

THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS SEPTEMBER 2025

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Luna.

The Quirky Charm Of a Bunny Flop

By Jane O'Wyatt

Featured on the front page of the July 2025 Thump was Ruby-Ann, a gorgeous bunny rescued from the streets of Long Island. Photographed in glorious mid-flop by Katie Scarr and given pride of place in Mary Ann Maier's masthead, Ruby-Ann almost obscured the type behind her. This masthead inspired me to work on the following short, illustrated piece about bunny flopping.

While a bunny's joyful binkying is celebrated for bringing comic relief to rabbit lovers, the less spectacular behavior known as flopping has its own lovable, quirky charm.

Rabbit.org Foundation describes flopping:

"Your rabbit, who has been sitting quietly, or grooming herself, suddenly falls over on her side, exposing her belly. You think

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Flopping on Long Island

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 for photos of their bunnies enjoying relaxing flops,

(Continued on page 2)



Bunbun.

Social-Media Photo Shoot Sparks Outrage Among Rabbit Lovers in NYC

By Rabbit Rescue and Rehab

It was a perfect storm involving an online influencer and cute rabbits on leashes. And the saga still hasn't ended.

"Fake heiress" Anna Delvey, whose real name is Anna Sorokin, set off the Instagram frenzy in August when she posted photos and videos showing her with leashed rabbits in TriBeCa. The rabbits were standing outdoors on a sidewalk with her in the sun at a subway entrance. Nighttime videos showed Sorokin teetering on a rock as she held one of the rabbits with his head tilted backward.

Web sleuths later reported that the three rabbits had been dumped in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, and many blamed Sorokin and those involved in setting up the photo shoot. An acquaintance of hers said he had gotten the rabbits from Facebook Marketplace and was the one who released them into the park.

Ms. Sorokin said on Instagram that she was "appalled by what transpired."

The bunnies were rescued (see the photo with this story, taken by Terry

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Quirky Charm

(Continued from page 1)

she's having a heart attack, but the rabbit is thinking: "I'm totally relaxed. Life is wonderful, and so am I."

House Rabbit Rescue of Missouri: St. Louis gives these details:

"A bunny flop is a sign of pure contentment and relaxation. If you see your bunny flop, feel proud that you've created a comfortable and reassuring environment for your bun. Rabbits are naturally prey animals. A rabbit who flops in front of a human feels safe and comfortable enough to let its guard down. A flop may occur after a running session or just prior to a relaxing lounge or nap. The rabbit may be lying on its side or completely on its back."

Most of the rabbits I know are not habitual floppers, so my bunny body-

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Tina.

language reading skills are not advanced enough for me to grasp when a bunny is about to flop. A flop always surprises me!

This is how it happens: My rabbit companion and I are chilling on a carpeted floor when she suddenly rotates her head slightly, rolls over on her side and lies motionless, belly exposed, eyes open and glazed-looking. She holds this pose briefly, and then returns to her everyday self. Other observers report that their rabbits roll over on their backs, hold the "dead bunny" pose for a long, sometimes unnerving time, fall asleep or immediately spring to their feet and binky, flop again, binky again, etc.

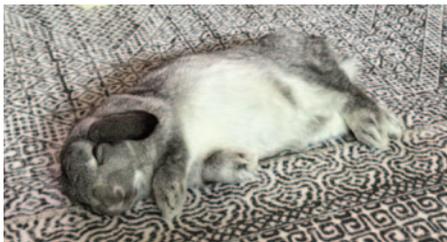
Although there are probably as many flop styles as there are variations in binky choreography, the subtle flop is unique in that it reveals a normally hypervigilant creature in a trusting state. To observe a carefree bunny flop in one's presence is a great privilege.

(Ruby-Ann, our July masthead bunny with that wonderful flop, has been adopted!)

Flopping on Long Island

(Continued from page 1)

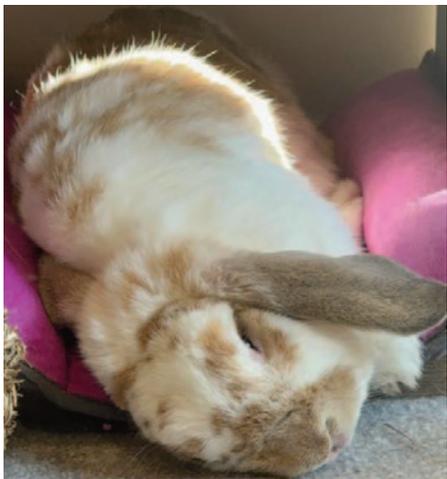
and we're happy to share these images with the readers of Thump.



Ada.



Bee and Bunbun.



Yoshi.



Reggie.



Chamomile.



Arthur.

(Continued on page 3)

Flopping on Long Island

(Continued from page 2)



Beatrice.



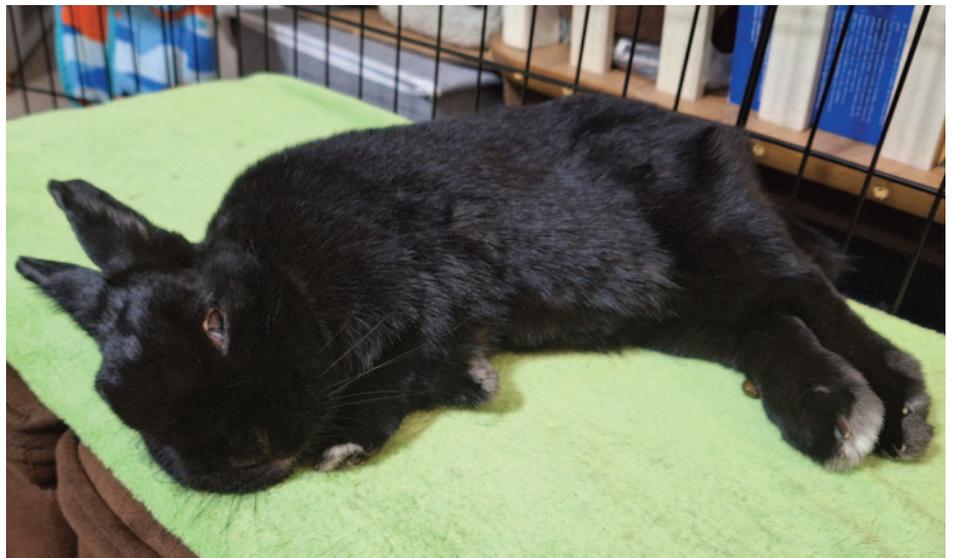
Eugene.



Maddie.



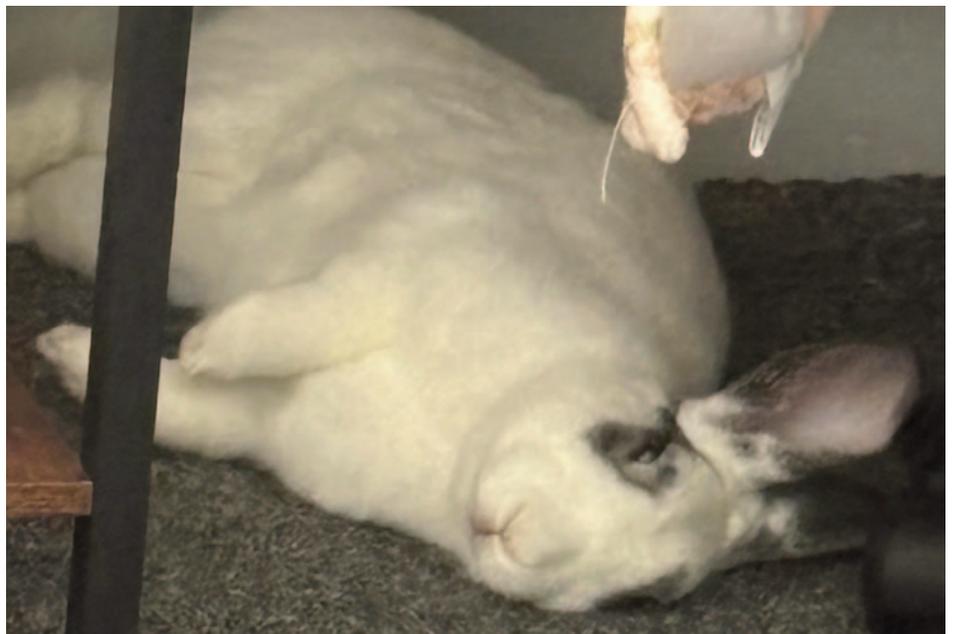
Sweet Pea and Bugsy.



Ellie.



Cookie.



Harper.

(Continued on page 4)

Outrage

(Continued from page 1)

Chao) and found foster homes as the online criticism mounted.

Sorokin denied knowing about the dumping incident, and she announced a donation to a rescue group. She started selling “Bunnygate” T-shirts to highlight the controversy, featuring a rabbit photo and the words, “Missing,” and “Have you seen me?”

The online influencer, who spent two years in prison on charges of swindling money from wealthy people and financial institutions, has been active on social media. She often posts videos of herself in unusual costumes at various locations in New York.

The Sorokin photo-shoot controversy points up many problems facing the rabbit-rescue community today: social-media hype, the widespread dumping of pets, ignorance about the basic needs of rabbits, the availability of leashes (which often lead to a rabbit’s death) and the widespread belief that bunnies are just like babies in wanting to be picked up and held.

Here is a bit more about our concerns:

Social media

Thump featured a page-one article in March 2024 about social-media

Photo: Terry Chao



Terry Chao helped to rescue the rabbits dumped in Prospect Park.

influencers and their companion animals. Countless instances of misinformation and hype abound, with followers believing that all rabbits will act a certain way, or that a particular breed of rabbit is preferred because of its cute appearance. Some postings show rabbits in unrealistic, pristine settings, with no mess to be seen.

The Thump article cautions that social media reinforces many common misconceptions about rabbits. In reality,

they are not low-maintenance pets and they need lots of attention. Their vet care is expensive. Because they are prey animals, they don’t like being picked or cuddled. They are physically fragile and can be injured by handling.

Leashes

Thump’s archives also include an April 2011 article (pages 14-15) by Natalie

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Flopping on Long Island

(Continued from page 3)



Coco.



Sophie.



Druscilla.

Outrage

(Continued from page 4)

Reeves titled, "Houdini's Message: Harnesses Can Kill." The story is heartbreaking. A postscript by Mary Cotter, founder of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, says: "Over the years I have received (and saved) many tragic emails from rabbit owners who learned the hard way that leashes and harnesses are NOT safe for rabbits. If there were one type of product I could remove from all pet-store shelves, it would be harnesses and leashes for rabbits."

Releasing rabbits into parks

Many of the rabbits rescued by our volunteers in Manhattan and on Long Island have been dumped in parks throughout the New York area. These are house rabbits lacking in outdoor survival skills, and usually without the brown camouflage color of wild cottontails. The summer temperatures are brutal for animals whose internal temperature is 101-103 degrees Fahrenheit. The winter temperatures are equally punishing. These rabbits do not survive. They are easy prey for birds and larger animals. They also are sickened by poisons, toxins and parasites transmitted by other animals such as squirrels.

As one of the Rabbit Rescue & Rehab information posters states, "Setting Your Pet Rabbit Loose Doesn't Make Her 'Free.' It Makes Her 'Food.'" The poster says, "Domestic rabbits lack the survival instincts wild rabbits use to fend for themselves. So they become food for everything from raccoons and dogs to crows and hawks. And the 'lucky' ones who don't get eaten get run over by cars or die from heat or disease."

Abandoning your pet in a public space such as a city park is a misdemeanor offense punishable by possible jail time and a monetary fine. Local municipalities in New York State have created additional regulations regarding pet abandonment, which is considered a form of animal cruelty.

Cuddling or picking up a rabbit

Dana Krempels, in her article for *Thump* (pages 22-24) titled "Close Encounters of the Furry Kind: Understanding Your First Rabbit," puts it this way:

"When you force a bunny to be held against his will, you reinforce his innate notion that you are a predator trying to restrain him. Holding a rabbit while he struggles and kicks is not only dangerous for the human (sharp claws!), but also for the rabbit. A rabbit is built for quick escape, with powerful muscles attached

to a relatively light, flexible skeleton. When a bunny is held in the air, he lacks the natural 'brake' of the ground against his hind feet, and one powerful kick can hyperextend the spine, causing it to subluxate or fracture. We have seen an alarming number of young rabbits with broken backs and legs because people (usually children) insisted on carrying them around and handling them against their will. A very few rabbits enjoy being held and cuddled. The vast majority do not, and prefer to snuggle on the ground, with you lying close (like a fellow bunny)."

Furthermore, holding a bunny backward is frightening and dangerous. Rabbits put into this trancing position by a human respond by freezing their movement, as they would do if grabbed by a predator. It is a fear-induced, involuntary response that is a defense mechanism. The rabbit, sensing immediate danger, is playing dead. You should never, ever put a rabbit through this kind of extreme stress.

Paige K. Parsons, a house rabbit educator, discusses trancing in "Why You Should Never Trance a Rabbit" on rabbit.org.



Animal Communicator Offers Sessions

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

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

For all information, email: chiguygo@icloud.com.

Rabbits With Horns Are Sighted in Colorado

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

The news photos are alarming. Some wild rabbits in northern Colorado have sprouted small horns.

The dark horns appear on the heads and faces of some cottontails, making them seem to be possessed by an otherworldly contagion. Facebook posts in August referred to the animals as “Frankenstein bunnies” and “zombie rabbits.” It is unclear how many rabbits are affected.

Wildlife officials in Colorado said that the hornlike skin growths are benign and are caused by the cottontail rabbit papillomavirus. The infection, also known as the Shope papillomavirus, is part of the virus family that causes warts in humans. The virus is typically spread by fleas and mosquitos in the summer, and the rabbits usually recover on their own.

Because the images on Facebook and Instagram are so unusual, many people have jumped to the conclusion that the infected rabbits pose a danger to humans. Some rabbits appear to have horns blocking their eyes and mouths, raising questions about their ability to survive.

An online fact sheet from Colorado Parks & Wildlife states, “The growths have no significant effects on wild rabbits unless they interfere with eating/drinking. Most infected cottontails can survive

Photo: Education Images



A wild rabbit with horns.

the viral infection, after which the growths will go away. For this reason, CPW does not recommend euthanizing rabbits with papillomas unless they are interfering with the rabbit’s ability to eat and drink.”

At the same time, wildlife experts advise people to avoid the infected rabbits and hares because of the possible danger to domestic rabbits. Colorado officials said: “Like other papillomaviruses, this virus is specific to rabbits and does not cause disease in other species. There is a risk of transmission to domestic rabbits,

especially if rabbits are housed outdoors where they may contact wild rabbits or biting insects. In domestic rabbits, the disease is more severe than in wild rabbits and should be treated by a veterinarian.”

Richard Edwin Shope first identified the rabbit papillomavirus in 1933. His discovery helped others to link the papilloma to warts and cervical cancer, ultimately leading to the development of the human papillomavirus vaccine. Shope also was among the first to pinpoint the influenza A virus to the deadly 1918 flu pandemic.



You Can Help!

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

Most of our foster rabbits are quite far from their veterinarian. Unfortunately, many trips can be last-minute due to an emergency.

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

Thank you!

NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

And for My Next Trick...

By Samantha Rowan

I have never been one for training pets to do tricks, but I seem to have done this with our roughly 2-year-old rescue bunny, Truman. It started in the early days of our lives together, when Truman was skittish while also demonstrating a remarkable knack for getting into places where no other rabbit we've ever had has gone before.

It quickly became apparent that we needed to reinforce our defenses against a clever and fearless bunny. This meant that until we had a better sense of what Truman was going to do, he had to either be supervised or remain in his enclosure. The former was easy enough to do, while the latter involved getting a distrustful rabbit into someplace where he could be safe.

That first weekend, Truman sat under the couch, breathing heavily, as we tried to encourage him to get into his enclosure for the night.

"We need a way to get him inside without stressing him out," my husband said.

"Maybe he'll come for a treat?" my son said.

"I'll try it," I said.

I picked up the bag of treats, shook it and managed to lure Truman out. Predictably, he grabbed the treat and went back under the couch. But then I stood closer to his enclosure, shook the bag and called Truman by his name. And to my surprise, he cautiously came out, grabbed the treat and scuttled into his enclosure.

I gave Truman a pat on the head, told him he was a good bunny, and we all went to bed. The next day, when we were on our way out, I picked up the bag of treats and called Truman – and to my delight and surprise, he came running.

It wasn't long before we sorted out the rabbit-proofing and Truman moved into his free-range bunny phase. At night, however, as we were going to bed, I'd always call him over for a treat. It became a nightly ritual for us and our bunny.

One of the interesting things we have noticed about Truman is his observational skills. Often, he'll sit and watch us go about our business or study a piece of furniture and sooner or later we'll see the result of his observations. I didn't realize at first that he was studying me.

It began with Truman standing on his hind legs, which always elicited a squeal



Photo: Samantha Rowan
Truman.

and a pat on the head from me. After a week or so, Truman began to come directly over to me and stand on his hind legs in front of me and, whenever he did that, I started to give him a treat.

"Look, I've trained Truman to come over to me and stand up!" I said gleefully one day to my husband and son. "See how cute he is?"

For some reason, they were looking at me with amusement.

"Actually, I think Truman has trained you," my son said. "He's been doing it for weeks. You're finally getting it."

And as I reflected on the past few weeks, I knew he was right. I patted Truman on the head and wondered what my next trick will be!

The Top 10 Reasons My Bunnies Thumped at Me in the Past Week

By Megan Hilands

I love my three bunnies – Simba, Nala, and Charlie – and do my best to make them as happy as possible. Despite my best efforts, though, bunnies (like humans) cannot be completely content all the time. My three bunnies are not shy about telling me when they do not like something. Whether they are annoyed, frustrated, or just urgently need my attention, I can expect to hear them thump surprisingly loudly.

Often the reasons my bunnies thump are a little surprising, and if I'm being

honest, sometimes a little entertaining.

Here are the top reasons my bunnies thumped at me in the past week.

10. I had the audacity to start brewing my morning coffee before serving breakfast.

9. I opened the fridge and didn't give the bunnies a snack.

8. Something crinkled that wasn't a treat bag and the bunnies did not get a treat.

7. I decided to work from the couch (too close to where the bunnies were napping) instead of my desk.

6. I was talking too loud on a work call.

5. The washing machine was too loud.

4. My alarm went off at an unexpected part of the day.

3. A car alarm went off.

2. I woke Simba up from a nap.

1. I sneezed too loudly.

As I read over this list I notice many of the things my bunnies do not like are related to loud noises. On a more serious note, I feel as if the bunnies and I are well suited to each other in this regard as I also do not like noise – I'm much

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Miss Mina's Successful Rescue on Long Island

By Susanne LaCorte

It was a busy August day for me. I had just packed up my fur babies to go to their bunny sitter, in preparation for my son's college dropoff. While packing clothes and trying to prepare dinner, I received a text about helping to rescue an abandoned bunny in Suffolk County. I grabbed an X-pen and my 15-year-old son, Brayden, and jumped in my car.

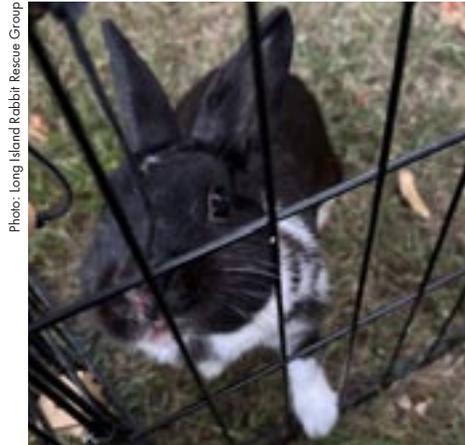
When I arrived at William J. Byrne Park in East Northport, I spotted the bunny we named Miss Mina. She was lounging on a patch of grass beside Tracy Farino, another volunteer with Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group. Mina appeared relaxed.

This was my second rescue and was definitely more challenging than the first. Brayden and I each held an end of the X-pen and formed a semicircle. As Mina slowly approached us, we gently began to enclose the circle. Well, this young, very perceptive firecracker immediately sprinted away.

After several attempts and great teamwork, we all were able to successfully secure Mina to safety. She is a beautiful girl



Mina.



In X-pen.

with big curious eyes and a snowy white dewlap that adds to her cuteness.

I left the park that evening feeling a true sense of purpose. It's an amazing feeling

to both foster and adopt a rescue bunny. However, being a part of a rabbit's rescue mission is on a whole other level! Thank you, LIRRG, for allowing me to be part of your amazing organization.



Tracy Farino holds Mina.

Her Life Has Changed Forever

By Tracy Farino

What started as a normal evening taking my son to football practice turned into something I'll never forget. As I pulled into the lot in East Northport searching for a parking spot, I noticed a small

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RABBIT BEHAVIOR

10 Reasons

(Continued from page 7)

more likely to enjoy an evening in with a book than a night at a rock concert, and I too don't like that the washing machine is so loud!

I also believe that when the bunnies use thumping to communicate with me, it in a way marks me as a member of their family. After all, this is how bunnies evolved to communicate with each other in the wild. My bunnies also exhibit many happy behaviors including binkies and flops, so I know they feel safe and happy with me the majority of the time.



Charlie has plenty of toys and is quite happy even if he gets a little annoyed from time to time.



Nala loves to play with large boxes, which have become a fixture in our dining room.

A Tribute to Larry

By Denise Bertolotti,
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

We're heartbroken to share that Larry passed away in August.

He had yet to find his forever home, but had so many wonderful families interested in him – probably our most asked-about adoptable this year!

Larry had a dental issue in the spring that we were hoping was resolved with medical intervention. Recently, we discovered a large abscess on his lower jaw, a concerning development given his history.

We brought him to the hospital for a CT scan to get a clearer picture of the severity of his dental disease. Tragically, Larry began seizing shortly after the scan and passed away soon after. We're devastated by this sudden loss.

To all who loved Larry, especially those who cared for him during his time in foster care, our thoughts are with you.

Photo: Katie Scarr



Larry.

Binky free, dear Larry. You are forever loved.

(Laura Lavin added: Omg, I am so heartbroken. Larry, being your foster mom brought so much love and joy to

Photo: Laura Lavin



me. You were the best boy and I can't believe you left us too soon. At least I know you're pain free, and definitely doing many binkies. Rest easy, my guy.)

Meet Our New Friend, Sheila!

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

We were first notified about Sheila by her finder in August. At the time, we didn't have any open foster placements, but her finder was concerned that she might be pregnant and brought her to Rocky Point Animal Hospital for an exam.

While Sheila wasn't pregnant, the vet discovered something far more serious: She was suffering from pyometra – a life-threatening infection of the uterus that causes it to fill with bacteria and pus. She needed emergency spay surgery to survive.

Thankfully, an adoption opened up a foster spot for us. As soon as we learned

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group (Facebook)



Sheila.

about Sheila's condition, we moved her to the top of our intake list. She was spayed at Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital. Her uterus weighed 1.5 pounds and was on the verge of rupturing – something that would have been fatal.

Sheila is healing well and resting comfortably.

We're incredibly grateful to her finder for getting her the urgent care she needed, to the amazing veterinary teams who acted quickly, and to our supporters. Without their generosity, none of this would have been possible.

Trixie's Adorable Girls

If you've been patiently waiting for Trixie's girls to go up for adoption, now is the time to put in your applications! They have been spayed and will soon be ready to go to their forever homes. Say hello to Tanya, Talia and Trish!



Tanya.



Talia.



Trish.

Successful Rescue

(Continued from page 8)

rabbit sitting in the grass. My heart sank; she didn't belong there.

I called volunteers Lauren Schulz Eddings and Denise Bertolotti to see how we could help. Within moments, Denise

set up a group text and, thankfully, Susanne was nearby. While I kept a close eye on the little bun (who we now know as Mina), Susanne rushed over with an X-pen.

In the middle of a busy parking lot, it was tense. Susanne and Brayden held

the pen steady while I tried to guide Mina toward safety. It took a few tries, but we were able to capture her and bring her to safety. From that moment on, Mina's life has changed forever.

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

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

Dove

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

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

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

Pink

Pink is a sweet Himalayan boy with an affectionate demeanor. He does have a big energetic streak and likes to get in his exercise by running big laps and fluffing up his blankets before settling in for a nap on his IKEA doll bed. He's particularly fond of toys that can be tossed around, and loves all of his pellets, greens and hay. Pink is neutered and ready for adoption. If you are interested in adopting Pink, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside and, wanting to help this poor bunny, brought her back to his home. Once there, she surprised him with a litter of



Dove.



Pink.



Skye.

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.

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ADOPTIONS

RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 11)

Indigo

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

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-



Indigo.



Lucy.



Carmela.

only home. She would also likely make a good partner for another rabbit. She has been spayed and is in foster care.

For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carmela, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

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

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



Jazzberry Jam.



Sugar.



Earwicket.



Luna.



McTwisp.



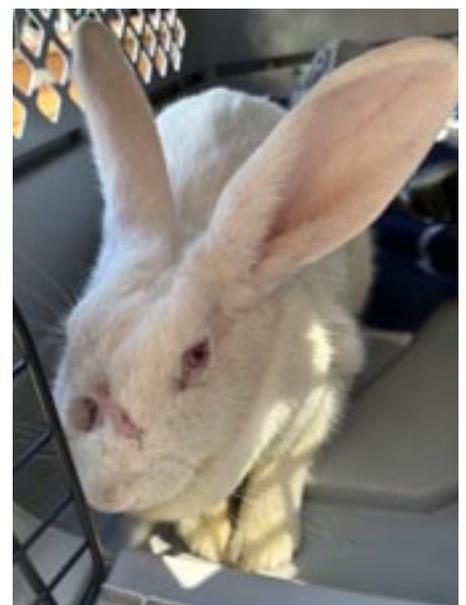
Maverick.



Max.



Tarrant.



Binklesworth.

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



Charmander.



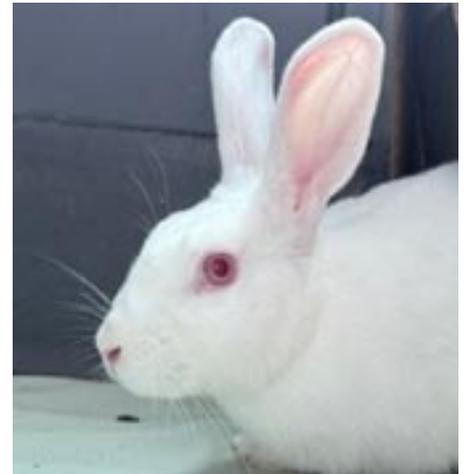
Blizzard.



Carroll.



Eevee.



Pikachu.



Alice.



Nivens.



Bellsprout.

Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Yancy, Bunny Eilish, Turner, Quinn, Diamond & Reggie, Emmy, Tate, Trixie, Ruby-Ann, Barry White, Paul, Turner, Conrad, Todd, Thackery, Humphrey and Giselle were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

9 REASONS TO KEEP YOUR BUNNY INDOORS

- 1)** Outdoor rabbits are exposed to extremes of weather: heat, cold, thunder, lightning, high winds (which can damage or destroy housing). Of these, heat is particularly dangerous: rabbits succumb very quickly to high temperatures, and need to be kept cool in the summer. In extremely cold weather, drinking water freezes and rabbits can become dehydrated.
- 2)** Outdoor rabbits are prone to insect/tick bites and fly strike (flies laying eggs on the rabbit and the larvae burrow into the rabbit's flesh).
- 3)** Outdoor rabbits are exposed to parasites and diseases carried by other animals; e.g., raccoons carry *Baylisascaris procyonis*, which rabbits can pick up on the ground and ingest (by grooming their feet), and which can then migrate to the rabbit's brain, where it is fatal.
- 4)** Outdoor rabbits often become the victims of poisoning from pesticides, herbicides, and/or fertilizers. Even if your neighbor uses them, rain will wash the chemicals onto your property. In many areas, ground and air spraying of toxic chemicals is used because of the threat of West Nile Virus.
- 5)** Outdoor rabbits often are often neglected or forgotten once the novelty wears off. Their food and water may become infested with insects, bacteria, or molds. They do not get the human interaction they need in order to develop trust, and often become extremely hard to handle as a result.
- 6)** Outdoor rabbits are "out of sight," if not "out of mind," and this makes it almost impossible for owners to become adequately familiar with their bunny's "normal behaviors." When you are not thoroughly familiar with your bunny's normal behaviors, it is difficult to recognize subtle signs of illness/injury in time to prevent emergency visits.
- 7)** Outdoor rabbits experience fear from unfamiliar sounds, from which they cannot escape (e.g., lawnmowers, leaf/snow blowers, tree chopping), smells, unfamiliar visitors (e.g. neighborhood children, passersby, etc.).
- 8)** Outdoor rabbits often become the victims of predators (dogs, cats, hawks, raccoons, snakes), and can suffer fatal heart attacks from even the approach of a predator.
- 9)** Outdoor rabbits (especially those housed in hutches) often get little or no exercise. Rabbits that are let loose in a yard for exercise face all of the above dangers, as well as road hazards and the risk of getting lost if they escape from the yard.



Dental Disease in Rabbits: A Simple Overview

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

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

Even if your rabbit has perfectly aligned incisors (front teeth), it is wise for you to ask your rabbit-experienced veterinarian to do regular dental checkups as part of your bunny's wellness exam. Undetected dental problems in rabbits are a major cause of more serious illnesses that develop due to the pain and stress of sore teeth and jaw.

Healthy Rabbit Teeth

Rabbits are hypsodonts, meaning their teeth grow continually throughout life. In a normal rabbit, the teeth are aligned so that they wear against each other as the rabbit chews. This maintains even, relatively flat surfaces (with some sharp edges on top) on the molars and relatively short, chisel-shaped incisors. The incisors are used only for cutting the food into manageable pieces. The molars do the grinding into fine "mash" that is swallowed and sent down the GI tract for further processing.

Dental Disease

Dental malocclusion in rabbits is not uncommon, especially in the short-faced breeds produced via generation upon generation of inbreeding. This often causes harmful, recessive genetic traits to be expressed, and one of these is misalignment of the teeth because of abnormal bone structure in the skull.

Because it is primarily the wearing of the teeth (incisors and molars) against each other – not against items being chewed – that maintains their normal length and shape, neither chew toys nor hard foods will cure this problem. In many cases, a veterinarian will need to anesthetize the bunny to gain access to the spurs with tools designed specifically to cut off spurs and smooth the teeth.

Incisor Malocclusion

If the teeth do not line up correctly, incisors quickly overgrow and can become unmanageable "tusks" that either snaggle up out of the mouth or curl back into the mouth, making eating nearly impossible. Although some veterinarians will be willing to regularly trim the teeth, this is stressful for the rabbit. Also, clipping the teeth rather than filing or grinding them down can be dangerous, since micro-fractures of the tooth from clipping can travel below the gum line, inviting bacterial infection that can ultimately be life-threatening.



Overgrown incisors can make eating nearly impossible.

Many rabbit vets believe that the best way to treat maloccluded incisors is to extract them. This is a surgical procedure that must be done very carefully and patiently by your rabbit-experienced veterinarian, to ensure complete, permanent removal. The rabbit will probably need to be on pain medication for a day or two after surgery, but once the patient has recovered, the only adjustment the rabbit "parent" needs to make is to cut up fresh food into bite-sized pieces, since the cutting teeth (incisors) will be gone. Pellets and hay can be handled as before, without problems.

Your first sign of trouble might be something as subtle as a change in eating habits.

Molar (Cheek Tooth) Problems

Many rabbits who have maloccluded incisors, and even many who have perfectly aligned incisors, still develop molar spurs. These are sharp points on the edges of the molars that result from uneven wear. Spurs that form on the lower molar arcade point inward toward the tongue, and are known as lingual ("tongue") spurs. Spurs that form on the upper arcade poke outward into the cheek, and are called buccal ("mouth") spurs.



Molar spurs.

These points can stab and abrade the tongue and cheek. Rabbits, being prey animals, do not readily show signs of pain. Your first sign of trouble might be something as subtle as a change in eating habits, and the nature of this change is unpredictable and idiosyncratic (unique to the individual).

In some extreme cases, molar spurs can actually grow into the tongue or cheek,

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Dental Issues

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causing extreme pain. There have been cases of a molar spur going undetected for so long that it formed a bridge over the tongue, preventing the bunny from eating properly.

Left unattended, the pain of dental disease can trigger a potentially life-threatening condition known as ileus: <http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/ileus.html>. Before this happens, you surely want to get your bunny to a rabbit-savvy vet for examination and treatment.

Dental Disease and Elder Buns

Dental disease can also develop as a rabbit ages. With advancing years, rabbits (like all of us) tend to lose bone density. When this happens in the already-delicate bones of the skull, the teeth can become ever-so-slightly looser in their sockets, and this can cause uneven wear.

Rabbit teeth do not have true roots, but the bases of the teeth can become infected when the teeth are loose, as bacteria from the mouth travel downwards along the gum lines. Swelling almost anywhere along the mandible (lower jaw) or maxilla (upper bones of mouth) can signal an infection that requires at least antibiotic treatment, and possibly surgical treatment.

The base of the rabbit tooth is the location of the constantly dividing tissue that gives rise to the teeth. In some cases, the bases of the molars and/or incisors begin to extend farther into the jaw bone than normal (this is far more common in older rabbits). These “rogue roots” may begin to impinge on the tear ducts, causing epiphora (runny eyes) (<http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/weepy.pdf>). Sometimes, such “overgrown” molar bases may even puncture the sinuses or the eye orbit, allowing intrusion of mouth bacteria into areas meant to remain sterile. Abscesses can result.



A dental checkup should be part of your rabbit's regular wellness exam.

If you have an elderly bunny with any signs of dental disease, ask your veterinarian to do a complete oral exam including head radiographs to detect the extent of the problem and the appropriate course of treatment.

Treating Dental Disease

Molar spurs can be filed smooth by your veterinarian, who may use anything from a Dremel tool to a blunt-tipped diamond file. The procedure ordinarily requires anesthesia (e.g., isoflurane or sevoflurane gas), but usually can be done relatively quickly.

Check for these signs that something could be wrong:

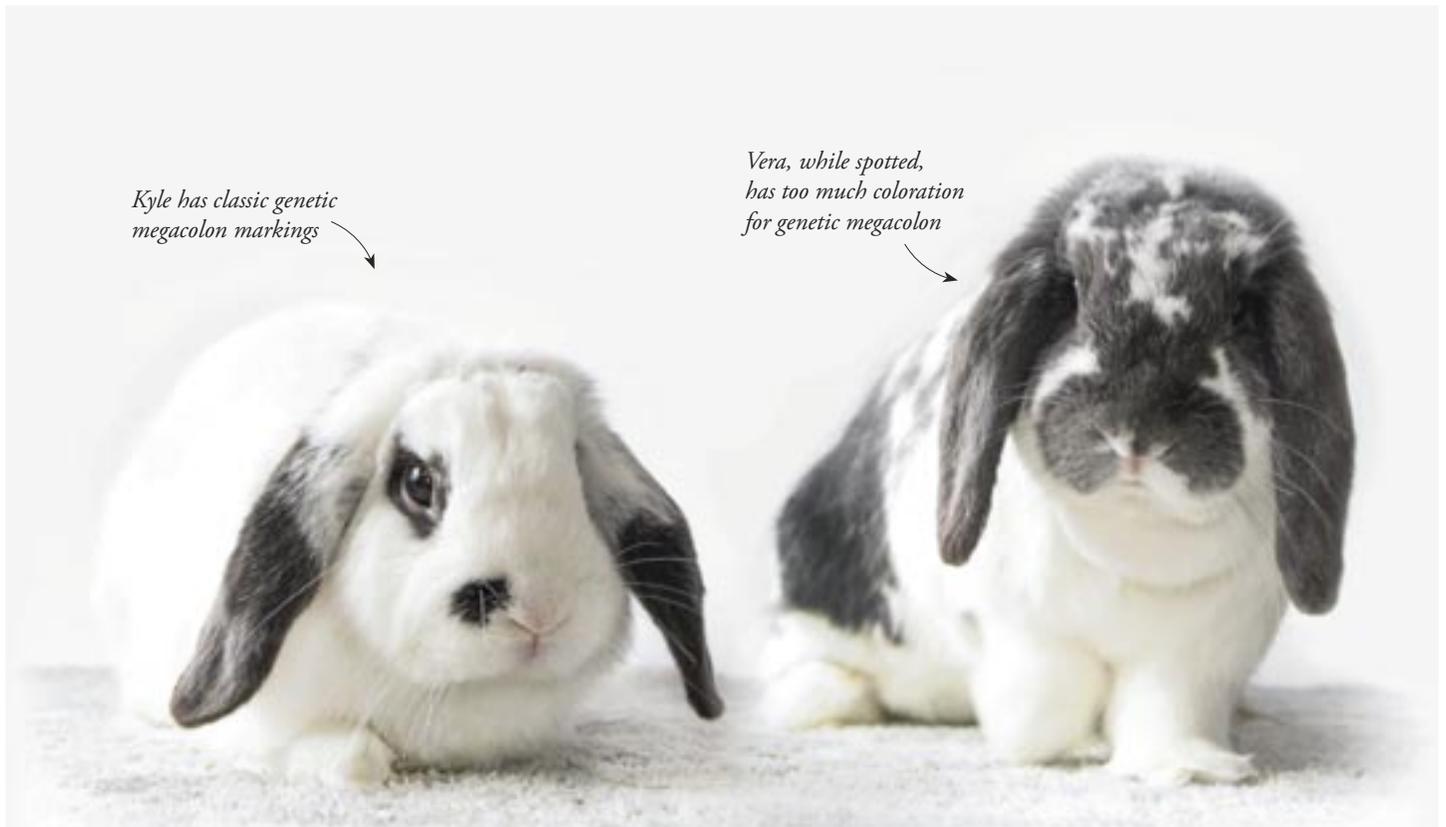
- Drooling.
- Runny eyes.
- Eagerly going to food, but then acting unwilling to actually take it into the mouth.

- Gradual (or sudden) change in dietary habits (e.g., refusing to eat pellets, but happy to eat hay – or the other way around!)

- Unusual eating habits, such as a willingness to eat only one or two food items, and rejecting other types.

- Excessive drinking (this also can be a sign of renal disease, but rabbits with sore mouths will sometimes drink constantly in an attempt to soothe the soreness).

If your bunny is showing any of the above signs, then it's time to get him/her to a veterinarian who is very familiar with rabbit dental disease. If your bunny does turn out to have dental problems, you'll be amazed at his relief once the teeth are properly filed and in the right shape. Make a dental checkup a regular part of your bunny's well-bun exam!



Kyle has classic genetic megacolon markings

Vera, while spotted, has too much coloration for genetic megacolon

Recognizing and Managing Megacolon in Rabbits

What is Megacolon (MC)?

MC is a genetic digestive condition that affects the function of a rabbit's gastrointestinal (GI) tract in rabbits with certain genes. The condition is progressive and each rabbit may be affected differently, showing varying degrees of symptoms at different life stages. Rarely, rabbits may develop MC from trauma, surgery, or injury ("acquired MC").

So what does this mean for an MC rabbit?

These bunnies are predisposed to gut problems and have trouble absorbing essential nutrients from food. While some may remain healthy for the first few years of their lives, others will show symptoms from birth. Many MC rabbits will show worsening symptoms around the age of 3-5 years. Detecting and treating the condition at the onset of symptoms and as early in their lives as possible is essential to keeping them happy and healthy. However, humane euthanasia in severe cases may be recommended.

One of the most common ailments that affects MC rabbits is impaction of the gut due to slow motility. If left untreated, the colon can become severely distended and painful for the rabbit. These slowdowns can lead to serious gut infections and death. At some point in most MC rabbits' lives, daily oral medications will be necessary. This can include medications for managing pain, motility, and/or softening stool.

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How do you know if you have an MC rabbit?

There are currently no tests that can diagnose MC. Instead, we look at coat coloration, fecal/cecal output, and ruling out other conditions that may present similar symptoms. Typically, genetic MC rabbits are mostly white with some spotting around the eyes, nose, ears, and spine. Not every rabbit with this coloration will have this condition.

A healthy rabbit's fecals are consistently spherical with little to no varying in size/shape, they are not overly small or large for the rabbit's size, and aren't too dry or too wet in consistency. You may have a megacolon rabbit if his typical fecal output is very large, misshapen, or varies in size. Sometimes fecals are overly dry, or conversely, they can be overly moist.



Cecotropes of a healthy rabbit come in shiny clusters that resemble the size, shape, and lustre of a blackberry. The cecotropes of an MC rabbit are overly large, and can be sausage-like in shape, and/or shiny in appearance and resemble tar.

Additional symptoms of MC: gut leakage, poor body condition with muscle wasting around the spine, potbelly, staining around the tail and back paws, weight loss with a voracious appetite.

Cecotropes from a non-megacolon rabbit in relation to the size of a pinkie finger.



Cecotropes from a megacolon rabbit in relation to the size of a pinkie finger.



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How can you best support your Megacolon (MC) rabbit?

Believe it or not, many veterinarians do not yet acknowledge MC as a condition in rabbits. Therefore, it is important to find a rabbit-savvy veterinarian who believes that megacolon exists in rabbits, or one who is willing to learn from vets who do. Once you have found a trusted veterinarian, work on a diet and in some cases, a medication plan, to keep your rabbit's MC symptoms as mild as possible. Each MC rabbit is different, so a diet and medication plan for one MC bunny may not work for another. Once you find a diet that works, stick to it! Only make modifications as needed. Take your MC rabbit for wellness exams 2x a year and bring along a sample of their fecal output which will help your veterinarian assess how they are doing.

Get to know the subtle signs before a serious GI crisis arises. Often, an MC rabbit's gut will begin to slow down and become backed up but the rabbit will continue to eat voraciously, and your first sign may be a decrease in fecal production. They may also show a decrease in appetite but won't refuse their favorite treats. It can be tough to notice the early stages of an episode, but the better you know your rabbit, the clearer it will be. Talk to your vet about what to do when you notice these early signs so you can hopefully prevent a major crisis from happening.

Signs that may point to a GI Slowdown in an MC rabbit:

- Fewer or no fecals produced
- Decrease in appetite or disinterest in foods they normally enjoy
- Behavioral changes
- Body posturing: belly pressing, hunched look
- Change in fecals from their "normal"
- Distended abdomen that feels hard to the gentle touch

MC-friendly treats:

The Well Kept Rabbit:

Delilah's Megacolon Tonic Forage, Delilah's Megacolon Tablets

www.thewellkeptrabbit.com

Pre & Probiotics:

(May be useful to maintain a balance of bacteria in the gut. Please note it's use and results are anecdotal.)

- Protexin: Pro-fibre for Rabbits, Fibreplex
- Probios: for horses



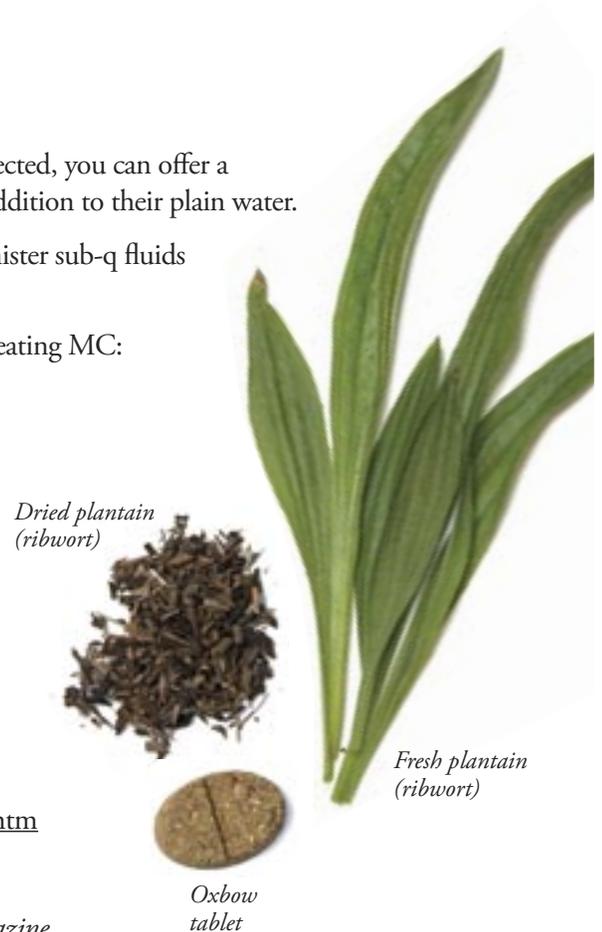
Probios chewable

Delilah's Megacolon tonic forage

(Continued on page 21)

Tips:

- Avoid fresh or dried fruit and other sugary treats.
- Introduce new foods slowly and one at a time so you can observe what helps or worsens symptoms.
- Feel (palpate) your rabbit along its spine regularly and note any changes. If the spine feels thin, contact your rabbit-savvy veterinarian to reassess their diet.
- When it comes to greens, feed herbs such as parsley, dill, mint, oregano, thyme, basil, rosemary, lavender, sage, cilantro. Avoid kale, lettuces, spinach, etc.
 - Introduce greens one at a time each week. Discontinue any that cause soft stool.
 - Some MC rabbits have a “dry gut” and will do better with very wet greens as it will add hydration to the gut. Others have a “wet gut,” and may or may not be able to tolerate greens at all.
- Offer fresh or dried Plantain (a plant also known as “ribwort,” and not the banana). Plantain is a great motility aid for rabbits. You can purchase dried from sources such as Small Pet Select, or Elliot’s Awesome Treats (on Facebook). Fresh is easy to grow from seed in a window sill.
- Make sure they get plenty of exercise time. Exercise promotes better motility.
- Keep them well hydrated:
 - Offer water in a bowl rather than a bottle.
 - If your MC rabbit tolerates fresh greens, serve them wet.
 - For increased hydration when early signs of a GI slowdown are suspected, you can offer a 50/50 mix of water and plain (unflavored) green coconut water in addition to their plain water.
 - You may ask your veterinarian to teach you when and how to administer sub-q fluids at home in the event of a GI crisis.
- It has been reported that the following supplements may be helpful for treating MC:
 - Oxbow Vitamin C tablets may aid in gut motility.
 - Oxbow Digestive Support tablets may be helpful in MC rabbits that have a dry gut.
 - Daily Vetri DMG can be offered for immune system support.



References & further learning:

<http://www.vgr1.com/mc/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbSrsXeSMNY>

http://www.medirabbit.com/EN/GI_diseases/Differential/mega_differential.htm

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0093750>

Dani Tomlin (2017). Megacolon In The Domestic Rabbit. *Bunny Mad! Magazine*

<http://www.pva-apeldoorn.nl/megacolon%20konijnen.pdf>

Genetic Megacolon Bunnies on Facebook: A private, invite-only group for Genetic MC bunny owners only. If you have an MC rabbit, you may email katie@longislandrabbitrescue.org to be introduced to the group admin to be invited.

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Adoptable Rabbits

There are lots of adoptable rabbits available in Manhattan, Queens, 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 Queens Animal Care Center at 1906 Flushing Ave. in Ridgewood..

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Queens 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



Milly.

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 SEPTEMBER 2025

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

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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.

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. 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
Davia Kot, 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
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2056 Jericho Turnpike
New Hyde Park
(516) 877-7080
catnipandcarrots.com

Meredith Davis, DVM, MS
Island Exotic Veterinary Care
591 East Jericho Turnpike
Huntington, NY
(631) 424-0300
islandexoticvet.com

Long Island (continued):

Perri Wiggin, DVM
Long Island Veterinary Specialists
163 S Service Rd.
Plainview, NY 11803
(516) 501-1700
livs.org

Ellen Leonhardt, DVM
Animal General of East Norwich
6320 Northern Blvd.
East Norwich, NY 11732
(516) 624-7500
vcahospitals.com/animal-general-east-norwich

Marilyn Olds, DVM
Rocky Point Animal Hospital
526A Route 25A
Rocky Point, NY 11778
(631) 849-8638
rockypointanimalhospital.com

Brian Rose, DVM
Jeff Rose, DVM
Jefferson Animal Hospital
606 NY-112
Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776
(631) 473-0415
portjeffersonanimalhospital.com

FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY
If your rabbit is a client of Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital, they have explicit instruction to call the vet.
Veterinary Emergency Group
204 B Glen Cove Road
Carle Place, NY 11514
(516) 693-8859
veterinaryemergencygroup.com

Licensed HRS Educators

NYC/Westchester:

Alex McIe
Chapter Manager,
NYC House Rabbit Society
alexlmcie@gmail.com

M.C. Basile

Mary Cotter
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