

# THE HUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS MARCH 2026

## Easter: From a Rabbit's Perspective

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

For a rabbit, Easter time can be one of the most dangerous times of the year.

Each spring, baby rabbits are purchased on impulse as holiday gifts. Too often, families are told that rabbits are “low maintenance, happy to live outdoors in a hutch, inexpensive to care for, good pets for children, and naturally cuddly.” None of this is true.

Rabbits are prey animals. They feel safest with all four feet on the ground and can be seriously injured by improper handling. Most do not enjoy being held or carried. They frighten easily, and a child's normal exuberance can be overwhelming and stressful. When frightened, rabbits can and will bite; it is a fear response, not aggression.

They are also far more complex to care for than many people realize:

- They must live indoors with ample space to run and exercise.
- They require spaying or neutering.
- They need annual vaccinations for Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2.

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



**Learn about Magic and her eight babies. (See the article on page 9.)**

- Their care must be provided by an experienced rabbit veterinarian, and treatment can be expensive.
- They are crepuscular, most active at dawn and dusk, meaning they often sleep when children are awake.

- Their diet is highly specific and includes unlimited fresh grass hay daily.
- They cannot be “trained” out of natural behaviors such as chewing and digging.
- They require significant daily human interaction.

*(Continued on page 2)*

The World's Most Popular Rabbit

Page 4

Ways to Help Bunnies With Arthritis

Page 5

Truman and the Slipcover Scandal

Page 7

## Easter

*(Continued from page 1)*

- Their life expectancy is typically 8 to 12 years.
- They are very fragile. They can easily be injured and are prone to frequent and long-term health issues.
- Veterinary care can be prohibitively expensive for people who are not financially committed.
- The same mindset that is used for dogs and cats cannot be used with rabbits. A proper interpretation of their behavior – understanding their physiology and psychology – requires a “rewiring” of the human psyche. It is dangerous for people to assume that anything rabbits do or feel is similar to the behavior of cats and dogs.

While the 2024 pet-store ban will prevent rabbits from being sold in New York State this Easter, it is still legal to sell rabbits in retail shops in Connecticut, New Jersey Pennsylvania and most other states in the country.

Pet stores often sell baby rabbits sourced from rabbit mills, operations comparable to puppy mills in terms of overcrowding, poor sanitation and cruelty. Many of these babies die within weeks. Those who survive may suffer from chronic health issues.

Rabbit breeders are still allowed to operate in New York State and every other state. As we’ve previously noted, many people have turned to breeders, largely because of the massive numbers of cute rabbit accounts on social media. We recently came across a New Jersey Lop breeder account with 1.5 million followers, across platforms, and we felt an immense sense of defeat.

Because of the cruel practice of selective breeding, Lops are plagued with a plethora of congenital health issues. (We are referencing Lops, but, the same situation applies to many other breeds.) While these rabbits suffer, the breeders are becoming wealthy, selling a baby Lop for over \$1,000.

---

# SETTING YOUR PET RABBIT LOOSE DOESN'T MAKE HER "FREE!"



# IT MAKES HER "FOOD!"

---

photo ©Mary E. Cotter, 2002

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. Please, before getting a bunny - or abandoning one - visit [rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://rabbitrescueandrehab.org).

Breeders are not experts in rabbit care. They know little, if anything, about proper care. When selling an (underage) innocent baby, they give incorrect or no information to the purchaser. Regrettably, the mortality statistics for breeder babies is no different than pet-store babies.

When the novelty fades, the rabbit grows older and hormonal, allergies develop, time becomes scarce, behavioral or medical issues arise, and families often seek to surrender the animal. Unfortunately, most shelters do not

accept rabbits. Many rabbits become neglected or are released outdoors.

This is especially tragic because domestic rabbits are not the same as the wild eastern cottontail. Domestic rabbits lack survival instincts. Releasing one outside does not “make it free.” It turns the animal into prey. It is no different than releasing a tiny white dog onto a busy street or into the woods.

Rescue organizations are overwhelmed every year after Easter. Hundreds –

*(Continued on page 3)*

## More Photos of Kit, Our Masthead Bunny

(Continued from page 1)

Photos: Katie Scarr



Kit with a toy.



Relaxing in her tunnel.

## Easter

(Continued from page 2)

sometimes thousands – of rabbits in the tri-state area alone become unwanted within months of the holiday. Many will not live to see their first birthday because of misinformation and lack of preparation by purchasers.

The most compassionate choice this Easter is simple: Give children stuffed rabbits, books, candy or other holiday gifts; not live animals. Rabbits are best suited for informed adults or families with older children who are able to understand and obey rules.

An Easter surprise should bring joy, not a lifetime of unintended consequences for a fragile, misunderstood animal. Hopefully someday people will stop thinking of these special, complex souls as storybook characters. Please continue to educate others in person and on social media. We must all use our power to prevent suffering and save lives.



### My name is Paddington 🌸

I was a baby in this photo but today I am a 9-pound rabbit! Baby rabbits will not stay small forever, and many baby “Easter rabbits” will never make it to their first birthday. They end up abandoned to overcrowded shelters or are left to die outside once the reality of a lifetime commitment sets in.

Babies will grow into adult rabbits that have special care needs and live for 10+ years.

Rabbits require a spacious indoor home and vet care from a rabbit-savvy vet. They are fragile and do not like to be picked up, so rabbits are seldom suitable for children and absolutely never as a “starter pet.”

 **I am a lifetime commitment, even when I am no longer little!**



 **RABBIT RESCUE & REHAB**

[Rabbit Rescue & Rehab](http://RabbitRescue&Rehab.com)  
[nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

# What's Up, Doc?

By Robert Kulka

We are all familiar with the ubiquitous Bugs Bunny. Over the years many of us have enjoyed his antics in comic books, cartoons, movies, storybooks and art. We probably never thought, however, about the origins of Bugs himself or the interesting facts behind his popularity.

Bugs was born in the 1930s. Cartoon historians, however, say his ancestry goes further back. Like jazz and rock 'n' roll, Bugs has at least some of his roots in black culture. One of the first slick rabbits was Zomo, a trickster folk rabbit from Central and Eastern Africa. Zomo gained audience sympathy by being smaller than his oppressors and turning the tables on them through cleverness, long before he was invented as the wise-cracking Bugs Bunny. Zomo is a con artist, a masquerader, ruthless and suave, in control of the situation. He was known to specialize in impersonating women.

Jumping ahead in time, Bugs borrowed traits from other well-known personalities. Max Hare (Disney, 1934-1936) was an overconfident, athletic character who was often cited as the design precursor to Bugs Bunny (Warner Bros., 1940). Bugs perfected the smart-aleck archetype. Where Max was persistent, Bugs dominates opponents with wit, making him a more enduring, influential and chaotic pop-culture icon. It also seems that Bugs "stole" gags from silent-film comedians such as Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin. One example of a Chaplin move is the abrupt and shocking kiss Charlie plants on someone who's getting too close for comfort. It became one of the favorite ways for Bugs to upset his adversaries.

Where did his carrot-crunching and "What's up, Doc?" signature bits come from? Once again it is not certain, but experts have suggested they might have



been inspired by a couple of popular films during the development of Bugs. In Frank Capra's 1934 Oscar-winning comedy, "It Happened One Night," Clark Gable nervously munches on carrots. In the classic 1936 screwball comedy "My Man Godfrey," William Powell uses the line, "What's up, Doc?" repeatedly. Mel Blanc, the voice of Bugs, claims that he ad-libbed the line. Blanc said that recording the "What's up, Doc?" line turned out to be the most physically challenging part of doing the voice. "What's up, Doc?" was incomplete without the sound of the rabbit nibbling on the carrot. Along with not being fond of raw carrots, Blanc said it was impossible to chew, swallow, and be ready to say my next line. The solution was to stop recording so that Blanc could spit out the carrot into a wastebasket and then proceed with the script. Bugs Bunny did for carrots what Popeye did for spinach, convincing children to eat their vegetables.

Since 1939, Bugs Bunny has starred in more than 175 films. He has been nominated for three Oscars, and won one in 1958, for "Knighty Knight Bugs" (with Yosemite Sam). Every year from 1945 to 1961, he was voted "top animated character" by movie theater

owners (when they still showed cartoons in theaters). In 1985 he became only the second cartoon character to be given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (Mickey Mouse was the first). For almost 30 years, starting in 1960, he had one of the top-rated shows on Saturday morning TV. Really interesting is that in 1976, when researchers polled Americans on their favorite characters, real and imaginary, Bugs came in second behind Abraham Lincoln. Bugs Bunny became so popular with the public that he got laughs even when he didn't deserve them. "He could do no wrong," remembers dialog writer Michael Maltese.

Bugs Bunny has also reflected the mores and events of each generation interpreted through various political lenses. Bugs Bunny cartoons during the 1940s often reflected American propaganda, showcasing the "Bugs Bunny way of war" – a slow-to-start, but overwhelming, response when provoked, representing a "total victory" mindset. Scholars have noted that several cartoons featuring Bugs in the Middle East or North Africa normalized negative, orientalist stereotypes of Arab/Muslim men as violent or lazy. Culturally Bugs Bunny's enduring, subversive "wascally wabbit" character often acts as a trickster figure, representing defiance against authority figures like Elmer Fudd or Yosemite Sam. Reflecting his popularity, in a 2017 Alabama special election, Bugs Bunny was among the fictional characters (including Mickey Mouse and SpongeBob) to receive write-in votes.

Bugs Bunny is the world's most popular rabbit. And when you think about it, he really does reflect many of the characteristics we have come to know about our own clever rabbit companions. And that's "what's up!"

## Managing Arthritis for My Bunnies

By Megan Hilands

According to our rabbit-savvy veterinarian, my bonded pair, Simba and Nala, have officially entered their senior era. Simba and Nala turn 12 in July, and this past January their vet confirmed that while they are in excellent health for their age, it is time to start daily medication to manage their arthritis. Here's what we have done to help our girls stay as mobile and healthy as possible in their golden years.

### Early measures

Simba and Nala's annual visit about a year ago at age 10 and a half was (luckily) the first time they had exhibited real signs of aging. At the time, both girls had started to lose weight due to decreased muscle mass. (The vet ran tests to confirm the weight loss was not the result of something more serious.) They also had some level of build-up of wax in one of their ears but not the other, indicating they were beginning to have trouble reaching their ears to clean the wax themselves. Both buns were hopping well and did not seem to have trouble getting around, but the vet recommended we purchase a lower litter box and consider supplementing with rabbit glucosamine chondroitin tablets. We left the visit with a sample of glucosamine but neither Simba nor Nala could be enticed to take it regularly. Even trying to mix it with their pellets or a treat failed, but some bunnies are apparently less picky.

Throughout the year, Simba and Nala remained relatively healthy. I noticed Simba, in particular, became a little less adventurous and stuck closer to the home base of her X-pen, but she and Nala still otherwise behaved like healthy and happy bunnies. Nala even had no issues jumping on the couch – take that, arthritis!

### Time for prescriptions

This year when Simba and Nala turned 11 and a half, the vet confirmed their arthritis has gotten a little worse and recommended we start them on a low dose of daily Metacam. Simba's ear wax buildup was a bit worse than the previous visit and was now in both ears. Simba also seemed a little more hesitant in her hops, and both girls again lost a small amount of weight. Otherwise, though, the girls' blood work looked great and they are in excellent shape for their age.

Still, I felt a little nervous about just the idea of giving Simba and Nala daily medication. Any time I have ever needed to give them simethicone and Metacam for gas was at best an exercise in frustration. How was I going to manage doing that every day?

Fortunately, I took some inspiration from Mary Poppins and with the vet's approval I gave the buns their own spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down. Simba and Nala love apples, so each evening for their nightly treat I

take a small slice of apple, carefully cut out a small insert, and add the Metacam to the apple before reassembling and serving it to the buns. This method has been incredibly successful, and Simba and Nala express no hesitation whatsoever in taking their medicine this way. If I am late with the apple, they start periscoping and staring at me. Better yet, they actually seem to like the taste of Metacam. One night Simba spilled a

*(Continued on page 8)*

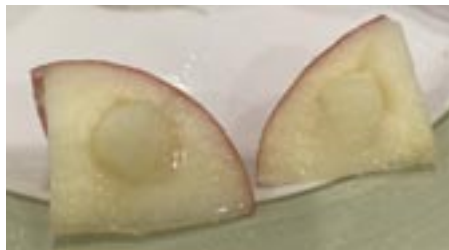


Nala enjoys her nightly treat with medicine.

Photos: Megan Hilands



Step 1: Cut the apple slices and insert Metacam.



Step 2: Reassemble the apple and serve.



Even my picky bunny Simba loves her apple and Metacam.

## Spaying and Neutering

An unspayed female rabbit has an 80% chance of developing uterine cancer. Spaying and neutering are safe procedures when performed by an experienced rabbit-savvy veterinarian. Rabbits can be fixed beginning at 4 to 6 months old.

Every year in the U.S., an estimated six million to eight million homeless animals enter animal shelters. By spaying or neutering your rabbit, you can help give shelter rabbits a better chance at finding a home as well as help decrease the number of rabbits entering shelters each year.

For more information, go to the [May 2025](#) issue of Thump, pages 17-18.

## Rabbits Can Fly

Alaska Airlines said it has reversed a mid-2025 [policy change](#) and is once again allowing rabbits to travel in the passenger cabin. The updated policy applies to flights within the continental U.S. and Alaska. Rabbits still aren't accepted for international itineraries.

The airline brought the option back in January. Rabbits must ride in a carrier that fits under the seat. You need to reserve space and pay the airline's in-cabin pet fee. Alaska says pet travel fees range from \$100 to \$200 each way depending on route and type of travel.

For more information call Alaska Air reservations at 1-800-252-7522.



## Understanding the Pandemic's Impact On Shelter Rabbits

By House Rabbit Society

There is a newly published, open-access [research paper](#) available: "Sheltering Domestic Rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) in Canada and the USA during the Covid-19 Pandemic and RHDV2 Emergence: A Cross-Sectional Mixed-Methods Survey of Intake, Care, and Management (2017–2022)."

The paper was written by Carol Tinga, a postdoctoral scholar at the Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph.

This is one of several papers based on data from a 2022 study that is part of a growing body of research aimed at improving the lives of domestic rabbits.

The paper explores how rabbit rescue groups and animal shelters in the U.S. and Canada navigated the dual challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergence of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type 2.

The study examines changes in rabbit intake, care practices, resource strain, and overall shelter management during this period. The findings highlight the significant pressures many organizations faced, often forcing them to limit intakes while working with fewer resources.



Shelter bunnies.

The paper also offers recommendations for the future, including stronger emergency planning, expanded foster programs, and deeper community partnerships to help safeguard rabbit welfare in times of crisis.

## 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](mailto:NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

# The Great Slipcover Scandal

By Samantha Rowan

A few weeks back, we were in one of those situations peculiar to people who live in New York in which our building was getting new washers and dryers, and we had to find and use up the balance on the various laundry cards we'd acquired over a roughly 10-year period.

We keep a clean, albeit often hay-strewn apartment, but there are certain tasks that just don't get done as often as they should, such as washing the slipcovers on the sofa and armchair. The sofa and armchair get a lot of brushing in a daily, almost futile attempt to remove the fur our rescue bunny Truman leaves on the cushions, but it's rare that we pull the slipcovers off for a full clean.

I'm pretty sure the day we did this will loom large in Truman's memory.

From Truman's perspective, the day started out the same as his days do. Kibble, fresh hay and water, and a long game of nose pats and tag. He retreated under the sofa and did whatever it is he does under there and we started unzipping the slipcovers.

It took about a tenth of a second for Truman to figure out that we were messing with the couch and that the cushions – all of the cushions – were now in a messy pile on the floor. As he inspected them, we inspected the rip he'd made in the fabric on the bottom of the couch. The cushions had hidden it before.

"When did you do that?" I asked Truman.

By that point, Truman was back under the couch and staring at me near the small rip. His eyes showed extreme displeasure.

"I know you're upset but maybe think about our feelings. You ripped a hole in the sofa!"

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Truman inspects the sofa.

As is always the case with pets, Truman showed no regrets for what he did. He snuffled around, thumped a few times and then lay down for his first nap of the morning. I have to admit it was very cute and anyway the sofa is old and probably had it coming anyway.

The incident has reminded us to be vigilant when it comes to any ripping, chewing and gnawing because of the dangers posed to a rabbit's GI system. We'll pay closer attention now when Truman disappears behind or under a piece of furniture.

I'd like to say that Truman had a nice, uneventful day after that but the drama around the slipcovers seriously disturbed his rest. My morning was accompanied by lots of thumps and baleful glances

that continued even after the slipcovers were clean and the couch was reassembled. I don't think he got more than four hours of sleep that day!

The drama continued that night, when Truman jumped up on the sofa and the armchair and left his scent (and fur) on it and even into the next day, when he disappeared after breakfast with another angry thump.

The good news is that it's going to be a long while before we get the urge to clean the slipcovers again (I swear our apartment is actually clean and tidy, apart from the hay and puffballs of fur.). The bad news is that when we do, Truman will have had a long time to think about how to exact his revenge.

## Arthritis

*(Continued from page 5)*

small amount of Metacam on the floor but then eagerly licked it up.

Simba and Nala's neighbor, Charlie, also receives a small slice of apple, but as he's only 5 he does not get Metacam (and hopefully won't need it for quite some time).

Metacam always should be prescribed by a veterinarian who can determine the proper dosage. Vets typically monitor rabbits for any side effects, and for any signs of kidney issues.

### The effect of medication

After Nala had been on Metacam a few weeks, we noticed a significant shift in her activity level. I've seen her sprint and explore her surroundings much more, which warms my heart and makes me grateful that we are able to get such great rabbit-savvy vet care for Nala and Simba as they age. With Simba, the shift

has not been as significant but she has honestly always been a bit of a homebody. Both bunnies eat, flop, and cuddle to their hearts' content and must feel some

---

A note from RRR: We have all been there: using every fruit, jam, syrup, etc., known to mankind in an attempt to "hide" medication for our rabbits. The goal is to ALWAYS use the smallest amount of fruit, etc., that is necessary to get the job done. The sugar can complicate matters by causing GI upset, excess cecal production (with subsequent "poopy butt"), imbalance in the delicate gut microbiome, etc. Unfortunately, some medications taste so foul that you have no choice but to make them palatable. Luckily, most rabbits happen to love Metacam and think that IT is the treat! It appears that Simba and Nala may have joined the Metacam-loving crowd. When this is apparent, it is best to ditch the fruit, jam, etc.,

arthritis relief from the Metacam. I remain hopeful that even at an older age we have many happy hops ahead!

altogether and give the Metacam on its own. Some rabbits enjoy drinking it straight from the syringe, and some prefer it dosed onto a nonabsorbent plate. We wish our best to precious Simba and Nala and all of the bunnies dealing with age-related maladies.



RRR has been using and recommending this low-sided "litter box" for years. We suggest giving your rabbits this box before they show obvious signs of arthritis or other degenerative issues.

For this year's Easter basket,



Choose Me                      Not Me



## Some Bunny to Love: Tales From Our Foster Families

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

A few months after Christmas and shortly after Easter, without fail, we see an uptick in abandoned rabbits across Long Island. Perhaps the blizzard will shift the timing this year, but we must prepare. The local community has been incredibly generous with monetary donations and support on social media. We currently have a great need for foster families.

Foster families are the foundation of [LIRRG](#). The organization would not run without those who welcome a rabbit into their homes, whether it be for a month, three months, or much longer.

In addition to the anticipated abandoned rabbits, we have nine very special rabbits for whom we are seeking placement in the upcoming months – a mama bun named Magic and eight babies, born right around Christmas 2025. The babies – seven boys and a girl – need individual foster homes as they mature and grow. They will be ready for adoption later in the spring.

We'd love to share more with you about the babies and see if fostering or adoption is right for you. Please email [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](mailto:information@longislandrabbitrescue.org) for more details and super cute baby bunny videos!

Because of our incredible foster families, we saved 31 rabbits and found forever homes for 55 rabbits in 2025. We'd love to welcome many more foster families this year. We provide all supplies and medical care; you provide the indoor space and the love.

If you would like to apply to foster, please use this [link](#).

Some of our past and current foster families shared stories about their experience fostering for LIRRG. Here are their tales:

“Honestly, fostering was amazing. We were lucky enough to watch Eden while her foster family was away. We fell in

love with her immediately and we are so thrilled she has found her forever home.”  
– Jennifer B.

“I guess you could say I love fostering these precious babies. The 10 that I have fostered all had different personalities. I loved them all. This group has always given me help and support. Even though I couldn't resist buying special toys and treats, the rescue supplied pens, food, hay, food bowls, toys and any other things the fosters needed. It was so rewarding that in some small way I was able to give love (not hard to do) and care to these special buns until they found their forever homes. I recommend it very highly.”  
– Karen R.

“I truly believe that fostering a rabbit or two is one of the most compassionate and selfless acts a human being can do. You are providing a safe haven for these precious animals by keeping them off the streets and out of the cold. It feels amazing to be a part of this mission. Please consider fostering with LIRRG and help save a life!”  
– Susanne L.

“Fostering is a beautiful way to help save an innocent bun and help it realize there is love in the world. It's also a great way to see if being a permanent bunny parent is right for you!”  
– Lisa N.

For more information on this opportunity, please visit this [site](#).

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Four of Magic's eight babies.



**“Honestly, fostering was amazing.”**  
*-Jennifer B.*

**LOCAL FOSTER HOMES NEEDED**

**[LIRRG.org/Foster](https://LIRRG.org/Foster)**

## Forever Homes Found!



Josephine (on the right).

We are happy to report that Josephine, Poe, Linda and Leona were adopted since the last newsletter.



Linda.



Leona (on the right).



Poe.

## Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

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

### Dove

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

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

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

### Pink

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

### Skye

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



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](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

*(Continued on page 13)*

## ADOPTIONS

### RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

*(Continued from page 12)*

#### Indigo

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

#### Lucy

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

#### Carmela

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



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](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

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

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

### Ro

Ro is a very friendly and playful bunny with a joyful, affectionate personality. Once she feels comfortable around you, she truly shines – she'll happily flop down like a little pancake right at your feet, a sure sign of a relaxed and happy bun. Ro enjoys attention and will gladly accept head scratches and gentle pets. Her easygoing nature and playful curiosity make her a delightful companion, whether she's exploring her space or lounging nearby soaking up affection. If you're looking for a bunny who warms up into a loving, interactive friend, Ro may be the perfect match for you.

### Sal

Sal is a sweet bunny who easily becomes comfortable with gentle humans. He enjoys exploring and snuggling in for endless head pets. His left eye has some scarring and a laceration to his lid from past trauma – it's healed and not painful, but he will need eye lube in that eye once daily for the foreseeable future.

### Kip

Kip's story started with a little adventure. He was spotted by a kind local resident while she was walking her dog, and she quickly reached out for help to rescue him. By the time our volunteer arrived, Kip was already safely tucked into a cardboard box thanks to the quick thinking and kindness of a delivery driver. From the very beginning, this little guy

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Ro.



Sal.

has had people looking out for him! Kip is as striking as he is spirited, with beautiful blue eyes that will absolutely



Kip.

melt your heart. He's adventurous and curious, always ready to explore his surroundings and see what's around the next corner. He's a brave boy who isn't afraid to take a few (safe) risks in the name of fun. He's also a certified snack enthusiast – a big food lover who believes treats are one of life's greatest joys. When he's not investigating or zooming around, you'll likely find him eagerly awaiting his next tasty bite.

Playful, bold, and full of personality, Kip is looking for a loving home where his adventurous spirit and big appetite for life (and snacks!) will be cherished. If you're ready for a fun, curious companion with stunning blue eyes, Kip just might be your perfect match.

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

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



Bundrop.



Tamagotchi.



Buffy.



Sugar Bunny.



Mummy.



Santana.

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



Evee.



Lola Bunny.



Lindsey.



Nutella.



Cottontail.

I  
am  
**NOT**  
a  
toy  
for  
Easter



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

## What Should I Feed My Bunny?

By Dana Krempels

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

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

### Hay!

Perhaps the single most important item in the rabbit diet is grass HAY, and it should be fed in unlimited quantities to both adults and baby rabbits. A rabbit fed only commercial rabbit pellets does not get enough long fiber to keep the intestines in good working order. The long fibers in the hay push things through the gut and keep the intestinal muscles in good tone. In addition to keeping the intestinal contents moving at the rate at which nature intended, hay may also help prevent intestinal impactions caused by ingested hair or other indigestible items. (For more information on problems associated with slowed intestinal function, please see <http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/ileus.html>)

Alfalfa or clover hays, although tasty for the rabbit, are too rich in protein and



Greyson eating first-cut Timothy hay.

calcium to be fed ad libitum. Instead, offer fresh grass hays such as Timothy, oat, coastal, brome, Bahia or wheat. If you can't find good quality hay locally, you may wish to mail-order hay from Oxbow Animal Health, American Pet Diner or other suppliers. The coarser "first cut" Timothy hay is higher in fiber than the softer, more fragrant "second cut." Some rabbits who refuse to eat the (putatively healthier) high-fiber first cut will often eagerly accept second cut hay. Less fiber is better than none at all!

### Pellets

A high-quality commercial rabbit pellet provides trace nutrients, vitamins and minerals that a rabbit might not get if fed only hay and fresh foods. However, very little pelleted food is required for good health. Many experienced rabbit veterinarians are now recommending no more than 1/4 cup of quality pellets per five pounds of rabbit per day, and some even consider commercial pellets a

*(Continued on page 19)*

## What Should I Feed?

*(Continued from page 18)*

“treat food” that can promote obesity in spayed/neutered adult rabbits. A rabbit fed too many pellets will sometimes ignore hay, to the detriment of the intestinal system!

A good quality rabbit pellet DOES NOT contain dried fruit, seeds, nuts, colored crunchy things or other things



Olivia.

that are attractive to our human eyes, but very unhealthy to a rabbit. Rabbits are strict herbivores, and in nature they rarely get fruit, nuts or other such fatty, starchy foods. The complex flora of the cecum can quickly become dangerously imbalanced if too much simple, digestible carbohydrate is consumed – especially if the diet is generally low in fiber. The result is often “poopy butt syndrome,” in which mushy fecal matter cakes onto the rabbit’s behind. This a sign of cecal dysbiosis, which can foment much more serious health problems.

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

calories and lower in fiber than Timothy-based pellets.

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

The wise “bunny parent” will begin to gradually taper the quantity of pellets once the rabbit is about eight to twelve months old, and feed no more than 1/4 cup per day for every five pounds of rabbit (you can give a little bit more if the pellets are Timothy-based). Some rabbit caregivers complain that their rabbits won’t eat their hay. If the problem is not medical in nature (e.g., molar spurs and other dental problems are a common problem responsible for “picky eating”), then it may be that the rabbit is eating too many pellets, isn’t hungry, and so doesn’t eat the hay so vital to his/her health. Take the tough love approach! Cut back the pellets until you are sure your rabbit is eating enough hay.

## Fresh Vegetables

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

Fresh, moist greens are about as important as hay in maintaining a healthy intestine. Try broccoli, dark leaf lettuces, kale, parsley, carrot tops, endive, escarole, dill, basil, mint, cilantro, spinach. Almost any green, leafy vegetable that’s good for



Sugarplum and Pineapple.



Baldwin Harbor Five baby bunnies eating fresh greens.

you (including fresh-grown garden herbs such as tarragon and various mints, with the exception of Pennyroyal) are good for a rabbit. Experiment and see which types your rabbit likes best! Rabbits love fresh, fragrant herbs from the garden.

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

Baby rabbits may start receiving greens very gradually at the age of about two months. Add one item at a time, in small amounts, and if you see no intestinal

*(Continued on page 20)*

## What Should I Feed?

(Continued from page 19)

upset, add another. Carrots, romaine lettuce and kale are good starters. A five-pound adult rabbit should receive at least four heaping cups of fresh, varied (at least three different kinds each day) vegetables per day. Be sure to wash everything thoroughly to remove pesticide and fertilizer residues as much as possible. Even organic produce should be washed well to remove potentially harmful bacteria, such as *E. coli*.

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

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



Vanessa at Petco Union Square.

## Water

The importance of adequate water intake cannot be overstated. A rabbit who does not drink sufficient water will gradually begin to suffer desiccation of the intestinal contents. Skin tenting, a common method used by veterinarians to gauge the state of hydration in many animals, is not a good gauge of hydration in rabbits. It seems that even when the tissues of the rabbit appear to be well

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

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

## Fresh Fruits?

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

## Don't Feed Potentially Harmful 'Treats'

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

NEVER feed your rabbit commercial "gourmet" or "treat" mixes filled with dried fruit, nuts and seeds. These may be safe for a bird or hamster – BUT THEY ARE NOT PROPER FOOD FOR A RABBIT. The sole function of

"rabbit gourmet treats" is to lighten your wallet. If the manufacturers of "gourmet rabbit treats" truly cared about your rabbit's health and longevity, they would not market such products.

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

## A Special Note About Corn and Other Seeds

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

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

---

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

## 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](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

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

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the 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](mailto:adopt@nycacc.org)). Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

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

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

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

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

Photo: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Five of Magic's litter of eight babies.

## Donations

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

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).

## THUMP MARCH 2026

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS  
[rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://rabbitrescueandrehab.org)

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

Masthead Logo Designer:  
Mary Ann Maier

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

## Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

Here's our recommended vet list for the New York metropolitan area. **Please note that many clinics have multiple veterinarians, and our recommendations are for specific veterinarians in those clinics.** If you can't get an appointment with a recommended vet at one clinic, don't assume (no matter what you are told by the clinic) that other vets in the same clinic can help your rabbit. 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](http://catnipandcarrots.com)

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

### Long Island (continued):

**Perri Wiggin, DVM**  
Long Island Veterinary Specialists  
163 S Service Rd.  
Plainview, NY 11803  
(516) 501-1700  
[livs.org](http://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](http://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](http://rockypointanimalhospital.com)

**Brian Rose, DVM**  
**Jeff Rose, DVM**  
Jefferson Animal Hospital  
606 NY-112  
Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776  
(631) 473-0415  
[portjeffersonanimalhospital.com](http://portjeffersonanimalhospital.com)

**Elena Buenrostro, DVM, Registrar**  
(Exotic Companion Mammal)  
VMCLI (Veterinary Medical Center of  
Long Island)  
75 Sunrise Hwy North Service Rd.  
West Islip, NY 11795  
(631) 587-0800  
[vmcli.com](http://vmcli.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](http://veterinaryemergencygroup.com)

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

**Alex McIe**  
Chapter Manager,  
NYC House Rabbit Society  
[alexlmcie@gmail.com](mailto:alexlmcie@gmail.com)

**M.C. Basile**

**Mary Cotter**  
Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,  
[mcotter64@gmail.com](mailto:mcotter64@gmail.com),  
(914) 643-0515

**Jeanine Callace**  
[Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net](mailto:Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net)

**Marcie Frishberg**

**Cindy Stutts**  
[bygolyoly@yahoo.com](mailto:bygolyoly@yahoo.com),  
(646) 319-4766

**Laura George, DVM**

### Long Island:

**Nancy Schreiber**  
President, Long Island Rabbit Rescue  
Group, [nschreibmd@gmail.com](mailto:nschreibmd@gmail.com),  
[LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Mary Ann Maier**  
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group  
Volunteer, [altitude8@yahoo.com](mailto:altitude8@yahoo.com),  
[LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Donna Sheridan**  
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group  
Volunteer, [hpocus217@yahoo.com](mailto:hpocus217@yahoo.com),  
[LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**