

THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS JULY 2023

Fozzie's Rescue Comes Amid a Recent Surge in Homeless Rabbits

A feisty little bun named Fozzie was rescued in late May by a team of Long Island volunteers.

The two-day weekend rescue effort went smoothly. After a failed attempt to find the bunny in the pouring rain the day before, the volunteers spotted the little man when he showed his face in the Sunday sunshine. Fortunately, he was quickly netted by Justin Eddings and he will never spend another day outside.

Thanks to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, Fozzie is now enjoying his indoor life as a foster bun in Huntington. His foster bun neighbors there are Freya, Edison and Lavender.

Lauren Eddings posted a [video](#) on Facebook titled, "Monday morning fun with highly adoptable Fozzie."

In early June, a volunteer took Fozzie to Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital, where he was neutered. He is hoping to find a forever home in the near future.

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Fozzie.

Fozzie's rescue came as local volunteers say they are inundated with requests for help. Abandoned Easter rabbits are being spotted outdoors throughout the New York area. Hot, humid weather has

(Continued on page 3)

Knowing Your Bunny As an Individual: Why It's Important

By Megan Hilands

I workshoped several different titles for this article. For a brief period I considered "Why Simba Is Truly the World's Pickiest Bunny," "How My Bunny Called Me Home From Vacation," or "Be Like a Bunny: A Girl's Guide to Thumping Your Way Back Home," but I ultimately thought these headlines would give readers the wrong impression about me and my love for my rabbits.

As you probably guessed, my bunny Simba gave us a bit of a scare recently. We had planned to travel to New England for a road race and spend a few days hiking and enjoying beach cocktails. Instead, we ended up frantically packing up and driving home. But – and I can't emphasize this enough! – it was all worth it as Simba ended up being happy and healthy before long. When all is said and done, I have come out of this

(Continued on page 2)

Knowing Your Bunny

(Continued from page 1)

unfortunate experience with a newfound appreciation for just how special rabbits can be. Even if you have had a wealth of experience with these cute little fuzzballs, you might encounter a particularly picky bunny who throws you for a loop – or, in my case – sends you barreling down I-95 toward home.

Day 1

On a Thursday morning we dropped off our three bunnies at a local rabbit-only boarder I had found last autumn. Initially I thought that this situation would work well for our family. The woman who boards rabbits is at least as bunny-crazy as I am and lives a 10-minute drive from my home. She's converted her large garage into a rabbit vacation space. Bunnies' accommodations are X-pens decked out with hay, toys and hidey boxes galore. The owner is also extremely knowledgeable about rabbit care and would have eyes on them at almost all waking hours through a series of cameras. After a successful trial stay last year, I thought I'd found the remedy to the anxiety I always experience when I have to leave my rabbits. I trust the owner to look after bunnies properly, which we bunny people know is incredibly important.

Day 2

Simba, however, was not too happy about the boarding scenario. Although she had been in the space before and initially seemed to settle into her surroundings, late on Day 2 she seemed to become very anxious. She expressed this as many bunnies do – by not eating. My guess is that because Simba is a more sensitive bunny, the combination of being away from us, in a new space, and where she could likely smell other bunnies was too stressful for her.

I received a text from the owner informing me of Simba's condition. She mentioned that although Simba looked fairly normal and comfortable, chinning toys and even sitting relaxed with her legs extended behind her – she was barely eating.

Photo: Megan Hillands



Simba is happy to be in familiar surroundings.

Soon she was refusing greens, so I gave permission for simethicone. "It's probably just gas," I told myself. Simba has had gas before. I assumed she'd be fine and back to binkies soon.

I barely slept that night as I worried about Simba.

Day 3, Part 1

The next morning was race day, so I was dressed and out of the hotel by 5:30 a.m. I had texts from the owner overnight that she was continuing to monitor Simba, but not seeing as much progress as she would like. Since it was so early, I thought it was unlikely anyone would be awake for updates, and I proceeded to the race. But midway through the event I started to see texts on my watch about Simba's condition ("She's still not eating," "Unfortunately I think we may need to start treating for stasis," "Can you call?"). I continued running just to finish but was going through the motions. Many races are organized such that once you start, the fastest way to get out and back to your car is to finish, and so that was my only focus.

The owner and I were a little puzzled at Simba's condition. She seemed comfortable

and her belly was soft but she was refusing every delicious bunny treat under the sun. Given that it was a weekend morning, I would have to get her to an emergency vet for treatment. I spent about an hour texting my mother-in-law and making some calls, until my husband and I made the decision to leave and head home. I eventually got our normal vet on the phone and received the OK for gut-motility drugs and Critical Care, so at least she would have a full belly while we drove home.

Day 3, Part 2 (The Conclusion)

When we arrived for pickup, I also thought Simba looked fairly normal. She did not exhibit the signs of illness I was used to seeing, such as sitting in a hunched position, or pointing her ears back. She wiggled her nose and may have even nose booped my hand in the carrier. I had a sneaking suspicion she actually might recover if we went right home, so I decided to try that first before driving to the emergency vet. Within 30 minutes of being in her pen, Simba munched kale, and I breathed an enormous sigh of relief.

(Continued on page 7)

Fozzie

(Continued from page 1)

made the rescue work difficult, and area shelters are filled to capacity.

Foster homes are desperately needed for homeless rabbits in our area. (Please see our appeal on page 6.)

Animal Care Centers of NYC posted “No Vacancy” signs on its website, saying that it is desperate to find adopters for the many homeless animals. “ACC has reached a breaking point in the number of surrendered pets entering the shelter system, leaving cages in offices and staff burning out,” it said. Shelter officials have linked the surge in surrenders to people’s financial problems and rising inflation.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Fozzie in net.



Fozzie in his foster home.



Grabbing a treat.



Keeping busy.

Other Recent Successful Rescues

Lucille.

Photo: Mary O'Brien



Serena.

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Marbles.

Photo: Daniele Frazier



Honey's Stoicism and Joie de Vivre Brightened Her Life, and Mine

By Jane O'Wyatt

I still wake up in the morning planning to give Honey her eye meds, and at the end of the day that thought returns. Honey's pen is gone, but our other bunny, Kay, has inherited the big low-entry litter box that Honey didn't use much – litter-box skills were not her forte. Honey's absence still feels strange.

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Honey with a patch of grass from the farmers market.



Honey made herself at home quickly.

She had been surrendered/dumped at the Brooklyn shelter in December 2014; her intake record said that she was 3 years old. When I was asked to foster Honey, I agreed and promptly made an appointment for her to be examined by Animal Medical Center's Katherine Quesenberry, who said that Honey's blindness in both eyes was due to trauma, which had "possibly" been caused by an attack by a dog or a cat. In addition, one of Honey's rear legs was splayed, the result of untreated broken bones, and, like many lop-eared rabbits, she was deaf. I felt incredibly sorry for her and dismayed at the carelessness of the people in her previous home. However she may have been mistreated, Honey proved to be gentle, sweet-tempered and cuddly, and over the years she never resisted my

twice-daily care of her eyes: She patiently allowed me to instill drops and apply ointments. I flushed away debris and wiped ocular discharge from the orangey-brown fur on her pretty face, using gauze pads soaked in warm water. The latter grooming activity I had hoped would be assumed by another bunny, but attempts to bond Honey with a solicitous partner were unsuccessful.

Although Honey didn't have a "husbun," she did have a next-door neighbor named Hardy, whose cordial, yearslong presence was a comfort. In October 2021, after Hardy didn't come home from an emergency visit to AMC, where he had to be euthanized, Honey seemed more disoriented than disconsolate. I watched her worriedly, but, unlike many rabbits who had lost same-species

companions, she maintained her equanimity and her appetite. Only a few months later, in February 2022, Kay, whose person had just died, moved into the space formerly occupied by Hardy. Both Honey and Kay seemed to enjoy the new arrangement.

By the spring of this year, though, Honey had become an elderly bunny, losing weight and her interest in carrots and interesting greens, taking longer to finish her pellets, leaving smaller poops, having trouble with her balance – and sleeping so much and so soundly that I often checked to see if she was breathing. She would fall over on her side but immediately scramble to right herself and wobble about her business. Haunted

(Continued on page 5)

Honey

(Continued from page 4)

by memories of other old rabbits who had lost the use of their hind legs, I was determined not to let this befall her. But we had not yet reached that point: Honey was still decidedly, if effortfully, ambulatory (and she could still thump!), eating well and enjoying caresses.

For about 16 years I have taken care of rabbits in their homes, or boarded them, while their humans were away, often for weeks at a time. Fortunately, medical emergencies have been highly unusual: I had to rush one rabbit in anaphylactic shock (due to a sudden penicillin allergy) to Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital, and two rabbits in gastrointestinal stasis to AMC. The rarity of the latter crises, however, has not diminished my anxiety about GI stasis, called “The Silent Killer” by house rabbit expert Dana Krempels. (See the May 2023 Thump, pages 17-18). So the decision to leave town myself is always fraught. Still, my partner, Kathy, and I had taken a five-day trip to Paris this past April for a show of Kathy’s paintings. Honey, Kay and Amelia, the cat, had all

been well-cared-for in our absence by Jade Chan, an excellent pet sitter whom I had recruited to help with my weekly volunteer shift when Rabbit Rescue & Rehab bunnies were in residence at the Union Square Petco. Emboldened by Jade’s cheerful, uneventful texts while we were in Paris and the health and good spirits of our fur people when we returned, I decided to go with Kathy to Art Basel, in Switzerland, for a week in June.

Jade’s meticulous, twice-daily texts for the first few days were reassuring, even boring, but then she called to say that Honey wasn’t eating. In 2018, when Kathy and I had been out of town for a few days, Jade had gotten Honey through an episode of GI stasis by taking her to Dr. Quesenberry at AMC and then administering Metacam, metoclopramide and Critical Care to Honey at home. Why had Honey stopped eating at that time? Dr. Quesenberry surprised Jade by suggesting that Honey’s inappetence might have been due to the fact that I was away. But in my own experience as a bunny caretaker, I can remember only one clear instance of such behavior: I once took an Uber from Brooklyn to

AMC in the middle of the night with a rabbit who had gone on a hunger strike because her people were out of the country. But I digress. For reasons known only to herself, Honey was not eating.

Jade found the Metacam, metoclopramide and oral syringes that I had on hand and gave the prescribed doses, with variable results, conveyed to me by phone: Over two days, Honey started to eat a few pellets, left tiny poops and cecotropes around her pen, nibbled on a leaf of romaine, ate some more, stopped eating, ate a little, stopped again. Then I asked Jade to take Honey to AMC, where she was seen by an exotics vet whom I didn’t know. I was able to speak with this vet, who said Honey’s situation was dire. “We could stabilize her so she could go home,” the vet said, “but we had a neurological consult, and Honey’s hind legs are paralyzed. What about her quality of life?” In tears, I asked that Honey be euthanized. Standing outside a medieval cathedral almost 4,000 miles away, I couldn’t say a proper goodbye, but any delay in relieving Honey’s suffering was unthinkable. It was June 14, 2023. It was her time.

Later that day, Jade emailed me: “I know Honey was old and unstable, but I am in shock that she is no longer with us. While she was disadvantaged, she enjoyed every moment of her life so much! She made lemonade out of lemons.”

Honey’s inherent joie de vivre, love, patience and stoicism made her a powerful spiritual mentor for me, and I am very grateful to have known and cared for her. I miss rinsing her romaine, giving her a bedtime treat, combing her beautiful coat, giving her eye meds. Her absence still feels strange.

Note: previous stories about Honey can be found in the August 2015 Thump, (“Honey, a Special Needs Rabbit, Begins her Search for a Partner,” pages 8-10) and the November 2021 Thump, (“Farewell to a Beloved Foster Bunny,” pages 4-6).



Honey, fast asleep, May 29, 2023.

FOSTER HOMES NEEDED!!!

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

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

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

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

nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com • information@longislandrabbitrescue.org

Hot Cross Bun

By Samantha Rowan

In May, before the hot weather really hit the city, we had one of those hot days that serves to remind New Yorkers of what things are going to be like when July rolls around. Lenny, our senior rabbit, spent most of the day sacked out in the darkest, coolest place he could find.

We followed our usual hot weather protocols for Lenny, which include filling his water dish with ice cubes and making sure his daily salad was chilled and nice and wet with water when it was served to him for a little extra hydration. But even so, I realized one thing: Lenny was a hot, cross bun.

Caring for rabbits in hot weather is a combination of applying a series of logical steps and mitigants to the heat and taking the rabbit's lead on what works best.

Air conditioning, of course, is always a good option when the temperature hits the high 70s or higher. Here are some

additional useful tricks we have tried with Lenny (and others that we learned just don't work).

1. Cooling down the room

This can be through air conditioning, oscillating fans and simply closing the curtains or blinds during the brightest parts of the day to keep a room cooler. Moving a bunny to a cooler part of the apartment is also a good option, if that works with your specific setup. (One of the things that is slightly challenging about rabbit companionship in New York is that often, options can be limited. *Lenny score: 10/10 binkies. A cool bunny is a happy bunny.*)

2. Incorporating ice

Ice, frozen water bottles or frozen ceramic tiles can be a lifeline for a rabbit on a hot day and can be used to supplement air conditioning and fans. While most of our rabbits over the years have enjoyed a good frozen water bottle or ceramic

(Continued on page 8)



Photo: Samantha Rowan

A cool bunny is a happy one.

Knowing Your Bunny

(Continued from page 2)

Reflections

Even though Simba improved very quickly after we got home, I do not want to suggest that her condition did not constitute a medical emergency. No matter what prompts a bunny to stop eating – gas, stress, or something else altogether – stasis can set in quickly and is a deadly serious condition. If Simba had not improved so rapidly after we got home, we would have spent Saturday night at the emergency vet. We spoke to our normal vet again the following day, who agreed that Simba was likely fine now, and that stress was likely the culprit.

I feel as though this experience shows how important it is to assess whether a particular situation is right for your



Photo: Megan Hillands

Simba eating kale, one of her favorite treats.

bunny. Knowing that Simba is somewhat anxious and reserved helped me to make the call to drive back from vacation and to try to bring her home myself, rather than having her go with a relative stranger to the emergency vet sooner. I

struggled with this decision, but it was ultimately the right one for my bunny.

It's so important to understand not only what constitutes acceptable bunny care, but also what scenarios, though generally considered safe, would not be handled well by a more sensitive bunny. Apparently Simba was the first bunny in four years who was simply too stressed to eat at this boarding place. While Simba is OK traveling in the car with me or my husband, it seemed that leaving home and staying with an unfamiliar human crossed the line for what she could handle.

Ultimately, having this experience and knowledge makes me more confident in my ability to care for her in the future. But I reserve the right to call my sweet Simba the pickiest bunny.

What Yearbook Superlative Would Your Rabbit Win?

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.

In the spirit of the end of the school year and graduation, we asked our Friends: What yearbook superlative would your rabbit win? Here's what they had to say.



"Adoptable Morus would win Best Dressed." – LIRRG



"Mario and MaryJane would win Cutest Couple." – Katie S.



"Xander is Most Likely to Judge You for Not Sharing Your Snack." – Jess L.



"Bugsy would get Most Artistic." – Erica L.



"Eugene would win Class Clown." – Carly H.



"Salem can be Prom King." – Gina P.

(Continued on page 9)

Hot Cross Bun

(Continued from page 7)

tile, Lenny has typically viewed the former as a threat that must be destroyed and the latter with too much suspicion to use. The ice cubes, however, are always a treat.

Lenny score: 8/10 binkies for ice cubes in the water; 0/10 binkies for anything else.

3. Misting

Misting ears is a strategy that has worked for most of our rabbits but not (of course) for Lenny. Still, it's a good way to make your bunny a bit more comfortable on a hot day.

Lenny score: 2/10 binkies.

The bottom line is that rabbits can be badly affected by heat and it is important

to keep an eye on what they're doing. There are some warning signs, like rapid breathing, that could indicate an emergency, and in that situation you should definitely call your vet as soon as possible.

And remember: No one wants a hot cross bun.

Yearbook Superlative *(Continued from page 8)*



“Matty could be Most Likely to Get Into Mischief!” – Gina P.



“Faline is Most Adventurous!” – Janine G.



“Sweetest dreams...Noelle is Most Likely to Flip and Flop.” – Stefanie N.



“Winnie: Most Comfortable Dewlap!” – Angela S.



“Lola: Most Likely to Sleep In.” – Sandra N.



“Skyler: Most Likely to Use Their Significant Other as a Step Stool.” – Brooke S.



“Sienna: Most Likely to Steal Your Food.” – Brooke S.



“Sunny and Cloud: Homecoming King and Queen.” – Carly H.



“Loki would be Class Clown.” – Erica L.

(Continued on page 10)

Yearbook Superlative *(Continued from page 9)*



“Yoshi would be Fluffiest Flop or Fanciest Feet.” – Jennifer B.



“Moe would get Best Hair, obv.” – Katie S.



“Birch would win Most Destructive.” – Katie B.



“Mochi: Most Likely to Start an Emo Band or Ask to Speak to the Manager.” – Jennifer M.



“Tulip: Most Likely to Steal Your Man” – Jennifer M.



“Mr. Lou: Couch Potato or Best Snuggler!” – Tina G.



“Odin has the Best Side Eye.” – Lauren R.



“Freya is the Most Likely to Achieve World Domination or Best Bite.” – Lauren R.



“Tara would receive Most Likely to Beat the Odds” – Lisa N.

(Continued on page 11)

Yearbook Superlative (Continued from page 10)



“BunBun would receive Most Likely to Play Supergirl! Just give her a cape!”
– Lisa N.



“Sophie and Dylan would win Biggest Smooches in the School!” – Danielle P.



“Misty would be Most Likely to Sleep Through Class.” – Denise H.



“Dandelion: Most Likely to Get Caught in the Act” – Eileen T.



“Eeyore: Most Likely to Own His Own Ballpit!” – Nancy C.



“Ellie is Most Likely to Eat Things She Isn't Supposed To.” – Emily V.



“Noah: Most Chill Volunteer Spokesbunny.” – Shari Z.



“Bennington: Why Did You Clean My Room?” – Jean M.



“Elphie would be Most Loviest Baby! Always ready for some love.” – Jennifer B.

Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

By Noah the Bunny with assistance from Shari Zagorski

Hello and happy summer, my human friends!

Since the flurry of library education events prior to Easter, my schedule has quieted down somewhat. As many of you know, I volunteer as an advocate for the domestic bunnies out there who need loving homes. My role is to exhibit exemplary bunny behavior while humans pet me and volunteers from Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group teach all about bunny care, rescue efforts, fostering and adoption.

On May 13 we had a program for young children and their families at the Bryant Library in Roslyn. Several new volunteers from LIRRG helped out, including another spokesbunny-in-training! Monte was testing his paws in the water, so to speak, as his humans gauged how he handled the crowd of young humans touching him, and the new sounds and smells. In my humble bunny opinion, Monte was a star, especially for his first library event! After our human volunteers read a story and did a presentation, the visitors were able to feel the difference between my fluffy fur and Monte's rex velour coat. I was happy to have the company since this was an afternoon event and frankly, I was rather sleepy and it was my usual nap time, so Monte showed everyone how peppy a bunny can be. Interestingly, when our volunteers polled the audience to see who had a bunny, cat or dog, nobody had any pets.

A week later, we had an event on May 20 at the Lindenhurst Memorial Library in a beautifully renovated space. At this presentation, about half of the attendees already had pet bunnies and wanted to learn more. Some of our repeat junior volunteers helped talk about rabbit care, what makes rabbits so special, our personalities, and how smart we are. After our program, other animal groups

Photo: Amy McFieff



Noah's second 'Gotcha Day' celebration with his favorite humans!

Photo: Shari Zagorski



Junior volunteers with Noah at the Lindenhurst Memorial Library.

Photo: Shari Zagorski



A little respite and hay snack during the event at Lindenhurst Memorial Library.

Photo: Shari Zagorski



LIRRG volunteer Jeanette reading 'The Forgotten Rabbit' at the Bryant Library.

Photo: Shari Zagorski



Spokesbunny-in-training Monte with his human, Amy, at the Bryant Library.

showed up for a pet fair-style event, so it was time for us to leave. As it turns out, the library generously donated a Chewy gift card for the LIRRG foster bunnies.

On May 22, I enjoyed a holiday celebration in honor of my second "Gotcha Day"! My humans told me how special I am to volunteer and help

(Continued on page 13)

Photo: Gabbi Campbell



Pierre, Ebony and Marshmallow.

One Bunny Afternoon

The rain was pouring down and the sun was gone too soon
So we gather in the living room one bunny afternoon

Put down some soft blankets as the TV fills the air
Let the bunnies circle about and tangle up your hair

They jump and play for hours chinning all the household things
Looking over at the TV while the animation sings

Then Pierre tilts his head as he sees them hop about
A woof for mommy's attention, I'm a bunny too no doubt.

After a long round of hide and seek the bunnies always win
Their quiet steps outsmart the pooch, much to his chagrin

The rain outside settles down and the furbabies seem to too.
And they all decide to rest on one bunny afternoon.

– Gabbi Campbell 2023

Noah Reports

(Continued from page 12)

LIRRG educate people about how amazing bunnies are as family members. I know that I'm one lucky bunny to have these opportunities.

Coming up in July, I will be visiting the Mineola Memorial Library and Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library. Please feel free to visit, help as a volunteer, or just come pet me!

Until next time, this is Spokesbunny Noah signing off!

Photo: Shari Zagorski



Nap time at the Bryant Library afternoon event.

How to Select the Best Vegetables and Fruits for Your Rabbits

Rabbits in the wild all over the world successfully consume a wide variety of plants. Various types of dry and fresh grasses and plants with leaves comprise the largest portion of the wild rabbit diet. Rabbits will also eat bark on trees, tender twigs and sprouts, fruits, seeds and other nutritious foods in much smaller amounts. This is important to know when we discuss a healthy diet for our house rabbits.

(The following excerpts are taken from an [article](#) by Susan A. Brown, DVM, on House Rabbit Society's website.)

Hay Is the Most Important Rabbit Food

The majority of the house rabbit diet should be composed of grass hay (any variety). Grass hay is rich in Vitamin A and D as well as calcium, protein and other nutrients. Eating hay promotes good teeth and a healthy gastrointestinal tract and should be available to your rabbit at all times. Varying the type of grass hay or mixing hays is a great idea (such as timothy, orchard, oat hay, brome, etc). Avoid the use of alfalfa hay as the primary source of hay due to the fact it

is very high in calories and protein, far more than the average house rabbit needs. Alfalfa is not a grass, but rather a legume (in the pea and bean family).

Leafy Greens

Fresh foods are also an important part of your rabbit's diet and they provide additional nutrients as well as different textures and tastes. Fresh foods also provide more moisture in the diet, which is good for kidney and bladder function. The bulk of fresh foods should be made up of leafy greens (about 75% of the fresh part of the diet).

An approximate amount to feed would be around one cup of greens for two pounds of rabbit body weight once a day or divided into multiple feedings a day.

It is always preferable to buy organic produce if at all possible. If collecting wild foods such as dandelion greens, make sure they are from a pesticide-free area. All fresh foods regardless of the source should be washed or scrubbed before serving them to your rabbit.

Oxalic Acid

Most of the fresh vegetables we feed rabbits have a low to zero level of oxalic acid, but a few, including parsley, mustard greens, Swiss chard and spinach, have relatively high levels. The toxicity of oxalic acid comes with feeding large quantities of foods high in this chemical and can result in tingling of the skin/mouth and damage to the kidneys over time. These foods are nutritious and do not need to be excluded from the diet if you feed them appropriately. I recommend feeding a minimum of at least three types of leafy greens a day (and only one of them should be from the group with higher levels of oxalic acid). Don't feed the same greens all the time from week to week. For instance, if you feed parsley this week, then leave it out of the diet for next week and use something else. Rotating the greens will also give your bunny variety in taste, texture and general nutrition.

Concerns About Gas

Some people are concerned about feeding foods that cause gastrointestinal

(Continued on page 15)

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Mint.



Parsley.



Basil.

New House Rabbit Society Initiatives

In May, House Rabbit Society entered its 35th year of improving domesticated rabbits' lives around the globe. We're proud to have launched several new initiatives since last fall. In addition to undertaking a rebranding process, HRS plans to launch our new website on July 5, under a new URL, houserabbit.org. You will begin to see the new House Rabbit Society logo and URL on digital and printed materials.

Other recent initiatives include a restructured Educator program and an Easter public awareness campaign. Coming soon is an exciting endeavor in association with and approved by the Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarians to increase the number of rabbit-savvy vets.

Sincerely,

HRS Board of Directors: Edie Gower, Beth Woolbright, Joy Gioia, Laurie Gigous, Chris Beafore

Executive Director Chris Kelley

chris.kelley@houserabbit.org

Veggies

(Continued from page 14)

gas in people, such as broccoli. A rabbit's GI tract is not the same as a human's and many of the foods that may cause gas in a human do not cause gas in a rabbit. The most common types of foods that do create havoc in the rabbit's GI tract are those that are high in starch and sugars because they create a change

in the pH of the rabbit's cecum and eventually can throw the whole system off. The result can be serious GI disease. Foods that are notorious for causing rabbit GI problems when fed improperly are grains of any kind and legumes (beans, peas).

All Fruits Should Be Limited

Rabbits, like many animals, naturally gravitate toward foods high in sugar or

starch. This is a protective device from the wild days when they could never be sure when or if they would get the next meal. As a result, rabbits cannot limit themselves when given sugary or starchy foods. Overfeeding fruits can result in a weight gain or GI upset so it is up to you to feed these foods in limited amounts.

Photos: Jane C Wyeth



Carrot greens.



Kale.

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

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



Jasper.

Jasper

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

adopting Jasper, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Pink

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



Pink.



Skye.

ready for adoption. If you are interested in adopting Pink, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Skye

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

(Continued on page 17)

RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 16)

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

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

Indigo

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



Indigo.

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

Lucy

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

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



Lucy.



Carmela.

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

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

Emmett

Emmett was rescued in February of 2022 when he was left on the side of the road in a cage with another rabbit. He can be a bit of a princess, dumping his food bowl over and throwing it across his pen. Overall, he's a sweet guy who will let you pet him and has the most beautiful baby blue eyes.



Emmett.



Ginkgo.

Judy

Judy was found as a stray and brought to the Babylon Animal Shelter in October 2022, where she was cared for until we were able to take her into our care. She has an old healed fracture on her back right paw, but it doesn't hinder her from running around her foster home. Judy is a sweet girl and may take time to warm up in new places. She has glorious folds and the softest fur. While she can be cautious at first, with patient humans she enjoys gentle patting. Her future forever family should understand that because of her slight impairment, she may develop arthritis in her joints earlier on in her life. Judy's environment should be free of ramps (and platforms to jump up and down on), to prevent any further injuries.



Judy.

Ginkgo

Meet Ginkgo, one of the Botanical Babies born on 3/23/22! Ginkgo is a Rex bunny with supersoft fur that makes him extra special! Ginkgo is very friendly and comfortable with people. This sweet affectionate boy would love to have a home and family of his very own. Is he your forever boy?

Tara

Miracle bun Tara was rescued from a playground as a newborn in June 2022 by her foster mom. Despite her rough beginning, she grew into a clever, feisty, independent and loving bun. Tara loves her toys, cardboard and blankies, but can be very particular with the arrangement of her things as well as with her litter box (she prefers her business done on one side and her hay on the other). She



Tara.

loves nose rubs, head pats, behind-the-ear scratches and whole body pets. This adventurous girl loves to climb and will require a higher x-pen or dog crate. If you're looking for a bun filled with personality, energy and love, Tara is the perfect girl for you.

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

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



Olei.



Penny Proud.



Bubbles.



Pebbles.



Timmy.



Whiskers.



Cheerios.



Rompers.



Robin and Heartwood.

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



Nior.



Chocolate.



Muffin.



Jack.



Marcus.



Cece.



Lola.



Nibbles.



Mia.

(Continued on page 21)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC

(Continued from page 20)



Luna.



Pepperoni.



Wendy McBunny.

Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Paco, Rosemary, Sara, Snow and Jasmine were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!



Paco.

Urine Scald: A Symptom of a Greater Problem

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

*University of Miami Biology Department
House Rabbit Society of Miami*

A rabbit suffering from urinary tract problems may experience loss of fur in the genital region and hindquarters. The baldness and red, irritated skin are caused by “urine scald,” and it can happen to any bunny whose urine soaks into the fur around her vent and is in constant contact with her delicate skin.

There are many possible reasons for a rabbit to dribble urine and/or sit in urine, and the only way to know for sure is have your rabbit completely examined by a veterinarian experienced in rabbit medicine.

Some possible causes of urinary incontinence (and hence, urine scald) to consider are the following:

Bladder sludge

All rabbits normally excrete excess calcium and oxalate salts via the urinary tract, and the residue of normal urine will often appear “chalky.” However, when excessive amounts of calcium/oxalate salts precipitate in the urinary tract, they sometimes manifest as a thick, curry-colored “sludge” that sometimes has a consistency as thick as toothpaste. This can be very painful in the bladder and when it is passed, and sludge buildup can cause urine leakage and incontinence.

Although some vets suggest reducing dietary intake of calcium to help control this problem, we have not found any correlation between dietary intake of calcium and severity of sludge. Rather, this seems to be a metabolic problem suffered by a few individual rabbits, and may be an endocrine problem, rather than a dietary one.

Treatment for bladder sludge may include bladder flushes (in severe cases),

Photos: Mary Ann Maier



Urine scald.



Urolith.

or simply helping the bunny flush the bladder by administering subcutaneous fluids and a small dose of diazepam (Valium) to help relax the bladder sphincters. Your vet will know best how to treat your rabbit’s particular problem, if this is what it turns out to be.

Bladder stone (urolith)

Diagnosed via radiography, a bladder stone is a mass of calcium and/or oxalate salts that has precipitated into a solid mass. Like sludge, a urolith can cause urinary incontinence and dribbling. Unfortunately, the only viable treatment at this time is surgical removal.

Urinary tract infection (UTI)

Bacteria can infect the urinary tract (kidneys and/or bladder), just as they can many other organ systems. The best way to diagnose this particular ailment is via cystocentesis: inserting a sterile needle into the bladder and extracting a sterile sample into a syringe. This is then sent to a laboratory for culture and

sensitivity testing. This will reveal (1) what species of bacteria is causing the infection and (2) which rabbit-safe antibiotics (with good urinary tract penetration) will kill them.

Unfortunately, urinary tract infections are sometimes caused by “fastidious anaerobes”: bacteria that die upon the slightest exposure to oxygen. If this is the case, then the culture and sensitivity test will come back negative. However, your vet may be able to determine if a UTI is likely by examining the urine under the microscope for signs of blood and white blood cells in the urine. If there is a good chance that your bunny has a UTI, even if the culture comes back negative, your vet might wish to put her on a course of antibiotics such as chloramphenicol, which is effective against many anaerobes and also concentrates well in the urinary tract. Your vet is the best person to advise you on the proper course of action in case of a UTI.

Arthritis of the spine or pelvis

Arthritis of the spine or pelvis can result in the rabbit’s inability to posture correctly for urination. This can cause urine to collect in the fur and soak into it, causing urine scald.

Arthritis can be diagnosed via radiography, and can often be helped tremendously with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as carprofen (Rimadyl) or flunixin meglumine (Banamine).

Rear limb/pelvic paresis

Paresis is defined as a weakness without total loss of movement in a particular area of the body. This problem is not uncommon in older rabbits, and some even lose the use of their hind legs. The problem may be caused by arthritis, disc degeneration or other skeletal problems.

(Continued on page 23)

Urine Scald *(Continued from page 22)*

Some vets suspect that a central nervous system/renal system parasite known as *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* might be responsible for this condition, but there is still no conclusive clinical evidence to support this contention.

Some people have reported excellent improvement of paresis with acupuncture and massage, whereas others have seen improvement with short-term use of anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. corticosteroids, which should not be used long term). This also helps with urinary tract incontinence.

E. cuniculi is being experimentally treated with any one of several related drugs (albendazole, fenbendazole, oxbendazole, etc.), and although some individuals have reported improvement in the condition after using these drugs, there are still no studies to show conclusively that such treatments are effective.

Uterine cancer

Unspayed female rabbits have a very high risk of developing uterine cancer,

and a large tumor can sometimes interfere with normal urination. All female rabbits should be spayed for their health and longevity.

Our vets have noted that removal of the cancerous uterus (via spay operation) usually solves the problem, and they have not noted a high degree of metastasis (spreading) in this type of cancer, once the uterus is removed. Spaying is the best treatment option for this problem.

A Final Note: The Color of Urine

Healthy rabbits excrete excess calcium salts via the renal system, and this can give the urine a chalky or opaque appearance. The urine will often dry to a white, chalky residue. Unless the residue is thick, pasty, and the color of mustard powder, this is normal, and should not be considered “sludge.”

Normal rabbit urine is usually pale yellow in color, but upon exposure to the atmosphere, compounds in the urine may oxidize to darker yellow,



A low-entry litter box can help a bunny with mobility problems.

orange, red, or even dark brown. This isn't unusual, and – by itself – is not necessarily a sign of a health problem. Blood in the urine, unless it is from a hemorrhaging uterus or very serious problem, is usually not readily visible to the naked eye. Your vet is the best judge of whether your bunny's urine is normal.

Urine that is very dark immediately when it emerges may indicate that the bunny is dehydrated, and should receive more water, either by mouth or – in more serious cases – via administration of subcutaneous lactated Ringer's solution.

Photos: Mary Ann Maier



Fake sheepskin wicks urine away, keeping an incontinent bunny dry.

Adoptable Rabbits

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Peri in her condo.

Donations

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

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

THUMP JULY 2023

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

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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.

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt

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
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333 Great Neck Road
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