increase their getting used to each other's scents.

Place the bunnies in the neutral room with you and observe. You, the caretaker, should wear sneakers on your hands to quickly plunge in between the rabbits to

stop any fighting before it starts. Watch body language. Dominance, often displayed as mounting (humping) is perfectly normal, but is only okay IF the hump-ee doesn't mind and if it's not head humping (extremely dangerous for males if they get their penis bitten). If you see any signs of aggression – ears back at a 45-degree angle, tails raised, tension, circling or chasing – separate the buns. Be careful to understand the difference between dominance and aggression. You can gently push the dominant bun to the side. The other rabbit may be submissive, but may also get irritated if mounted for too long. Both males and females will mount. Do this for one or two 2-minute sessions a day for at least a week.

### Bonding takes commitment and patience on your part

Work up to 5 minutes ONLY if all goes well for a week or more of 2-minute sessions. Have patience. The hardest thing about bonding is human patience (or lack thereof). Set a 2-minute timer, if necessary, and then put the bunnies back in their cages and get on with your life! The object is to build up many, many peaceful SHORT sessions rather than to push too fast for longer sessions. We often hear: "Well, they did so well



Bullet and Sammie.



Delilah and Hugo.

after 5 minutes that I extended it to 15 minutes. Then the fight broke out!" It is a common mistake.

When your rabbits show positive signs of progress, you can gradually increase the time they spend together in the neutral area. After they can spend hours together, which can take weeks or months of gradually longer sessions, you should be looking for signs of affection, as in grooming and cuddling. With a tentative friendship, they should always be separated when you're not around.

With your patience and cooperative, compatible bunnies, you can eventually enjoy the sight of your bunnies together, and they can enjoy each other's company. Two rabbits really can be as easy as one. Boredom and depression are common symptoms of loneliness in rabbits, and boredom can sometimes lead to destructiveness. Here is a [Howcast video on bonding](#), featuring Mary Cotter and Amy Sedaris.

Photos: Jane O'Wyrt



Baby Push (front) and Tiny Tina.

# Veterinarian Training Project

By House Rabbit Society

We're making strides with our medical training program, where the next generation of veterinary professionals – pre-vet students, veterinary technicians, and veterinarians – are trained on best practices in rabbit medical care. At our

facility in Richmond, Calif., our medical team is working to ensure veterinary professionals across the U.S. can receive first-hand experience working with rabbits.

The goal is for the veterinarians to return to their local areas with new understanding

and skills that will translate to increased availability of quality rabbit-specific medical care nationally.

To learn more about House Rabbit Society, visit our new website, [houserabbit.org](https://houserabbit.org).

## What Bunnies Can Teach

*(Continued from page 1)*

eats more than her fair share of dinner, or maybe one bun skipped the line for the litter box. In any case, I occasionally notice indications that one bunny is annoyed at the other – flinging poops, grunting, or even an occasional chase. However it has been extremely rare that these actions ever escalate to the point of a true fight that would require me or my husband, Nick, to intervene. Whatever disagreement the bunnies have is one they can overcome themselves, and then they are shortly back to their normal happy selves.

### 2) A mediator can be helpful

Of course, there have been two notable occasions where Simba and Nala's fights were more severe and we decided it was in their best interest to separate for a short period of time and re-bond. In these cases, I spent some time every day sitting with the buns in a neutral area and observing their behaviors – both encouraging positive interactions like grooming and separating them if tensions escalated.

### 3) The nature of your relationship can change over time

Over the years, Simba and Nala have each taken a dominant role in the relationship at different times. When I first brought them home, Nala seemed to be the top bunny, demanding grooming from Simba regularly and being the first one to explore most areas of the apartment. Now, though, Simba is more dominant.

Photo: Megan Hilliards



Simba and Nala often enjoy cuddling or napping with each other in their castle.

While both bunnies groom each other, Simba requires that she eat before Nala and will growl if Nala tries to get breakfast first. For the most part, Nala has accepted this role with regards to eating arrangements.

### 4) Cuddles often make everything better

When the buns are a little scared or uncomfortable – for example, in a car ride, or when a new human enters the house – they almost always use each other as a source of comfort. The way they cuddle with each other in these

moments is incredibly cute and touching, and reminds me how helpful the physical touch of someone you love can make even the worst situations seem much more manageable.

For the remainder of 2024, I plan to follow Simba and Nala's lead and hug/cuddle my way out of my problems. While I'm not sure my husband and I will ever be as cute as my bunnies, we can take comfort in knowing we have two similarly solid partnerships under our roof – one human and one bunny.

# Puppy Pads Aren't Safe

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Beware! Puppy pads are not safe for rabbits.

Just because your rabbit hasn't chewed a puppy pad yet, doesn't mean he won't. Rabbits won't bother with a particular thing for years – until the time comes that they decide to. At some point, **your rabbit is going to chew on the puppy pad.**

A look at the composition of disposable puppy pads is all that is necessary to realize how dangerous they are.

Puppy pads are made of plastic. Your rabbit should never have access to plastic because ingesting it can cause a life-threatening intestinal blockage. Plastic bags and the like are made out of "film," or thin, flexible sheets of plastic. The sheets are made from polyethylene, which begins as ethylene extracted from natural gas or crude oil. Bisphenol A, a chemical used to create plastic bags, can contribute to the development of asthma, ulcers and certain cancers. Excess amounts of BPA can also cause liver toxicity and heart disease in humans and animals.

The plastic aspect of the pads alone is enough of a reason not to have them anywhere near your rabbit. Unfortunately, there are more dangers.

Manufacturers wouldn't be able to sell these disposable pads if dogs were not drawn to them. Puppy pads contain chemical attractants designed to simulate the smell of grass, ammonia and



pheromones. As we know, rabbits are much more fragile and sensitive to irritants than dogs are. Inhaling any of these chemicals can damage your rabbit's sensitive respiratory tract and liver.

The reason people choose to use puppy pads is because they absorb liquid. Ever wonder how? Inside the pad is sodium polyacrylate. This is a superabsorbent polymer, capable of absorbing hundreds of times its mass in water. If ingested, it would dry the contents of your rabbit's digestive tract so quickly, it would be lethal. Further, if inhaled, the polymer beads can cause an airway obstruction.

As if the above information isn't terrifying enough; there's more. Superabsorbent polymers contain chemicals that may be toxic to humans – such as formaldehyde, a known carcinogen, and other hazardous substances. The hydrogel products in puppy pads can induce acute neurotoxicity in animals.

Synthetic polymers can cause environmental issues throughout the production process, in addition to their obvious ocean contamination. They are nonbiodegradable and remain in natural waterways.

Further, plastic "liners" should also not be used in your rabbit's litter box, for all of the plastic dangers discussed above.

Setting up a healthy litter box is easy. Place thick sections of newspaper, rabbit-safe litter, or newspaper and litter, together in the box. Then, **FILL** up the box with several kinds of good-quality grass hays. This provides your rabbit with the ability to forage, which is critically important for his health.

Dump the litter box often. Every 24 hours is a good time frame. If the litter box itself has gotten soiled, spray it with white vinegar and wipe it dry. Vinegar neutralizes alkaline rabbit urine. Vinegar is also the only cleaning product that should be used in your rabbit's area or on his possessions.

If necessary, you can always place a towel or a washable/reusable "puppy pad" under or around the litter box for any over-the-side urinating or to collect kicked-out hay.

There are enough things that negatively affect our rabbits that are beyond our control. A dangerous litter box should not be one of them.



## Animal Communicator Offers Sessions

Would you like to communicate with your current companion or one who has crossed the rainbow bridge? Warren, animal communicator, has generously offered his services, donating 100% of his fee to benefit the rabbits of Rabbit, Rescue & Rehab.

He is offering 20-minute phone sessions to help you learn more about your rabbit or any other furry family member.

For all information, email: [chiguygo@icloud.com](mailto:chiguygo@icloud.com).

# The Life of Lenny

By Samantha Rowan

We said goodbye to Lenny, our sweet senior rabbit, on Dec. 30. His passing was unexpected in that he'd had a good wellness check a month before his death and had been his feisty little bunny self in the days before. But our family had known, simply based on his advanced age, that our time with him would come to an end sooner rather than later. It didn't make it hurt any less.

How can I describe Lenny? He was fierce and loving – as likely to nip us as he was to ask for snuggles – fearless and almost always grumpy. He told us what he wanted with long, suggestive stares and grunted when he didn't get his way. He loved his food and never found a cord he didn't want to chew. And he loved getting petted and melting into a soft pile of fuzzy mush on the floor or the couch, his little nose pressed into your side.

Lenny was his name when we adopted him from Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

At the shelter he'd come to them from, Animal Care & Control, his name had been Lucky. It reflected a history that we knew – Lenny had been found in an industrial park in the Bronx – and suggested a darker part of his life we will never know about.

Rabbits – even gutsy, independent ones like Lenny – don't just end up in industrial parks in the Bronx. He was likely left to fend for himself and he was lucky, ACC said, to have gotten off the street. They estimated he was about 2 years old when he came into their care.

We promised Lenny, when we brought him home, that we would be his forever family. We had 10 good years with him and once again, Lenny was lucky. Apart from his annual visits to the vet, he did not suffer from health issues and every day – even his last ones – was pretty much like the day before.

It was really only in the last year or so that he started to seem very slightly older in a way that was hard to explain.

He ate well, he slept well, he still jumped up on the couch and had no trouble with his litter pan or grooming. He developed cataracts, we learned in November, but his eyes were still bright with affection, mischief or annoyance. He simply lived his life to the fullest and then one morning, without warning, did not wake up.

Lenny had a good sense of the passing of time each day. He knew when we were supposed to be up, feeding him, or if it was time for our son to come home from school. A free-range rabbit, he invariably ended up in his cage at around 9 every night and dozed there until morning. But I always wondered if he had a sense of the passing of years in the same way we did or if he knew he was growing old.

Lenny was there for so much of our lives, so many holidays and milestones. Our friends, family and co-workers knew him. He was our Pandemic Bunny, the white and grey rabbit who sat under the table and nudged our feet for petting as my husband, son and I tried to figure out how to take a world that had once been so big and move it to the walls of our apartment and giving us comfort by just being present for us.

As I write this, Lenny has been gone for nearly two days and the space he filled is quiet and empty. We look over to his cage and then remember that while Lenny is in our hearts, he is no longer there. We are a family of three now instead of four. But we are also richer for having been Lenny's family.

The name that Lenny had first been given when he was rescued, Lucky, demonstrated his good fortune, but we believe that we were the lucky ones to have been his friends.

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Lenny.

# Is Your Rabbit an Anarchist or a Happy Digger? The Psychology of Messy Litter-Box Skills

By Jane O'Wyatt

Kay used to have good litter-box skills. Now she doesn't. After her roommate Honey's death, Kay inherited her big, green, low-entry litter box, which she began to use just as Honey had: she sits in it nibbling hay but uses it sparingly otherwise, peeing mostly on a piece of synthetic sheepskin in front of the litter box and pooping randomly around her roomy pen. Did Kay inherit Honey's litter-box skills? If this were a mystery in need of a solution or a behavior in need of modification, I might consult an animal communicator. However, I rather like the ambiguity of the situation with its reminders of brave, blind Honey. Besides, the housework is no big deal.

Back when I first became aware of Honey's out-of-the-box peeing, I was worried about urine scald because she often sat in a wet spot rather than immediately hopping away from it. So I put a piece of synthetic sheepskin, with a washable human incontinence pad under it, where she regularly peed. Urine passes right through the sheepskin, so the surface remains dry, and the pad underneath absorbs the urine. Also, as Mary Ann Maier pointed out in "Getting to the Bottom of Sore Hocks" (*Thump*, Nov. 2023), synthetic sheepskin provides "surface softness and another component: 'Loft.' Loft is the squishable thickness and cushioning that further eases a rabbit's gait as he or she walks." Although Kay's feet have more fur on them than Honey's did, she is somewhat disabled due to spinal injuries and is almost eight years old. So the hack devised for Honey works well for Kay. It does entail more bunny laundry, but it's worth it.

Occasionally other rabbits stay with us when their people are out of town. A visiting bunny will have a sturdy, well-furnished, spacious pen, and this pen will be near Kay's but distant enough to

prevent physical contact. The idea is to accommodate the bunnies so they can safely see, smell and hear – and possibly enjoy – each other. Kay informs the visitor about boundaries, and the visitor claims his or her own space, in a "poop war" that is less weaponized incontinence than it is a dialogue. Kay, who seems relatively content with her daily routine but finds humans kind of boring, likes having bunny visitors. Peter Rabbit, a bouncy Hotot whose person often travels for work, is probably Kay's favorite. He is staying with us now, and I credit him with enabling her to get in touch with her inner wild rabbit. One night (only!) he inspired her to dig up her litter box and scatter Farmer Dave second-cut timothy hay and Feline Pine pellets all over her synthetic sheepskin. Not often seen in house rabbits, such a flare-up of instinctive lagomorph behavior is generally regarded by human caretakers as anarchic and messy, and appeals for solutions to this kind of digging can be found on various bunny-focused websites. But I smiled as I looked into Kay's pen the following morning: what fun she must have had! The mess, I believe, originated in a rabbit-specific form of "funktionslust," a concept formulated by psychologist Karl Bühler to describe one's pleasure in doing something for which one is suited by nature and ability. In addition to digging, poop wars may also be said to exemplify *funktionslust*.

So what are litter-box skills if not a human construct? We say that a house rabbit has good litter-box skills when she poops and pees where we want her to. Bad litter-box skills challenge us to consider their source in nature. They also require us to do more housework and bunny laundry, activities that house rabbits may regard as good litter-box skills in humans.

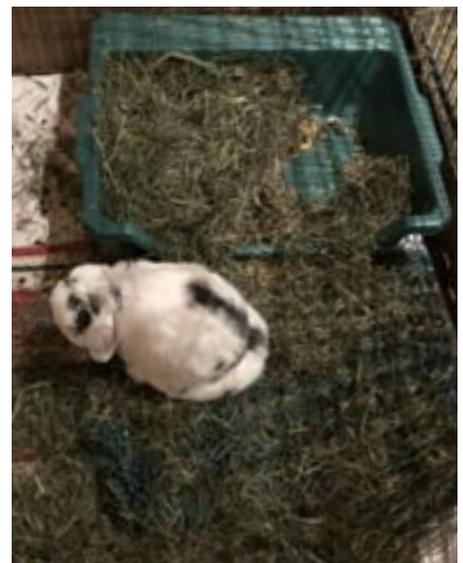
Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Kay and her litter box.



Peter Rabbit, influencer.



Kay the morning after digging up her litter box.

## Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

*By Noah the Bunny  
with assistance from Shari Zagorski*

Hello my human friends!

The end of 2023 sure was full of adventures. Besides my usual Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group education events, I also got to cheer up people in a nursing home and visit New York City!

In November I was the guest speaker at a meeting in Rockville Centre where 9-year-old Girl Scouts learned about habitats and the differences between domestic and wild rabbits. In early December, I volunteered at my third annual “Scales and Tails” pet fair-style event at the Middle Country Public Library. It was fun seeing some of my human and animal friends from past years there. One of our volunteers brought some stickers and key chains she created and I was able to check out her table display of bunny swag!

The next day I went with my humans to a rehabilitation and nursing home that allows furry companions to visit. On my first visit there, I sat on my special towel on a bed while Grandpa sat in his wheelchair and gave me lots of petting. It really cheered him up, especially since I ignored the wire to the bed controller (aka “spicy hay”) the whole time! My humans always bring my familiar towel and a small litter box with hay to keep me comfortable whenever I’m out of my home.

Since that visit went well and I was told that I make people smile, my humans took me back a week before Christmas to bring some holiday cheer. This time, I not only sat on the bed for petting, but I also got to ride down the hallway in the wheelchair on Grandpa’s lap! We visited a lounge where humans came to see their family members, and I made new friends and informally educated people about how amazing bunnies are. My third visit to the rehabilitation center was just before Christmas and by now



Photos: Shari Zagorski  
Making children happy as spokesbunny.

the place was familiar and comfortable and the staff members asked if I could come back. I really look forward to visiting again, bringing joy to the staff and residents, and acting as LIRRG’s spokesbunny when I’m interacting with people.

Now for my big bunny adventure. On Dec. 23, just two days before Christmas, I had the experience of a bunny lifetime! I rode on a train into New York City. It was pretty cold outside on the train platform, so my humans put a soft fleece blanket inside my carrier and wrapped another fleece around the outside for added insulation. Even though I have a plush fur coat, they figured since I’m always indoors I might not be used to the cooler temperature. My humans put the carrier on their laps for the train ride and the people in the seats next to me were asking lots of questions about bunnies. When we arrived at Grand Central Terminal, it was amazing! We rode escalators up and up until we finally arrived in a concourse and then at a huge train station where my humans seemed inclined to take photographs of me because it’s a famous building.

After we left the train hall, my humans hugged my carrier tight as they walked toward our destination several blocks away. The fresh air felt nice and the smells of the city were so new and interesting! At this point, you may be wondering where I was going in the city. Well, not



Special visit plus a ride on Grandpa’s lap.



Big bunny adventure with my bun-pal Alex the Great.

to the usual holiday sights like Rockefeller Center or the department-store windows. I had an invitation to see my celebrity bun-pal Alex the Great who was visiting all the way from San Francisco! My humans had met Alex and his humans while visiting California several months ago, so now it was their turn to meet me. I’m not sure if I mentioned, but Alex is a 30-pound Flemish Giant who also volunteers and goes on many exciting adventures.

When we arrived at the hotel where Alex was staying, I advised the staff that I was there to attend a bunny party. I’m not sure if they were laughing or saying

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Sharing Our Rabbits' Holiday Traditions and Antics

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 about their rabbits' holiday traditions and antics. Here's what they had to say.



Peanut.

"2023 was **Peanut's** 12th Christmas but the very first year that Peanut got curious about the tree!" – Denise B.



Ellie.

"**Ellie** can't be trusted around the Christmas tree, so we have to rearrange our kitchen and set it up on the other side of the fence, out of tiny bun range." – Emily V.



Zander.

"**Zander** enjoyed meeting our newest holiday decoration." – Jess L.



Penelope.

"Don't need a pen for them (**Cadbury and Penelope**). Need it to protect the tree." – Mary D.



Cowboy.

"**Cowboy** goes crazy rummaging through all the spent Christmas wrapping paper. This year Cowboy had no interest in wrapping paper as every gift was for him." – Kevin G.



Cara.

"We have constructed a 4-foot fence to keep everyone's darling **Cara** (Miss July) from getting into the Xmas tree. Things Miss **Cara** has fitted into this week: Found a way to crawl under and inside the grandfather clock, crawl under the wall unit to where the subwoofers are, jumped off daddy's forehead and onto the end table...the list is endless really." – Barbara P.



Yoshi.

"**Yoshi** likes to 'help' unwrap." – Jennifer B.

## Happy Gotcha Day, Daniel

By Lauren Lourenco

On Dec. 1, 2018, a lop-eared black-and-white bunny named Daniel had found his forever home with me. I had developed a chronic illness earlier in the year and my boyfriend (now husband) promised me a support animal.

When I went to adopt Daniel, it was truly love at first sight. I walked downstairs in the foster home and the first rabbit I saw was this little black-and-white bunny. He perked up on his hind legs and basically cast a spell on me because I have loved him ever since that moment.

His bottom fur was still matted and covered in his pee from before he was rescued out of a terrible situation. I often think to myself, how could someone not have loved this bunny, and treated him so poorly? He is the sweetest being on this planet, and has the most amazing loving and caring personality. I honestly think he is an angel here on this earth in bunny form. Which isn't too far off to believe since he was named after his guardian angel Daniel.

Daniel has molded me into the person I am today. He has made me a kinder, overall better person and has taught me a type of empathy and selflessness that can only grow from true love.

There is a type of rewarding feeling knowing that the choices you make in life aren't just about you anymore. Every-

thing we do revolves around Daniel, from the apartment we chose to live in, to even the time frame we picked to take our honeymoon – just to make sure we didn't miss his gotcha day this year.

I wouldn't have it any other way. Daniel is so special to everyone who ever has had the joy of knowing him. He is funny, crazy, kind and so so loving.

I love everything about him – all his little quirks that are unique to him, like the constant random flops for attention

or the way he likes to fall asleep during the day with his ear soaked in his water bowl. I love the way he waits for me at his gate and how he knows to wake me up every morning. He's extremely intelligent and knows exactly how to get his way. I love how he is the perfect combination of crazy and playful but also is so sweet and cuddly.

I hate how fast time is flying, but love every new day spent with you, Daniel. Happy fifth gotcha day. Mommy loves you more than you could ever know.

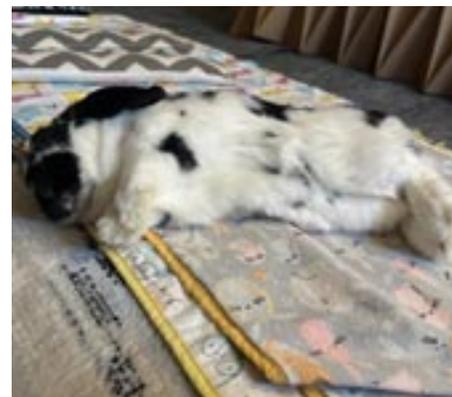
Photos: Lauren Lourenco



Daniel relaxing at home.



Sampling high-quality hay.



Sleeping soundly.

## Noah Reports

*(Continued from page 7)*

I was cute, but they directed us to the penthouse lounge on the 17th floor. I was getting very excited to meet Alex and his family as we had been corresponding on social media for about a year and a half. When we arrived at the lounge, it was carpeted and had nice comfy sofas to relax. My humans, as always, brought

my familiar towel and a travel litter box with hay for me. Two additional bunnies, Oz and Clove, and a bunch of humans also attended the party. I took the opportunity to be LIRRG's ambassador and explain how they helped me and saved so many other bunnies, and to promote adoption and fostering. After several hours at the party behaving as the "sweetest gentlebun" (mom's words),

it was time to head to the train and back home. During the ride I entertained some 7-year-old boys and helped answer all of their bunny questions.

I'm already booking a few education events for the winter and early spring so I'll have plenty to write about for the next edition of Thump.

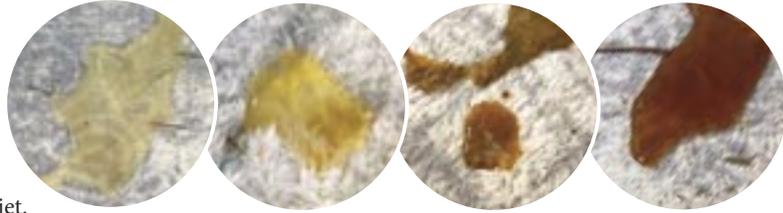
Until next time, this is Spokesbunny Noah signing off!

# Rabbit Urine

## Normal

Normal rabbit urine can range greatly in color. It can be pale yellow, dark yellow, a range of oranges, browns, and even rusty red. There are many factors including genetics and diet.

Even though it ranges in color, normal urine is always watery and not thick.



## Calcium in urine

When excess calcium is no longer needed for their metabolism, it is excreted in the urine. Sometimes owners will notice a dried chaulky white residue on bedding, at the bottom

of the litterbox, or even on fecal pellets, where they resemble powdered donuts. A watery cloudy urine of normal color is also indicative of calcium in urine. If you have concerns, talk to your veterinarian.



## Sludge

Sludge is not normal. Its main characteristic is that it is thick like peanut butter or putty. Sludge is formed when calcium is retained in the bladder, causing sedimentation at the bottom of the

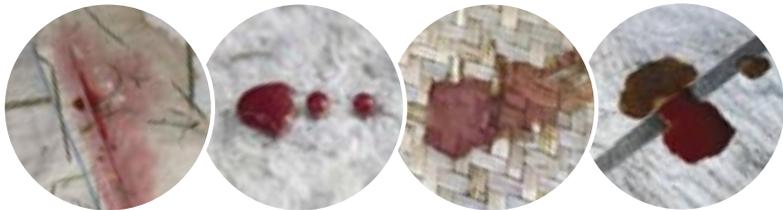
bladder. It can be common in rabbits that are obese, elderly, or arthritic and is indicative of a problem that needs to be treated by a rabbit-savvy veterinarian. Other signs of sludge include straining, dribbling urine, or avoidance of using the litterbox, accidents, etc. Sludge prevention includes encouragement of exercise, hydration (offer your rabbit water in a bowl rather than a bottle), and feeding the appropriate diet.



## Blood in urine/sludge

Blood in either urine or sludge is a medical emergency. Sometimes it's tricky to discern blood vs normal rust colored urine--blood is more of a magenta

red than a rusty red. It could be indicative of a variety of medical problems, i.e., uterine cancer in an unspayed female, bladder or kidney stones, or inflammation that needs to be treated by a rabbit-savvy vet as soon as possible. Sometimes it manifests as clots, and sometimes it's spotting on their bedding or flooring.



*Rabbits are a prey species, so noticing subtle, potential changes can be difficult. Whether it's your rabbit's fecals, appetite or urine, pay attention to what is normal for your rabbit.*

© Katie Scarr & Mary Ann Maier, created in consultation with Jennifer L. Saver, DVM, [catnipandcarrots.com](http://catnipandcarrots.com)

## 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)

### Dove

Unfortunately, the summer of 2023 was a record year for outdoor rabbit abandonments. We were called to a neighborhood where several rabbits were seen trying to survive. During week two, little Dove appeared on the scene. She was very young and quite fearful; it took a few days to convince her that we were there to bring her to safety.

She is a beautifully elegant 7- to 8-month-old sable seal point, tipping the scales at 3.5 pounds.

Dove is a very sweet little girl. She is rather demure, with a cautious approach to the world. She is an active girl and loves to run and does fantastic binkies! Her binky game is no surprise because she has the legs of a supermodel! Dove is spayed and would thrive in a calm, adult home. If you are interested in adopting Dove, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Dove.

### Pink

Pink is a sweet Himalayan boy with an affectionate demeanor. He does have a big energetic streak and likes to get in his exercise by running big laps and fluffing up his blankets before settling in for a nap on his IKEA doll bed. He's particularly fond of toys that can be tossed around, and loves all of his pellets, greens and hay. Pink is neutered and ready for adoption. If you are interested in adopting Pink, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](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 and, wanting to help this poor bunny, brought her back to his home. Once there, she surprised him with a litter of

babies. When we first saw Skye shortly after she had given birth, every bone in her small, frail body was visible and all movement was taxing for her in her emaciated state. Still, Skye was a wonderful mother to her babies and slowly but surely, she gained weight and became stronger. Today, Skye is completely healthy and enjoying some well-deserved free time now that her babies are grown up and off on their own adventures. Skye is looking for a quiet, calm human companion to match her sweet but reserved energy.



Pink.



Skye.

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

*(Continued on page 12)*

## RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 11)

### Indigo

Indigo's puppy-like playfulness is as endearing as his ears are enormous! Indigo arrived at ACC showing signs of terrible neglect. When we pulled him from the shelter, the veterinary treatment he was receiving had already filled an 8-plus-page-long medical record in that short time. He was facing an abscess, severe sore hocks, skin conditions, parasites and more. Today, Indigo has settled in beautifully and gained a whole 3 pounds since he first arrived at the shelter (currently tipping the scales at a magnificent 9.5 pounds!). Now living on cushy, appropriate floor material, Indigo's once infected and painful hocks are growing in nice new fur to protect his wonderfully giant feet. Indigo has been neutered and is living in foster care. He hopes to soon meet his forever family who will enjoy playtime and cuddle time as much as he does! If you are interested in adopting Indigo, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### 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



Indigo.

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 a good partner for another rabbit. She



Lucy.



Carmela.

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



## You Can Help!

We desperately need help driving our rabbits to and from the veterinarian, between foster homes, etc. Having to worry about how the rabbits will get to the vet or back home is adding a huge amount of stress on top of our already difficult mission.

Most of our foster rabbits are quite far from their veterinarian and we now have a huge problem on our hands, as one volunteer can't help any longer. Unfortunately, many trips can be last-minute due to an emergency.

If you are based close to Westchester County, are a safe driver with a clean driver's license, and want to help the rabbits in a huge way, we'd love to hear from you! Thank you!

[NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](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)



Eden.



Chamomile

### Eden

Serene and beautiful like the place after which she was named, Eden will capture your heart. She has been described as sweet, reserved and lovable. Once she's familiar with you, she'll be sure to entertain with nightly binky performances.

Eden is a foodie at heart, loving all kinds of food and enjoying her hay often. Perfect litter-box habits and a quiet



Arthur.

demeanor make her a great roommate. She prefers to be in a home with lots of space for her to explore, and she'd prefer any children that share her space to be at least 13. Eden doesn't mind some noise and could handle living in a more urban area, but she does ask for slow movements whenever you're in her space.

If Eden were a human: Marie Kondo.

### Chamomile

Chamomile was rescued from the streets during winter and is a very 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 when 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.

### Arthur

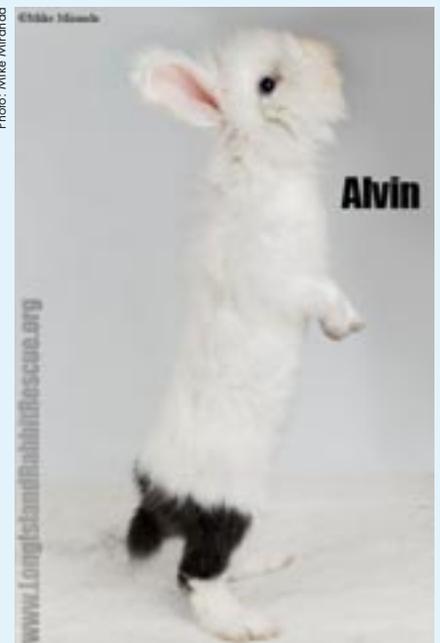
Arthur was found left in a nightstand of an abandoned house. Despite this, he is extremely friendly and outgoing – a real charmer!

While Arthur is extremely sweet and loves to be petted, he has a few simple rules for his humans to follow, such as: Don't bother him while he's in his litter box and while he's eating. He will be sure to let you know when he doesn't approve.

### Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Wabby Wabbit, Bubbles, Dylan, Jose, Davina, Peeps, Desmond, Judy, Bentley, Paris, Milly, Faith, Blitzen and Cupid, Grenas, Vanilla, Puff, Velveteen Rabbit, Jessica Rabbit, Chapelle, Kerry, Ravi, Jolly, Alfie, Mini Lola and Engine were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

Photo: Mike Miranda



Alvin on his ninth gotcha day.

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

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



Timmy.



Bino.



Patches.



Peluche.



Ollie.



Nono.



Tangerine.



Millie.

*(Continued on page 15)*

ADOPTIONS

**Rabbits at Manhattan NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 14)*



Lil.



Mr. Fabulous.



Phil.



Basil.

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



Dream.



Midnight.



Reptar.



Dumpling.



Gemelo.



Twin.



Lola.



Hope.



Roger Rabbit.

*(Continued on page 17)*

ADOPTIONS

**Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC**

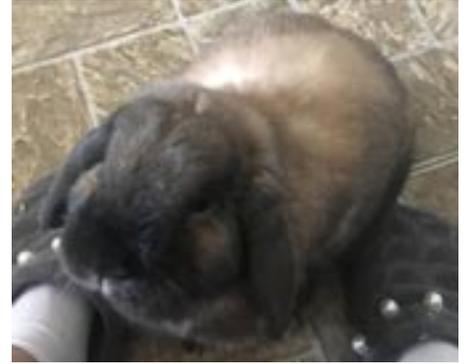
*(Continued from page 16)*



Jelly Bean.



Diglett.



Brownie.



Hoppy.



Snowball.



Pikachu.



Frost.



Oreo Hops.

*(Continued on page 18)*

ADOPTIONS

**Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 17)*



Chocolate.



Peanut.



Poppy.



Lucky.



Emilio.



Byly.



Bunni.



Peach.

# Winning Over a Shy Bunny

By Dana Krempels, Ph.D.

One of the most common misconceptions people have about rabbits is that they like to be held and cuddled. This is probably because they look like plush toys. Unfortunately, many people buy rabbits without realizing the true nature of rabbits, and that's one of the main reasons these lovely, intelligent creatures are "dumped" shortly after they reach sexual maturity and begin to assert their strong personalities.

You are distressed that the bunny does not like to be held. Consider for a moment, however, the natural history of the rabbit. This is a ground-dwelling animal that is a prey item for many predators. It is completely against the nature of the rabbit to be held far above the ground where it cannot control its own motions and activities. When you force her to be held against her will, you reinforce her instinctive notion that you are a predator who is trying to restrain her. Holding her while she struggles and kicks is not only dangerous for you and the children (You may have noticed her sharp claws by now!), but also for the rabbit. I wish I didn't know how many young rabbits come into our vet's office with broken legs, necks and spines because people insisted on carrying them around and handling them against their will. If you love your bunny, you won't do this.

Think about it: If your dog or cat didn't like to be carried around, you probably would not force the issue. Why treat your bunny any differently, simply because of her superficially "toylike" appearance? To understand rabbit behavior, you have to begin to think like a rabbit.

First, buy yourself a copy of "The House Rabbit Handbook" by Marinell Harriman. It's the most accurate book about rabbits available today.

Second, remember that a rabbit, unlike a dog or cat, evolved as a prey species.

Dogs and cats are predators, and most do not have a natural fear of being held. Reinforcing this natural tendency, breeders have selected generation upon generation of domestic dogs and cats so that their descendants have a short "flight distance." This means that domestic dogs and cats are generally not afraid of humans.

Domestic rabbits are very different in this respect. For centuries, rabbits have been bred primarily for meat, fur and physical characteristics. That means that when you adopt a rabbit, you adopt a beautiful animal with domesticated physical features – and the heart and spirit of a wild animal. It is much more challenging to win the trust of this kind of sensitive, intelligent creature than it is to win the heart of a puppy or kitten that has been bred to trust you from birth.

Most rabbits are naturally shy. It is up to you, the flexible human, to compromise and alter your behavior so that the bunny understands that you are a friend.

The following are a few steps you can take to win your shy rabbit's trust.

1. You and bunny should be together in a private, quiet room. No other pets. No distractions.

2. Have a little treat, such as a carrot or a tiny piece of apple, banana or a little pinch of oats in your hand. (These foods are only for small treats. Rabbits fed a diet with too much digestible carbohydrate are excellent candidates for serious gastrointestinal disorders.)

3. Lie on your tummy on the floor and let the bunny out of his "safe haven" (hutch). It's quite crucial that this hutch have a door that is accessible to the rabbit so that you don't have to lift him when you take him out or put him back in. The bunny should have absolute freedom to choose when he comes out. Don't force the issue. The bunny's natural curiosity will bring him to you.

4. Don't expect your bunny to approach you right away. Remain quiet and patient, even if it takes an hour or

*(Continued on page 20)*

Photo: Jone O'Wyatt



Peanut.

## Shy Bunny *(Continued from page 19)*

more. Rabbits are naturally curious, and eventually he will come over to sniff you.

5. Resist the temptation to reach out and pat the bunny. Instead, let him sniff you, hop on you and just get to know your smell. This will teach him that you are not a threat.

6. If the bunny finds the treat you have, hold it while he nibbles.

7. Do this every day. Gradually, you can start to touch the bunny by giving him a gentle “scritch” on the forehead (bunnies love this). Never force anything, and never chase the bunny. This will only undo all the patient sitting you have done to gain his trust. A rabbit does not generally like to play “chase” with an animal that is 30 times his size. It is simply not natural behavior for him, and it is not a sign of low intelligence.

8. As the bunny gradually becomes less shy, you can become more familiar with him, stroking his back, letting him lie with his side pressed against your arm... whatever feels comfortable and natural to both of you. Many rabbits seem to find a face less threatening than a hand. Your bunny may gladly allow you to give him a warm “nose nuzzle” (especially if you hum very low and softly; this is the way rabbits sometimes communicate among themselves), even if he won't let your hand come close.

9. Once the bunny learns that you are a friend, he will bond very strongly to you. It's important to have him neutered (or her spayed, if it's a girl) once she/he reaches sexual maturity, because otherwise the bunny will want to make love to everything, including you – whatever appendages happen to be within reach. Spay/neuter will stop this behavior, and it will eliminate the very real risk of reproductive tract cancers in females. Spay/neuter will also make litter-box training easier and more reliable. Be sure

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Peri.

you have this done by a veterinarian who is very experienced with rabbits.

In implementing the steps above, remember to imagine what the world looks like to this little, furry stranger. She's surrounded by a new environment, and there's a big, odd-smelling animal that's always looming over her. She has no idea you're trying to be friendly. Her “hard wiring” says: “AAAAAAA!!! It's going to EAT MEEEE!!!!” So it's up to you, the new bunny parent, to provide her with quiet, safe space where she can learn to feel secure. (Be sure all electrical wires and phone cords are out of the bunny's reach.)

Try to see the world through your bunny's eyes. Put yourself in her place. No one speaks her “language,” she has been taken from her family and perhaps the only home she has ever known, and she has no idea whether you plan to love her, cage her forever, or eat her. You need to gradually and patiently earn her trust. It can take days, weeks or months, and depends on the personality of the individual rabbit.

One complaint we often hear from people who bought a bunny for their children who turns out to be shy is that the rabbit is “not turning out to be the sort of pet we wanted for our kids.” Try to banish this kind of thinking.

Rather than being disappointed that the rabbit is not what you expected (it is



Cleo.

quite possible that she will never learn to like to be held), take this opportunity to teach your children respect for an animal who is different from them, who has different needs, perceptions and behaviors than a dog or cat, and who is NOT a casual plaything. If the children really want something to carry around, they need a stuffed toy – not a live rabbit.

Finally, remember that the ultimate responsibility for the rabbit's welfare belongs to the adults in the household – not the children. Most human children are pretty well into their late teens before they truly understand the necessity of constant, devoted care to another sentient life form. This can be your opportunity to get an early start in teaching them that all-important life lesson.

Your rabbit is a highly intelligent, potentially loving, loyal creature who can become a member of the family, if you allow her to be what she is – a rabbit. If you and all your family can do that, you are in for the most delightful companionship imaginable.

---

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

## Adoptable Rabbits

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

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



Tina.

## 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 JANUARY 2024

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**