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THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS MAY 2021

Just Thump the Stress Away!

By Megan Hilands

The longer I live with bunnies, the more it makes sense to me that these lovely creatures are often treasured as therapy animals. For better or worse I am the kind of person who gets stressed easily and feels deeply. Over the years I have struggled at times with anxiety and depression. But no matter what kind of day I am having my rabbits inevitably make me feel better.

Compared with other domestic animals, bunnies' behaviors and expressions may seem a little subtle. It's no secret that many buns will take some time to warm up to a new human and can seem guarded – especially when we compare them to dogs who might literally jump with joy when meeting a new person!

Bunnies are more sensitive, sometimes quiet creatures. But part of what makes them so special is that this sensitivity

allows them to pick up on subtleties of emotion – both in other rabbits and humans. When I am stressed, sad or anxious my bunnies really notice, and I truly believe they try to help me. I suppose I have achieved honorary membership in their warren.

Nearly a decade ago, a few months after adopting my first bunny, I came down with the flu and was confined to my couch for over a week. As I napped and sweated out my fever, my bunny rarely left his post at the foot of the couch. I like to think we switched roles that week, with him as the protector and me as the comparatively weak human who needed comforting. I, of course, repaid him with cuddles and treats when I was feeling better.

More recently, when I first started working from home my bunnies took

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Eveee.

Thanks So Much!

Thank you so much to all of our wonderful supporters who made Easter donations this year!

We are so touched by all of the kind and thoughtful messages we received, many expressing the desire to support rescued bunnies in honor and recognition of the tragic number of rabbits that are

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Bill Would Stop Sale of Dogs, Cats and Rabbits In Retail Pet Stores Throughout the State

The state Senate passed legislation to prohibit the sale of rabbits, dogs and cats in pet stores.

The bill now goes to the Assembly. If it is approved there, New York state will join other states and hundreds of cities in enacting laws to curb pet sales. Roughly 80 pet stores in the state would be affected.

The measure is aimed at high-volume breeding facilities that supply animals to retail stores. The breeders, often called puppy mills, have been criticized for how they treat the animals that they sell.

Senate sponsor Mike Gianaris said the bill would cut off what he called the “puppy mill pipeline.” The Queens Democrat said, “We should not be treating animals as if they are a commodity, as if they are a can of soup that we take off the shelf at the supermarket to buy.”

While the legislation blocks stores from selling the pets, they can work with animal rescue organizations to make pets available for adoption.

In 2016, New York City banned the sale of rabbits in pet stores throughout the five boroughs. Rabbit Rescue & Rehab has pushed for expansion of this ban into the entire state of New York.

The need for this legislation is enormous, considering the number of individual surrender requests received by Rabbit Rescue & Rehab and other groups. In addition, large-scale surrenders, hoarding cases, and over-reproduction situations may involve 100+ rabbits in each scenario.

A significant number of these surrender requests come from people who purchased a rabbit from a pet store on impulse, received a rabbit purchased from a pet store as a gift, or were given incorrect information (or no information) about rabbits from a pet store and only later learned that they were not prepared for the commitment or the expense. Upon learning about the special diet and care needs, cost, and commitment involved in rabbit care, many chose to abandon their rabbits or relinquish them to a

shelter rather than stepping up to provide the correct home and care to the rabbit that they purchased.

Following New York City’s 2016 ban on selling rabbits in pet stores, there was a decrease in the proportion of rabbit surrenders to rescue groups from within the five boroughs. There is hope that a statewide ban would similarly ease the rabbit abandonment crisis across all of New York.

The measure passed by the Senate on May 5 has the backing of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Society of the United States, New York State Animal Protection Federation, Voters for Animal Rights, Companion Animal Protection Society, Animal Legal Defense Fund, and the NYC Bar Association’s Animal Law Committee.

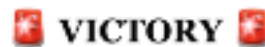
In the Assembly, the bill is backed by Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal. She said, “Preventing the sale of dogs, cats

and rabbits in pet stores won’t just protect animals. It will also save customers the great heartache and expense that comes with falling in love with an animal that is destined by its breeding to become irreparably sick.”

Ms. Rosenthal said, “I, along with the hundreds of thousands of animal lovers in this state, are waiting to end the puppy mill-to-pet store pipeline by passing bill A.4283.”

An undercover investigation conducted by the Humane Society of the United States last year found that many New York pet stores obtained puppies from breeders that provided poor conditions.

The legislation was passed by the Senate last year but it didn’t get to the floor in the Assembly. This year, advocates are looking for a different outcome. “We’re seeing some progress in the Assembly this year. Hopefully, we get this enacted before the session is out,” Mr. Gianaris said.



The bill prohibiting the sale of rabbits, dogs & cats has passed the N.Y. State senate!

The bill will now go back to the assembly to pass several more committees.

Please contact (via phone & email) your N.Y. state assembly person and ask them to vote **YES** on bill **A4283**, otherwise known as the “puppy mill pipeline” bill.

Look up your NYS assembly person here:
<https://nyassembly.gov/mem/search/>

Please ask your friends and family to do the same.
We are one step closer to ending the purchase of thousands of rabbits, dogs & cats that are suffering in pet stores and ultimately languishing in shelters.

THANK YOU!

Deadly Rabbit Virus Spreads to New Regions of the Country

By House Rabbit Society

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus continues to spread across the country. Since the deadly virus appeared early last year in the Southwest U.S., it has killed domestic and wild rabbits in at least 10 states.

The Wyoming Livestock Board said in April that a domestic rabbit in Laramie County was the first domestic rabbit in the state to have a confirmed positive case of RHDV. Previously, the virus was found in wild rabbits in four counties.

There have already been confirmed RHDV2 cases in Arizona, California,

Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Wyoming and Mexico, affecting both wild and domestic rabbits. (A previously reported case in Arkansas was determined to be the result of a laboratory error.)

RHDV was recently confirmed in Lethbridge, in the province of Alberta, Canada, after five indoor domestic rabbits died. Lethbridge is 75 miles north of Montana.

The virus is expected to arrive in our region this year, according to Anne

Martin, executive director of House Rabbit Society.

Visit this site for the latest information and for a full list of outbreak areas. You also can download a handout about RHDV to learn more about what you can do to keep your rabbit safe.

To learn more about the protocol recommendations for shelters/rescues in an outbreak area, go to [this link](#).

For anyone living in an area with current spread of RHDV, the most important things you can do to help keep your

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Thump the Stress

(Continued from page 1)

some time to get used to what my partner and I call my “work voice.” I must sound a little different taking work calls compared to social conversations (a tinge of stress in my voice perhaps?) – so for a time my bunnies would thump at me repeatedly every time I took a call.

Either they’ve adjusted or I’ve gotten more relaxed while working – but the habit of thumping at me when I’m anxious or stressed has persisted. I can’t tell you how many times I have been feeling sad this past year (it’s been a hard one after all!) and one or both of my rabbits has run over to where I am, looked me in the eye, and loudly thumped at me. If we think back to why wild rabbits thump – to alert each other of danger – this habit makes a lot of sense. My bunnies must pick up on the “danger” of their human feeling stressed and want to remedy the situation. This way, they will ensure every

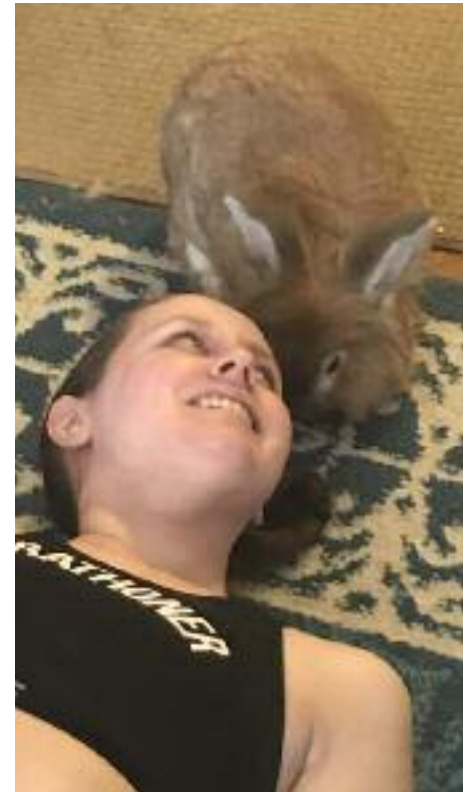
Photos: Megan Hillands



My first bunny, Baby, taught me how deeply humans and rabbits can connect with each other.

bun is safe and gets his or her treat as regularly scheduled.

All jokes aside, I do think my rabbits love me (almost) as much as I love them. Their sweet, subtle behaviors are why I as an introverted, perhaps overly emotional person will always identify as a bunny person and why I can’t imagine a life without bunnies.



Nala likes to groom me during my post-workout stretch. Some might say she likes the salt, but I choose to believe I have been granted token bunny status!

Thanks *(Continued from page 1)*

purchased and then quickly abandoned in the weeks following Easter. This time of year is indeed a difficult and busy one, and we so greatly appreciate this support

that makes our rescue efforts possible. Thank you all so much!!

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 [here](#).

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to [this link](#).

If Pet Rabbits Were the Stars

By Melissa Lee

Rabbits have long suffered from misguided portrayals on television and in movies. They are often pulled out of magicians' hats, given to children, housed in tiny cages and outdoor hutches, and fed nothing but carrots.

Let's imagine a television show where rabbits get the royal treatment that they deserve. This show stars, let's say, Hugs and Nola, two bonded rabbits, and their doting human family.

Instead of living in a hutch, Hugs and Nola roam free in their kingdom, a spacious house. They are both neutered/spayed – no “multiplying like rabbits” here. So luxurious are their lives that they never yearn for the outdoors or the life of a wild rabbit.

Their kingdom is rabbit-proofed, with all wires, cords and wood surfaces covered. Hugs and Nola rule their domain from their castle (their own room), complete with a comfy rug, litter box and play

Photo: Jane O'Wyff



Tina, mid-flop.

houses. There are fun toys like paper bags, boxes, cardboard rolls and branches. We watch their daily hijinks, binkies and zoomies as they explore, climb, hide, dig and chew.

The kitchen is chock-full of hay, with some pellets and a variety of organic leafy greens and other vegetables fit for the healthiest rabbit (or human) salad. The greens range from parsley to arugula to carrot tops. (The carrots themselves are relegated to the treat drawer.)

Their humans, a couple with no kids, wait on them hand (paw?) and foot. Hugs and Nola get regular bunny spa days – petting, brushing and manicures (nail-trimming).

Such a series would have to be a reality show because we all know rabbits never follow a script. We'll watch these furry divas' personalities come out and wait for the drama. Will Hugs chew a hole into the wall? Will Nola gnaw through a lamp cord? Will they cuddle with their humans and melt our hearts with their cuteness? (Yes, obviously.) It's a rabbit's world, and we are only living in it.

Deadly Virus

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rabbits safe are keeping your rabbits inside (including no outdoor playtime), taking biosecurity measures at home, and vaccinating when the vaccine is available (vaccine is available in current outbreak states and Washington state only).

Currently, there isn't a vaccine widely available to veterinarians in the U.S. or Canada. Vaccinations are generally available in countries where the disease is endemic (the disease is regularly found there). State veterinarians and the Agriculture Department are requiring a documented case of the disease in their state before approving special import permits for the vaccine, which are brought in from Europe.

Many people are frustrated that the vaccines can't be sold in all U.S. states immediately, but there are important

reasons why. For one thing, European vaccine manufacturers have limited capacity for production. If vaccines are sold to all states, there may be a critical shortage for RHDV2-positive states.

Also, since this is a foreign disease and we are using foreign vaccine on our rabbit populations, there is always concern, until proven otherwise, of inadequate vaccine protection. So far, these vaccines appear to be effective in this outbreak.

Please be patient with your local veterinarians regarding vaccine availability, because they have to follow strict USDA and state guidelines without exception. The USDA is currently supporting and working diligently with U.S. pharmaceutical companies to produce a vaccine in the U.S. It is expected this process will likely take a year or more, but House Rabbit Society will keep you updated.

Unfortunately, House Rabbit Society expects RHDV to keep spreading. In 2015, in Australia it spread coast-to-coast in the rabbit population in 18 months (about 3 million square miles compared to 3.8 million square miles in the U.S.) after it was first detected in that country. In Australia, RHDV outbreaks start in the fall and winter, peak in spring, and are generally absent in summer, which has mostly been the case so far with the 2020-2021 Southwest outbreak in the U.S.

Rabbit owners can sign up for an HRS newsletter that gives updates twice a month. Here's the [link](#).

Here are three news articles about the disease:

[The New York Times](#).

[The New Yorker](#).

[The Cut](#).

Big Ears, Big Sounds and Loud Neighbors

By Samantha Rowan

On the first night of the NCAA tournament, our neighbors had some friends over. Surprising, but not totally unexpected given the rapid rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine in New York City. Whatever game the neighbors were watching must have been an exciting one because there was lots of noise and merriment from the unit across the way.

The noise was almost nice to hear after our building had been so quiet for so long. But there was one member of our family who wasn't very happy: Lenny, our eight- or maybe nine-year-old rabbit.

Lenny, who lounges through his days, was sitting tensely in his cage. The fact that he was even in his cage was even more surprising. Evenings are usually spent under the coffee table, hanging out and nosing for pets while we play board games or watch television.

I went over to the cage and crouched down in front of it, rubbing Lenny's head until he relaxed a little and his eyes were less wary.

Not too long after that, the game ended and our apartment returned to its normal, quiet state. Lenny seemed fine and was in the loaf position, still in his cage, when we went to bed.

About three hours later, I woke up to the sound of Lenny thumping.

I jumped out of bed and went straight to the living room, where everything was quiet and peaceful. Lenny, however, was alert and tense. It was unnerving to see him so upset. Lenny, who believes he's the apex predator in the apartment, rarely thumps or even gets scared. It was a little alarming to hear him so agitated.

"What's the matter? Why are you thumping?" I asked.

I knelt down next to the cage and let Lenny sniff me. He was still pretty upset so I waited for a while until he'd calmed down and I went back to bed. The noise

Photos: Samantha Rowan



Lenny.

had probably upset him, we decided, and he'd be better in the morning.

Except in the morning, Lenny still wouldn't get out of the cage.

As longtime rabbit people, we're always half-watching for one of their "tells" that there's something wrong. A "tell" can be missing the litter box or changing eating habits or even sitting in a way that is different from normal. And now that Lenny is a little older, we're keeping even closer, but still casual, tabs on him.

My husband, son and I studied Lenny as we ate breakfast, trying to determine if there was anything different in his body language that might signal something was amiss.

Over the years, we've had rabbits who have had bouts with GI stasis and the biggest indicator for that was when they were sitting in a way that indicated discomfort, such as with their legs in slightly unusual positions or just a little more fluffed up than usual.

But Lenny seemed fine. And he'd done his usual mad lunge for his kibble (he is appropriately fed, just for the record) and was eating hay and using the litter pan. But he still wouldn't get out of the cage.

"Do we call Dr. Levison?"

"He's eating and he doesn't seem uncomfortable."

"Do you think he's still upset from the noise?"

We posed these questions to Lenny, who didn't reply, and then weighed the stress that would come from a visit to the vet versus the risk of just quietly observing him for another couple of hours. He wasn't showing any tells and he seemed comfortable, albeit wary.

Our best guess was that Lenny wasn't used to the noise and was probably feeling a little bit insecure. And our best answer was to just sit close to him and let him know he was safe.

I sat on the floor next to the cage and did some work. My husband took over for a while and then my son did his shift. It wasn't long after that that Lenny gave a giant stretch, shook himself and then cautiously put two feet outside of the cage and looked around. He looked at us as he hopped cautiously over to one of his usual spots and gave us the look that means, "I'm ready to be admired."

Because we live in an apartment in New York City, there isn't a lot we can do about noise from neighbors. I'm sure that life resuming will be stressful for all of us and possibly even more so for little creatures with big ears. So we will stay attuned to his behavior and probably work in a lot of extra cuddles as life gets back to normal.

Budgie Bunny Has Taught Me to Live in the Moment

By Jean Mellano

Since they cannot be trained to help with physical tasks, rabbits cannot be classified as support animals. However, they can provide emotional support by giving comfort and a therapeutic benefit to their owner through companionship.

Studies have linked pet ownership with reducing signs of depression in people with chronic illnesses, and with reducing loneliness. The calming nature of a therapy or emotional support animal can help ease anxiety, release endorphins and reduce stress.

Budgie Bunny

In 2010, Budgie Bunny was found wandering in a park fending for himself while he was still a baby. Long Island Rabbit Rescue asked me to foster him until his forever home could be found. That was over 10 years ago. Needless to say, I failed at being a foster parent. As a friend once said to me, there are worse things in life to fail at.

Little did I know that five years after saving Budgie, I would be diagnosed with Parkinson's and now, he is helping me.

How could a four-pound fur ball possibly help someone who has Parkinson's? On more than one occasion, while I was in the depths of despair having a pity party for myself over my current health

situation, Budgie would start giving me bunny kisses. I would become filled with gratitude to have such a great little buddy who seems to sense my emotions. I do not feel as alone having Budgie in my house.

Living with a rabbit has taught me some valuable lessons. Budgie has helped me to live in the moment, to be more patient, and to keep laughter in my life.

Live in the Moment

Budgie gets me out of bed in the morning. If I don't feed him on time, he will make a racket by pushing around his food bowl. If he wants attention, he will create a lot of noise by working on a bunny construction project or thumping his hind leg. In that moment, I forget that I have Parkinson's. I become aware that Budgie needs something from me. At times like this, I am in the present moment, which is so important for mental wellness.

Patience Is a Virtue

Since rabbits are prey animals, they do not automatically trust humans. It takes a deliberate investment for you to build a relationship with a rabbit. Initially, a bunny may be shy, afraid, very independent, or hesitant to trust a human. I developed a lot of patience waiting for Budgie to become comfortable with me. It took him a long time to realize I was not going to eat him for lunch.

Now that I experience Parkinson's-induced slowness of movement, I can become very impatient with myself when I get dressed in the morning. However, the patience I developed while building a relationship with Budgie has helped me to better cope with this Parkinson's symptom.

Laughter Is the Best Medicine

Budgie's antics never fail to make me smile. One time, I forgot to put his litter box in his pen. Budgie decided to use his food dish for his litter box and much to my surprise, he didn't even miss!

So, instead of getting annoyed, I chuckled and gave my sweet bunny a few scratches behind his ears. Budgie keeps me laughing and laughter makes me feel good.

Now It Is My Turn to Help Budgie

Since Budgie is a rescue rabbit, I don't know his exact age. I guess it to be around 11, which makes him an old man. Budgie was just diagnosed with arthritis. As a result, the strength in his hind legs is deteriorating and he tends to fall to the side. It seems like only weeks ago, he was doing "bunny 500s" around the house. Now, he can barely hop and he is incontinent. However, Budgie still loves to eat and is always looking for attention. The other morning,

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Photo: Karlie Rokita



Budgie.

Photo: Diana Kronenberg



Budgie at Diana's.

Photo: Jean Mellano



Budgie, guilty.

How Does Your Rabbit Communicate With You?

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, “How does your rabbit communicate with you?” and here’s what they had to say!

“Peanut will flop on his Penelopad when he’s ready for his salad. He’ll also grunt when he does *not* want to be touched, which is most of the time!” – Denise B.

“Mella bites my toes for attention. When she doesn’t want to be bothered, she hides in her tunnel. Lola runs and sticks her nose in our face (she likes her space so it’s not frequent). If she doesn’t want to be bothered she likes to lie under the nightstand or under her IKEA doll bed.” – Sandra N.

“Mine used to put his head under your extended foot telling you to rub his head!” – Rosemarie M.

“When I say, ‘Who wants dinner?’ Tully and Jamie come running out of the cage to meet me and I give them a piece of salad and they hop back to the cage to be fed. Tully also likes to give you a little nip if you’re sitting in his way. He’s tiny but mighty.” – Katie F.



Peanut.



Jamie and Tully.

“Mabel will run in and out of our feet and ‘beg’ (periscope) when she wants her food or a treat. When she wants love, she follows us around and will then push her head under whatever part of our body is nearest her. She’s not proud! Alec waits to be let out of his pen in the



Fizz.

morning for free-roam time. He follows closely, making sure we place the gate in the right place before doing his zoomies, earning him the nickname Mr. Inspector, while we sing Inspector Allie to the ‘Inspector Gadget’ song. When he wants us to go away he grunts and charges. Big tough guy at three pounds!” – Lisa R.

“Fizz will jump on the couch and stare at us for attention if we are playing video games, especially at 1 a.m. in the morning.” – Kristin D. M.

“My former bun Coco would do circles around my feet when I came into the bedroom. It was his way of greeting me. Likewise with Luna. When I kneel

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Budgie

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he was so happy to see me that he did a binky. I can’t describe how happy I was to see him binky. Arthritis and old age have not yet taken over my playful, sweet Budgie. My time spent with him now is even more precious.

A New Normal

To make Budgie’s quality of life as good as it can be, I have had to redesign his living space. That means lots of wee wee pads covered with fleece so he doesn’t

hurt himself if he falls, and to also prevent urine scald. Because of Budgie’s incontinence, I am also doing a lot more cleaning.

One friend asked me how Budgie was doing. When I told her that he is adjusting to his new normal, she said that actually I was adjusting to his new normal. Animals, by nature, live in the moment. Unlike his human, Budgie is probably not thinking about what his future will be like as his arthritis deteriorates.

Now it is my turn to help Budgie. I will keep him safe and comfortable for as long as he is with me. His life is so precious and he gives me so much comfort.

“Rabbits will always have a special place in my heart. They are often discredited as being good pets because they don’t ‘do anything’ – ask any rabbit owner and watch how they laugh!” – Shenita Etwaroo

A version of this article appeared at parkinsonsnewstoday.com.

Communicate

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down and hold out my hands toward her, she runs toward me for pets.”

– Jessica D.

“Nibbles really likes bananas. She bites the bars on her pen and shakes them back and forth until I open the door. Once open, she will run around the room very fast and do lots of binkies. She then ends up running back into her cage to have her treat. She gets so excited! Chewy lets me know that he does not like his pen cleaned. He grunts at me and then sits right in the spot I am trying to clean.”

– The Edwards Family

“Pumpkin will put a piece of cardboard in her salad bowl to let me know it’s empty; therefore she is obviously being starved.” – Heather M.

“Latrice’s grunts usually mean ‘get your paws off my hiney!’” – Thea H.

“Oliver likes to greet me by my door and run up to me. He also likes to run around and do binkies and shove his head in the bag of treats before I even get it to him.” – Olivia and Dawn R.

“Cooper will flip down next to me in bed. This means ‘mom, I want pets now plz’” – Angelica D.

“Riviera runs up the steps when it is dinner time. She loves her salad so I better have it ready on time!!!!”

– Karen G-R.

“Cameron trained me to pet him on command. He sits next to the dog bed, which he never uses, when he wants to be petted. Then I sit on the dog bed and pet him! Piper learned this from him and now she does it, too.” – Nancy K.

“Priscilla will lick *the sides* of the water bowl to let me know she’d like fresh water. She has also been known to scratch at my bedroom door when she would like attention. She used to venture into an empty, dark kitchen to



Nibbles.



Chewy.



Pumpkin.



Oliver.



Cooper.



Cameron.



Marshall.

wait for bananas before bed. When she wants to kiss our feet or legs she bites at socks and pant legs.” – Katie M.

“Marshall will put his head down and close his eyes and stay perfectly still to tell me he wants pets. Marshall also circles me and honks when he is excited. Marshall goes toward his house when he wants his salad or banana chip. He grunts, turns around with his back to me and wiggles his tail when is annoyed with me. He also shakes his front paws at me and kicks his back legs at me if upset. Marshall will lick my forehead if he is happy and to tell me he loves me. He will run toward me and other people to say hello.” – Sharon O.

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What Should I Feed My Bunny?

By Dana Krempels

The House Rabbit Society stresses that rabbits should live indoors, and have at least four hours of quality running/playing time per day. This, in conjunction with a proper diet, will help keep your rabbit happy, healthy and affectionate for a lifetime. Perhaps the most important items in the rabbit diet that ensure good intestinal health are (1) adequate oral hydration and (2) adequate crude long fiber, which helps push hair and food through the intestines, and keeps the intestinal muscles well-toned and moving quickly. This is essential to the rabbit's maintenance of a balanced flora (bacteria and yeast) in the cecum. Improper diet can quickly lead to intestinal problems, often originating with cecal dysbiosis, an imbalance of the natural "ecosystem" of the cecum.

Here are the most important items that you should be sure to include in your rabbit's diet.

Hay!

Perhaps the single most important item in the rabbit diet is grass HAY, and it should be fed in unlimited quantities to both adults and baby rabbits. A rabbit fed only commercial rabbit pellets does not get enough long fiber to keep the intestines in good working order. The long fibers in the hay push things through the gut and keep the intestinal

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Tillie.

muscles in good tone. In addition to keeping the intestinal contents moving at the rate at which nature intended, hay may also help prevent intestinal impactions caused by ingested hair or other indigestible items. (For more information on problems associated with slowed intestinal function, please go to [this link](#).)

Alfalfa or clover hays, although tasty for the rabbit, are too rich in protein and calcium to be fed *ad libitum*. Instead, offer fresh grass hays such as Timothy, oat, coastal, brome, Bahia or wheat. If you can't find good quality hay locally,



Feed no more than 1/4 cup of pellets per day for every five pounds of rabbit.

you may wish to mail-order hay from Oxbow Animal Health, American Pet Diner or other suppliers. The coarser "first cut" Timothy hay is higher in fiber than the softer, more fragrant "second cut." Some rabbits who refuse to eat the (putatively healthier) high-fiber first cut will often eagerly accept second cut hay. Less fiber is better than none at all!

Pellets

A high-quality commercial rabbit pellet provides trace nutrients, vitamins and minerals that a rabbit might not get if

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LONG ISLAND NEWS

Communicate

(Continued from page 8)

"Isabella will push her head against my face or hands to tell me she wants attention and pets. She will hide in her hidey space when she does not want to be bothered. Isabella will run toward me to say hello. She will do an excited



Isabella.

wiggle by my feet. Isabella will lick my feet, pants or hands when she is happy and to tell me she loves me. When she is upset or feels threatened or does not want to be bothered, she tries to be as small as she can or she hides. She will back away from touch and get as far away as she can." – Sharon O.

What Should I Feed?

(Continued from page 9)

fed only hay and fresh foods. However, very little pelleted food is required for good health. Many experienced rabbit veterinarians are now recommending no more than 1/4 cup of quality pellets per five pounds of rabbit per day, and some even consider commercial pellets a “treat food” that can promote obesity in spayed/neutered adult rabbits. A rabbit fed too many pellets will sometimes ignore hay, to the detriment of the intestinal system!

A good quality rabbit pellet DOES NOT contain dried fruit, seeds, nuts, colored crunchy things or other things that are attractive to our human eyes, but very unhealthy to a rabbit. Rabbits are strict herbivores, and in nature they rarely get fruit, nuts or other such fatty, starchy foods. The complex flora of the cecum can quickly become dangerously imbalanced if too much simple, digestible carbohydrate is consumed – especially if the diet is generally low in fiber. The result is often “poopy butt syndrome,” in which mushy fecal matter cakes onto the rabbit’s behind. This is a sign of cecal dysbiosis, which can foment much more serious health problems.

A good quality rabbit pellet should have at least 22% crude fiber, no more than approximately 14% protein, about 1% fat and about 1.0% calcium. Check the label on the rabbit pellets before you buy. Most commercial pellets are alfalfa-based, which means they’re higher in calories and lower in fiber than Timothy-based pellets.

Baby rabbits may be fed unlimited pellets, as their bones and muscles need plenty of protein and calcium for proper growth. However, the calories and nutrients of commercial pellets fed *ad libitum* exceed the needs of a healthy adult rabbit, and will not only promote obesity, but discourage the rabbit from consuming enough hay to ensure good intestinal health.



Milo and Victoria.



Tillie.

The wise “bunny parent” will begin to gradually taper the quantity of pellets once the rabbit is about eight to twelve months old, and feed no more than 1/4 cup per day for every five pounds of rabbit (you can give a little bit more if the pellets are Timothy-based). Some rabbit caregivers complain that their rabbits won’t eat their hay. If the problem is not medical in nature (e.g., molar

spurs and other dental problems are a common problem responsible for “picky eating”), then it may be that the rabbit is eating too many pellets, isn’t hungry, and so doesn’t eat the hay so vital to his/her health. Take the tough love approach! Cut back the pellets until you are sure your rabbit is eating enough hay.

Fresh Vegetables

You may have heard it from a breeder, pet store owner, or even a veterinarian who is not as familiar with recent rabbit health information as one might hope: Fresh vegetables will give your rabbit “diarrhea.” Nothing could be further from the truth than this old myth. In fact, fresh greens help keep intestinal contents hydrated, which makes them easier for the bunny to pass. Trace nutrients, fiber, and just plain old tastiness are other benefits of fresh greens. After all, what do you suppose wild rabbits eat?

Fresh, moist greens are about as important as hay in maintaining a healthy intestine. Try broccoli, dark leaf lettuces, kale, parsley, carrot tops, endive, escarole, dill, basil, mint, cilantro, spinach. Almost any green, leafy vegetable that’s good for you (including fresh-grown garden herbs such as tarragon and various mints, with the exception of Pennyroyal) are good for a rabbit. Experiment and see which types your rabbit likes best! Rabbits love fresh, fragrant herbs fresh from the garden.

Give starchy vegetables (e.g., carrots) in moderation, and use bits of fruit only in very, very small quantities, as special treats. Too much sugar and starch can cause cecal dysbiosis, and all its associated problems.

Baby rabbits may start receiving greens very gradually at the age of about two months. Add one item at a time, in small amounts, and if you see no intestinal upset, add another. Carrots, romaine lettuce and kale are good starters. A five-

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What Should I Feed?

(Continued from page 10)

pound adult rabbit should receive at least four heaping cups of fresh, varied (at least three different kinds each day) vegetables per day. Be sure to wash everything thoroughly to remove pesticide and fertilizer residues as much as possible. Even organic produce should be washed well to remove potentially harmful bacteria, such as *E. coli*.

Serve the vegetables wet, as this will help increase your rabbit's intake of liquid. This helps keep the intestinal contents moving well, and the bunny healthy.

Please don't make the mistake of serving less-than-fresh vegetables to your rabbit. A rabbit is even more sensitive to spoiled food than a human is. If the vegetables smell stale or are "on the fringe," they could make your bunny sick. Follow the Emerald Rule of Freshness when feeding your rabbit friend: "Don't Feed It to Your Bunny if You Wouldn't Eat It Yourself."

Water

The importance of adequate water intake cannot be overstated. A rabbit who does not drink sufficient water will gradually begin to suffer desiccation of the intestinal contents. Skin tenting, a common method used by veterinarians to gauge the state of hydration in many



A rabbit will usually drink more water from a clean, heavy crock than from a sipper bottle.

animals, is not a good gauge of hydration in rabbits. It seems that even when the tissues of the rabbit appear to be well hydrated, the intestinal contents may not be, perhaps because the rabbit is so efficient at sequestering necessary fluids from its own intestine. When this happens, the ingested food in the stomach and intestine becomes dry and difficult for the normal muscular motions to push through. This can start a downhill cascade into a condition known as ileus, which can be life-threatening if not recognized and treated.

A rabbit will usually drink more water from a clean, heavy crock than from a sipper bottle. The rabbit caregiver may wish to provide both, but it's important to be sure that the crock, if porcelain, is lead-free, and that the water is changed daily and the crock washed thoroughly with hot water and detergent to prevent bacterial growth in the water source.

Fresh Fruits?

These are considered treats, and, if offered at all, should be limited to very small quantities. Safe choices are apple, apricot, banana, cherries, mango, peach, plum, papaya, pineapple, apricot, berries....just about any fruit you would like is okay for your bunny. Be very careful not to overdo these treat foods, as they may promote cecal dysbiosis, other intestinal problems and create a desire in the bunny to eat treats instead of his/her normal, healthy foods.

Don't Feed Potentially Harmful 'Treats'

Remember: a rabbit is a lagomorph, not a rodent or a primate. The rabbit digestive tract is physiologically more similar to that of a horse than to that of a rodent or primate, and the intestine and related organs can suffer from an overindulgence in starchy, fatty foods.

NEVER feed your rabbit commercial "gourmet" or "treat" mixes filled with dried fruit, nuts and seeds. These may

be safe for a bird or hamster – BUT THEY ARE NOT PROPER FOOD FOR A RABBIT. The sole function of "rabbit gourmet treats" is to lighten your wallet. If the manufacturers of "gourmet rabbit treats" truly cared about your rabbit's health and longevity, they would not market such products.

Don't feed your rabbit cookies, crackers, nuts, seeds, breakfast cereals (including oatmeal) or "high fiber" cereals. They may be high-fiber for you, but not for your herbivorous rabbit, who's far better able to completely digest cellulose ("dietary fiber") than you are. Fed to a rabbit, the high fat and simple carbohydrate content of "naughty foods" may contribute to fatty liver disease, cecal dysbiosis and obesity.

A Special Note About Corn and Other Seeds

Some types of seeds (especially things like "Canadian peas" and corn kernels) have hulls that are indigestible to a rabbit, and can cause life-threatening intestinal impactions/blockages.

Corn, fresh or dried, is NOT safe for rabbits. The hull of corn kernels is composed of a complex polysaccharide (not cellulose and pectin, of which plant cell walls are more commonly composed, and which a rabbit can digest) that rabbits cannot digest. We know of more than one rabbit who suffered intestinal impactions because of the indigestible corn hulls. After emergency medical treatment, when the poor rabbits finally passed the corn, their fecal pellets were nearly solid corn hulls! Those rabbits were lucky.

*Copyright – Dana Krempels, Ph.D.
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We Are Looking for Loving Homes: These Rabbits Are in Foster Care



Eevee.

Eevee

Eevee is an adorable little brown lop and quite the ball of energy. Eevee would do wonderfully in a home with lots of open space to stretch her legs and to show off her athletic binkies. She loves to stay nearby and keep tabs on what her humans are up to, and will nudge you to a new spot on the floor if she thinks there's a better place for you to be sitting (she usually has a better place in mind!).

Eevee will occasionally settle for petting, but often prefers a playful and interactive relationship with less touching. She likes to keep busy – there is no such thing as too many toys. This wonderful little girl is spayed and ready for her forever home. If you are interested in adopting Eevee, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Ashton

He is a medium-sized dark chocolate Rex who is as soft as he is fabulous! Ashton is a super-friendly, young boy who loves attention. He is an easygoing, inquisitive extrovert. Ashton has been enjoying living in a bunny-friendly home. He has been moderately active, but we have much more to learn about him. If interested in potentially adopting please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.



Ashton.



JoJo.

JoJo

JoJo is a beautiful 8-pound blue-eyed white and tan rabbit who was found as a baby alone on the streets of Queens. A kind passerby first thought she must have seen a cat, but upon closer inspection saw a little bunny she knew couldn't survive on her own. She took JoJo home to keep her safe and took wonderful care of her until JoJo moved into her Rabbit Rescue & Rehab foster home.



Skye.

Today, JoJo has grown into a big rabbit with an even bigger personality, full of puppy-like affection and enthusiasm. As a very young bunny, JoJo is looking for a forever home where she will have lots of room to run and channel her youthful energy into games and exercise. Very much a "people person," JoJo craves lots of one-on-one attention both during her exuberant waking hours and her quieter nap times. If you are interested in adopting JoJo, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit and mom to the litter of "colorful" babies (Pink, Green, Blue, Purple and Orange) who all look just like her. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside and, wanting to help this poor bunny, brought her back to his home. Once there, she surprised him with a litter of babies. When we first saw Skye shortly

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Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 12)

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.

Pineapple and Sugarplum

Pineapple and Sugarplum are a beautiful pair of large Lionhead sisters who were born in the shelter as part of a litter of five babies, before we took the whole young family into our rescue. Their mother, two sisters and brother have all been adopted and now it's their turn. Pineapple is black and white, while Sugarplum is all black – and both have amazing manes of hair! These girls are shy at first but have tons of energy and are a joy to watch as they exercise – running and binkying with reckless abandon! They have been spayed and are living in foster care. If you are interested in adopting Pineapple and Sugarplum, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.



Pineapple and Sugarplum.

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

By Kirsten Ott

Coco

Coco is a medium-sized orange beauty. This lovely bunny is sweet in a quiet, unassuming way. She lets you pet her right away – and it's cute and funny that when you stroke her ears, they pop right back up as though on springs, and sometimes end up looking a bit helicopter-ish. In addition to her beautiful coat, she has gorgeous dark, almond-shaped eyes. Coco's sweet, calm demeanor would make her a good choice for a first-time bunny home or partner for another rabbit.

Coquito

Coquito is a small white Rex mix. This little guy is very curious and alert. No matter what you're doing in his presence, he'll be watching you with his exceptional-looking round eyes – dark, wine-red pupils ringed by deep blue irises. Little Coquito will let you pet his cute head



Coco.

and the nape of his neck, gradually allowing himself to relax but eyeing you all the while. His curiosity and energy will probably make him very entertaining to watch in his forever home.

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



Coquito.

Axel

Axel is a small white Rex mix. This little guy is as quiet and sweet and gentle as can be. He was found along with six other rabbits. After initial hesitation, Axel will let you stroke his ultra-soft head, and he adores it – he blisses out

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ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at ACC

(Continued from page 13)

more and more, turning his whole body into a pancake. He would make a good choice for a first-time bunny home.

Mops

Mops is a young Rex mix with glamorous brown Hotot markings, especially thick “eyeliner.” This girl is small now but is likely to get somewhat larger – perhaps reaching medium-size. Mops is curious about people. If you approach her gently, she will accept your offers of affection – then soak it up as if she’s been waiting for it all her young life. When you’re not petting her, Mops poses like a coquettish little princess – front feet perfectly aligned and neatly pressed together, head cutely cocked slightly to one side.

Bellissima

Bellissima is a small, red-eyed white bunny who’s probably on the young



Axel.



Mops.



Bellissima.

side. This little girl is a perfect little angel. She closes her eyes like a baby when you rub her darling head and ears. If you stop, she won’t move – she’ll just open her eyes a tiny bit and squint at you, willing you to come back to her. This sweet girl would be a good choice for a first-time bunny home, and would probably also make a good partner for another rabbit.

Letter

Tina

I am a veterinary technician at the Animal Medical Center. On March 26, a rabbit came into our emergency room. She was nonresponsive, and the emergency team worked hard and got her moving again.

The rabbit was emaciated and had very little muscle mass to keep herself up. Her name at the hospital was “Trip a.k.a. Tina.” We became heartbroken when we noticed that her owners abandoned her at the hospital.

Despite all that happened to her, Trip never gave up because she was not ready to die. She was under our care for roughly



Tina.

a month, and in that month, we helped her regain her strength by feeding her and loving her.

In a couple of weeks, she was eating like a champ. She regained her muscle mass and increased in weight. We gave her a second chance and she gave us hope.

Trip touched the hearts of everyone who worked with her with her kindness and perseverance. We were thrilled when we found out that she was going to be fostered through a local rescue group, and that they decided to keep her name as Tina.

I know in my heart that whoever decides to adopt her will be touched deeply.

Claudia Sencion

More About Cordelia

Photos: Katie Scarr



Cordelia, who is our masthead bunny this month, is “a classy lady,” volunteer Carly Eden says. “She is very sweet and loves pets. If she was on ‘Bridgerton,’ I think her full name would be Lady Cordelia of Dewlap.”



Take the RHDV2 Survey!

House Rabbit Society invites you to participate in a survey offered by the University of Georgia regarding Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type-2 (RHDV2). The purpose of the survey is to collect information from key stakeholder groups who interact with domestic and/or wild rabbit populations to help researchers understand how the disease

risk of RHDV should be managed and identify what information is useful to help protect the health of domestic rabbits.

The questions are geared toward both rabbit guardians and rabbit breeders. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete and is confidential.

At the end of the survey, you will be given an opportunity to add any additional comments and opinions you feel might be helpful to researchers. Please take advantage of this opportunity to be a voice for domestic rabbits at risk of this deadly disease. Take the survey now.

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) 337-6146. 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 St., New York, NY 10065
(212) 838-7053, (212) 329-8622

Alexandra Wilson, DVM
The Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine
568 Columbus Ave., 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
Laura George, DVM
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2056 Jericho Turnpike
New Hyde Park, NY 11040
(516) 877-7080

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

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

Adoptable Rabbits

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

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com. On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at nschreibmd@gmail.com or at 516-510-3637 (www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).

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

Adoptable Rabbit Rescue & Rehab rabbits are at Petco's Union Square location. Rabbit volunteers are present at these stores on Saturday and Sunday afternoons to answer questions.

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

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Brooklyn can be found by going to:

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

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only on weekend afternoons at Union Square. Please contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com to make arrangements.

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

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

Licensed HRS Educators

NYC/Westchester:

M.C. Basile, Chapter Manager,
NYC House Rabbit Society
Mary Cotter, Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,
Adviser to Thump, mec@cloud9.net,
(914) 337-6146

Jeanine Callace, Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net
Alex McIe, alexlmcie@gmail.com

Marcie Frishberg

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

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

Monica Shepherd, DVM

Long Island:

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

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THUMP MAY 2021

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

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

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.