

THUMP



NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS MAY 2026

Thump Sounds Off!

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Rabbit 'meetups'

We're seeing a lot of chatter on social media about people organizing "rabbit meetups" – gatherings where people are encouraged to bring their rabbits. These events are being held in homes, businesses, parks, on rooftops and in other public spaces.

Anyone truly committed to a rabbit's well-being understands that taking rabbits to social events is irresponsible. Meetups are not fun for rabbits. Rabbits are creatures of habit and feel safest in the familiar environment of the home they've grown accustomed to.

We've all seen what stress looks like in rabbits: hypervigilance, fear-driven behavior, hiding, tension and shut-down responses.

Stress severely affects rabbits' health. It can lead to digestive shutdown (GI stasis), which is life threatening, alongside severe immune suppression and potential heart failure.

Stress in prey animals can trigger high adrenaline, leading to anorexia, weight loss and behavioral issues such as aggression or extreme fear. Common causes include rapid environmental changes, heat, improper handling and chaotic situations.



Please don't compromise your rabbit's health by subjecting him or her to unnecessary travel, unfamiliar environments, strange humans, and rabbits they do not know. The risks are very real: stress, fighting, accidents and exposure to many communicable or stress-related illnesses.

Let's also never forget that exposure to Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus can come from anywhere. Whether a rabbit is vaccinated or not, every rabbit guardian should be practicing intense biosecurity measures. One of the best ways to protect rabbits is to avoid all unnecessary traveling and exposure to environments or circumstances that carry risk.

Anyone who has ever attempted rabbit bonding understands how stressful it can be for rabbits to be introduced to just ONE unfamiliar rabbit. Imagine

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Bunny Personalities: Some Things Will Never Change

By Megan Hilands

One thing I've really come to respect and appreciate over the years is how consistent my bunnies' reactions are to the same things over and over again. More than a decade ago I brought home my bonded pair of lionhead mix sisters, Simba and Nala. At the time I was still grieving the loss of my previous bun, Baby, the sweetest, most gentle giant bun I've ever met. (He was a 12-pound Californian and just built like a big guy rather than being overweight.) I chose to open my home relatively soon as I knew I had a lot of love to give and bunnies, as always, need homes. But I didn't want to compare my new bunnies to Baby so I purposely chose a pair who seemed a little different: spunky, opinionated Simba and her adventurous sister Nala. Funny enough, both were around 6 pounds so together they were the same size as my Baby.

Bunnies are in some ways remarkably similar to humans (as I'm sure is the same case with many other animals). Over the years of sharing my life with Simba and Nala, I have noticed their

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how overwhelming it is to be surrounded by three, five or 10 strange rabbits in a chaotic setting.

What people often don't talk about are the negative health effects that can appear once the rabbit returns home from events such as these. A rabbit should not have to endure painful gastrointestinal stasis or other stress-related health complications for the sake of a social gathering or photo opportunity.

While there are a few rabbits who tolerate travel and commotion well, they are in a small minority.

If you want to meet up with fellow rabbit parents, please do so. Build community, share stories and enjoy each other's company, but, please, leave the rabbits safely at home.

Health insurance

If you haven't already done so, get health insurance for your rabbit.

Since sharing our New Year's post about pet insurance, we've continued to hear from rabbit guardians who are struggling to afford veterinary care. Emergency and specialty rabbit care can be extremely expensive, and unfortunately, this is not an area where you can shop around for bargains or wait until you've saved enough money. When a rabbit becomes sick, treatment often cannot wait.

It is crucial to insure your rabbit *before* a medical issue develops. Waiting until your rabbit becomes ill may result in claims being denied as pre-existing conditions, and chronic illnesses may not be covered at all.

Having insurance can make the difference between immediate treatment and heart-breaking financial decisions during an emergency.

We strongly encourage rabbit guardians to immediately contact Nationwide Pet Insurance.

Protect your rabbit before there's a crisis, not after.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Gus.

Hydration

Be sure to always keep a close eye on your rabbit's water consumption. Many rabbits are poor drinkers and that can become a big problem. Dehydration, whether mild or severe, can have significant effects on a rabbit's overall health. Even if it does not rise to a serious health issue, mild dehydration can cause substantial discomfort and make your rabbit feel unwell.

Rabbits who do not drink enough water often do not eat enough dry food, especially hay. Reduced water intake combined with lower hay consumption is a major risk factor for gastrointestinal problems, including GI stasis.

You'd be surprised how many rabbits present with signs of stasis – lethargy, refusal to eat, small or dry droppings, belly discomfort, and decreased activity – and improve dramatically after receiving subcutaneous fluids. Proper hydration plays a critical role in maintaining normal digestive function and overall well-being.

Always make sure your rabbit has access to fresh water in a large bowl at all times. If your rabbit spends time in multiple areas of the home, provide several water bowls throughout those spaces.

We also recommend monitoring your rabbit's daily water intake. Measuring how much your rabbits drink over a 24-hour period can help you quickly recognize changes – whether they are

drinking less *or significantly more*, which can also indicate a medical issue.

As a general guideline, a healthy rabbit typically drinks approximately 1–2 ounces of water per pound of body weight a day, though this can vary depending on diet, temperature and individual health.

Tips to encourage better water intake:

- Use a large, heavy ceramic bowl
- Keep the bowl very clean, filled close to the top with fresh water
- Offer multiple water stations around the home
- Try filtered or bottled water
- Consider a pet fountain if your rabbit is comfortable with it
- Serve leafy greens freshly rinsed and very wet
- Place greens on a plate so water collects at the bottom; many rabbits will happily drink the “green juice”

If your rabbit still refuses to drink enough despite your efforts, speak with your veterinarian. In some cases, your vet may recommend or teach you how to administer subcutaneous fluids at home to help maintain hydration safely.

Disposable puppy pads

Once again, we are including on pages 3-4 our article discussing the dangers of disposable puppy pads.

Unfortunately, we continue to see many posts on social media showing disposable puppy pads being used in rabbit areas. These products are not safe for rabbits. Rabbits frequently chew, dig and ingest materials in their environment, and puppy pads can pose major risks including intestinal blockage, chemical exposure, respiratory issues and other medical complications.

If you see someone using puppy pads around a rabbit, please point out the potential dangers and encourage safer alternatives. Education and prevention can help protect rabbits from avoidable injuries and health emergencies.

PUPPY PADS ARE DANGEROUS FOR RABBITS



PUPPY PEE PADS CONTAIN HARMFUL CHEMICALS, PLASTICS, AND ABSORBENT MATERIALS THAT CAN CAUSE LIFE-THREATENING BLOCKAGES, RESPIRATORY ISSUES, AND TOXICITY IN RABBITS. INSTEAD, USE NEWSPAPER, RABBIT-SAFE LITTER, AND HAY FOR A HEALTHY, SAFE LITTER BOX. AVOID PLASTIC LINERS AND CLEAN WITH VINEGAR TO MAINTAIN A RABBIT-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.

PLASTIC INGESTION RISKS



PUPPY PADS ARE MADE OF PLASTIC. INGESTING PLASTIC CAN CAUSE A LIFE-THREATENING INTESTINAL BLOCKAGE

PLEASE AVOID USING PUPPY PEE PADS

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

We're deeply concerned to see so many rabbit guardians still using disposable puppy pee pads. Social media is filled with images and videos showing these pads in rabbit habitats, and we continue to receive photos from individuals seeking advice that feature them as well.

We published an article in Thump (January 2024, page 4) outlining the serious risks these pads pose to rabbits. It's important to repeat this message: The dangers exist regardless of whether your bunny comes into direct contact with the pad.

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Please take this warning seriously and avoid using puppy pee pads for rabbits or any other small animals. We rely on the compassionate rabbit community to help spread awareness and protect the health and well-being of these delicate, beloved companions.

CHEWING HAZARD




JUST BECAUSE YOUR RABBIT HASN'T CHEWED A PUPPY PAD YET, DOESN'T MEAN HE WON'T.

RABBITS WON'T BOTHER WITH A PARTICULAR THING FOR YEARS UNTIL THE TIME COMES THAT THEY DECIDE TO.

YOUR RABBIT IS GOING TO CHEW ON A PUPPY PAD.

SODIUM POLYACRYLATE DANGERS




INSIDE THE PAD IS SODIUM POLYACRYLATE. THIS IS A SUPERABSORBENT POLYMER, CAPABLE OF ABSORBING HUNDREDS OF TIMES ITS OWN MASS IN WATER. IF INGESTED, IT WOULD DRY THE CONTENTS OF YOUR RABBIT'S DIGESTIVE TRACT SO QUICKLY THAT IT WOULD BE LETHAL. IF INHALED, THEY CAN CAUSE AN AIRWAY OBSTRUCTION.

NEUROTOXICITY OF HYDROGEL PRODUCTS




THE HYDROGEL PRODUCTS IN PUPPY PADS CAN INDUCE ACUTE NEUROTOXICITY IN ANIMALS

TOXICITY TO HUMANS AND ENVIRONMENT



SUPERABSORBENT POLYMERS CONTAIN CHEMICALS THAT MAY BE TOXIC TO HUMANS, SUCH AS FORMALDEHYDE, A KNOWN CARCINOGEN, AND OTHER HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.

CHEMICAL INHALATION EFFECTS



PUPPY PADS CONTAIN CHEMICAL ATTRACTANTS DESIGNED TO SIMULATE THE SMELL OF GRASS, AMMONIA, AND PHEROMONES.

INHALING THESE CHEMICALS CAN DAMAGE YOUR RABBIT'S SENSITIVE RESPIRATORY TRACT & LIVER.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SYNTHETIC POLYMERS



SYNTHETIC POLYMERS CAN CAUSE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES THROUGHOUT THE PRODUCTION PROCESS IN ADDITION TO THEIR OBVIOUS OCEAN CONTAMINATION. THEY ARE NONBIODEGRADABLE AND REMAIN IN NATURAL WATERWAYS.

Bunny Personalities

(Continued from page 1)

core personalities have changed very little. Simba has perhaps mellowed a little but still refuses to let Nala eat her morning pellets before she has had a healthy portion. Nala is the same adventurer she has always been, and just last week I found her in our bathroom trying to open our linen closet! Here are some of the many ways Simba and Nala continue to be their shining selves year after year.

Cardboard and paper are cool

While I haven't kept exact tallies of all the toys I've bought Simba and Nala over the years, they must surely number in the hundreds by now! Funny enough, though, Simba and Nala continue to enjoy free toys like boxes and paper bags more than most of what I buy them. On the second day Simba and Nala were in our home, I had Chipotle for lunch and afterwards gave them the paper bag it came in. I watched with extreme amusement as they kept stealing the bag from each other and running around the room with it tucked between their teeth. I thought then, as I still do now, that they sure act like sisters!

A few weeks ago, I again gave Simba and Nala a paper bag as a toy. It had been some time since I last brought home a paper bag, given more and more restaurants and stores don't offer single-use paper bags anymore. I felt pure delight in seeing that they acted in the same way around the paper bag as they did all those years ago. Both bunnies loved the bag and wanted to chew, rip and sit by it. We've since made a point to find more paper bags and bring them home.

She makes her displeasure known

Simba is sweet and affectionate once she gets to know you (which can admittedly take a long time) but she does tend to get miffed and hold a grudge perhaps more than the average bun. A few years ago, my mother was visiting and tripped

Photo: Megan Hillands



Nala and Simba.

near Simba's X-pen, making a loud noise in the process. For the rest of the week, Simba seemed to go out of her way to avoid my mother, only approaching her if Simba knew she had food. Simba also doesn't like change at all. Every time we have moved, Simba has barely left the confines of her X-pen for a few weeks. Just this morning, Simba thumped at me when I put my suitcases near the door in preparation for a work trip – I guess her eyesight is better than I thought!

Knowing that Simba is sensitive, we do our best to keep disruptions to her environment to a minimum. She rewards us by flopping and grinding her teeth almost daily. Simba is truly a happy bunny when she just gets her peace and quiet!

Gets into everything

Nala, on the other hand, seems to thrive in relative chaos. She loves to explore, be it running upstairs or continually trying to break into the cabinets where we store her pellets and treats. We often observe Nala getting into antics in the oddest spaces: binkying behind the

curtains, or standing on the one tiny strip of hardwood on an otherwise carpeted floor. She is a free spirit.

Showing love in her own way

Neither Simba nor Nala is an especially cuddly bun, particularly in comparison to our bun Charlie who practically begs us to pet him multiple times a day. The girls do, however, clearly love and respect us. They have both at times tugged on my hair or clothing in a seeming effort to groom me and always greet me with a friendly nose boop, as long as I'm not overdue with meals, of course. Both bunnies also seem much more relaxed and unguarded when we are around and other humans are not, exhibiting happy bunny behaviors like flops and breathing a little easier when it's just us at home. We wouldn't have it any other way, though, and don't mind keeping a relatively low-key home environment for them.

Here's to Simba and Nala's distinct personalities, and hoping that they will never change.

Cottontail Connections: Tidings From Cottontail Cottage and Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

What Wildlife Rehabbers Wish People Knew Every Spring

By Briggitte Dix

Director, Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab

By the time most people are making coffee in the morning, my phone has usually already rung more times than I can count. Someone found baby bunnies after mowing their lawn. A raccoon has been crying inside a wall for two days after her mother was trapped and relocated. A squirrel nest came down with a tree branch.

Spring is baby season for wildlife rehabbers, and honestly, it can be brutal. People imagine wildlife rehabilitation as cuddling baby animals all day and yes, there are moments like that. A raccoon's tiny hand wrapped around your finger. A baby bunny falling asleep in your hand. Watching animals finally go back to the wild after weeks of caring for them.

But most of the animals coming through our doors are not here because nature failed them. They're here because we did and the hardest part is that most people never meant to hurt them in the first place.

Every spring we get calls about "abandoned" baby rabbits that aren't abandoned at all.



A baby eastern cottontail rabbit receiving treatment at Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab after suffering injuries from a cat attack.



An orphaned baby raccoon receiving care at Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab after her mother was trapped and removed from the property.

Mother rabbits only visit their nests a few times a day, usually around dusk and dawn, because staying away helps avoid predators.

We also get endless calls after raccoons are trapped and removed from attics during baby season. People hear noises overhead and panic. They buy a "humane" trap or hire someone to remove the mother. Then a few days later comes the second phone call, "There are babies crying in the wall." By then they're often dehydrated, starving, covered in fleas, and searching for a mother who isn't coming back.

That's the reality people don't see when wildlife is treated like a nuisance instead of a living animal trying to raise a family. A little awareness goes a long way this time of year.

Before mowing, check your yard for nests. Rabbit nests are often hidden in plain sight under grass and fur. Protect nests instead of removing babies. A laundry basket with small openings cut into the sides can help keep dogs away while still allowing the mother to return at night.

Think twice before trapping wildlife during spring and summer. If there's a

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Author Chloe Dalton Hesitates, Then Rescues a Baby Hare

By Jane O'Wyatt

"I was a city person, but I knew that you just don't go picking up baby animals in the wild." – Chloe Dalton

The author of *Raising Hare* did just that, she told a large, mostly female audience at a Barnes and Noble store in the city earlier this month. Our local celebrity-rabbit-expert Amy Sedaris, who was interviewing Chloe, asked how she decided to rescue an apparently motherless, motionless baby hare whom she found in the English countryside, exposed to February weather and buzzards circling overhead.

Chloe replied that her initial reaction had been "Let nature take its course," but when she saw the leveret again, four or five hours later, she changed her mind; the baby hare still lay in the same spot, still motionless, impossibly small and vulnerable. Were it not for the Covid lockdown, she would have taken the baby hare to a vet or a sanctuary. Instead, she brought the leveret inside, placed her in a shallow, grass-lined box and felt "horrified and stupid for doing the wrong thing." She had absolutely no idea how to take care of this wild creature, so she asked a blunt but "kind" wildlife specialist for help and appealed to her sister, a nurse who lived in a nearby house full of animals, to take the leveret. Their responses made her realize that if she were determined to save the baby hare, she would basically be on her own. Chloe's sister, however, provided her with some kitten milk, a small amount of which she was able to get into the leveret's tiny mouth. Would she survive? Chloe went to bed that night not knowing if her house guest would be alive in the morning.

The leveret did survive, and with her rescuer's increasingly knowledgeable care, she thrived, growing to adulthood, becoming the Hare in *Raising Hare*, a wild being who chose to live in two places: in hedgerows and fields and in Chloe's house and garden.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Chloe Dalton and Amy Sedaris at Barnes and Noble, 82nd & Broadway, NYC.

Amy praised the book: "*Raising Hare* is perfect, charming and so well edited. It has no fat! You just want to live in this book! It is meditative, magical, intimate, riveting, majestic, suspenseful, vulnerable, mysterious, precious and omniscient. And Chloe, did you have the feeling that you were living with the Hare or that she was living with you?"

Chloe: "Both. Perhaps the Hare felt that I was a strange, large hare that wouldn't chase her. She was happy to live between my house and the wild while I was writing this book. Hares are full of surprises – the day she leaped the garden wall and had the wild at her feet, and then she returned! Given freedom, the Hare chose to return. The more freedom she felt, the more she trusted me – her leverets and her leverets' leverets regarded my house as their own. As a result, I changed my habits, while the Hare remained exactly who she was: her independent, reserved nature made cats seem clingy."

Amy: "It feels so good when a rabbit or another prey animal who fears being eaten decides to trust you." (Note: Amy's beloved rabbit Tina had lived free-range in her apartment for many years; Amy was thrilled when Tina leaped up onto her bed.)

Chloe: "I never caged the Hare and I avoided touching her, so she wouldn't feel trapped. I always acted with restraint. My freedom is really important to me, and I respect the freedom of others. In a magical way the Hare extended my own freedom. She shattered the carapace that I had developed in order to function at work; she connected me to Nature. In giving me her story to write, the Hare gave me my own voice, which had been camouflaged up until that time. (I have ghost-written thousands of words for other people.)

Amy: "How did you come to write this book?"

Chloe: "When I witnessed the Hare feeding her young morning and evening, I wanted to share this story with others. She stood up, ears erect, surveying her surroundings vigilantly the whole brief time the babies nursed. It was awe-inspiring!

Then, soon thereafter, at the end of a meeting with a literary agent on behalf of somebody else, I happened to mention my experience with the Hare, and the literary agent said, 'Chloe, take your coat off and sit down!' She made me tell her the story and said, 'You should write a book!' She was so convincing, but I feared that the book could expose hares to unfriendly attention or that it might be treated as a guide for doing the thing that wildlife professionals advise us so strongly not to do. Anyway, I hope that the book can be read as a cautionary tale and also as a celebration of the beauty, the magic, of hares, whose numbers have fallen precipitously from previous levels. They are, as ever, in danger of being shot by hunters. They

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Beautiful Bunnies

By Samantha Rowan

I recently took up a new hobby, learning to sew stuffed felted animals. It all began when I picked up a book called “Making Luna Lapin,” which was about a stylish rabbit who wore very trendy clothes. As a longtime quilter, I’d been interested in learning about making dolls and clothing, and being able to do this – and making a stylish bunny – was too much to resist.

As I sewed my first Luna Lapin by hand, our rescue bunny Truman loafed nearby. It was kind of trippy to sew a felt bunny while my real bunny watched, and it got me to reflecting on how cute Truman was, how cute bunnies are and why a real bunny should never be dressed up.

There are a million reasons for this, including the stress on their bodies and

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Truman admires Luna Lapin and her friends.

their need for autonomy. This isn’t to say that dogs, for example, shouldn’t wear weather-appropriate clothing when

they’re outside. But bunnies aren’t dogs and it’s my sense that dressing up is not about protecting their paws from salt in the winter or keeping them warm in frigid temperatures.

So instead of dressing up your real bunny, here are three things you can do instead:

1. Computers are a magical thing and there are a million programs and apps that will let your bunny cosplay to your heart’s content without causing any stress.
2. Make a felt version of your bunny and dress that up instead. You can even introduce the felt bunny to your bunny and then take a picture of them together.
3. Just admire your rabbit’s natural beauty. They are all gorgeous, just as they are.

Cottontail

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raccoon in your attic or under your deck, there’s a good chance babies are involved. “Humane” traps are only humane when used properly. Removing a mother animal without checking for dependent young often leaves babies behind to slowly die.

Skip rodent poison entirely. We regularly see poisoned hawks, owls, foxes, and other wildlife after they eat contaminated prey.

Keep cats indoors or safely contained. Outdoor cats kill huge numbers of native animals every year, especially babies during nesting season.

If you find injured wildlife, don’t feed them. Place them in a secure box somewhere warm, dark, and quiet, then contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator through the Animal Help Now app or animalhelpnow.org.

Wildlife rehab has changed the way I see the world. Once you’ve spent nights syringe-feeding orphaned babies every few hours, or listened to raccoon babies cry for a mother who never returns, you stop seeing wildlife as something separate from us. You realize how much suffering could be prevented by slowing down and paying attention and honestly, most people would make kinder choices

if they understood what these animals are up against every spring.

Brigitte Dix is the founder of Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab, a licensed wildlife rehabilitation organization serving Westchester County and the greater New York City area. Cottontail Cottage responds to thousands of wildlife calls annually and specializes in the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned native wildlife.

For wildlife assistance, visit CottontailRehab.com or text the wildlife hotline at (914) 933-7559.

Baby Hare

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can be crushed by farmers with their enormous machines. I have become an advocate for hares, I work for hares.”

Amy: “Is your house still open to hares? Do they still do their floor routines outside the house?”

Chloe: “The house is no longer open to hares, but they leap over the stone wall

and do floor routines in the garden. I have installed cameras, linked to an app on my phone, so I can watch them no matter where I am in the world. I start every day watching hares.”

The Best Bunny Ever

By Susan Lillo

Sherlock. Yes, definitely the best rabbit ever. He died May 14 at the age of 14.

The day of his death I didn't cry. I smiled, looking back on Sherlock's wit, gentleness and love for his family. A medium-size Hotot mix bunny with a huge appetite for food and affection.

On the afternoon of his death, I took a long stroll through Central Park, soothed by the spring fragrances and blossoms. I walked past baby squirrels, loud puppies and speckled birds picking at crumbs. The park vibrated with beauty and chaos, and every sound and smell reminded me that Sherlock lived his life to the fullest.

Fourteen years. It was a long, adventure-filled life. His family was enchanted with him. Obsessed. We wanted him to live forever.

Sherlock came into our lives because his former family no longer wanted him. He became a partner for our girl rabbit, Rosie, and they lived together until Rosie's death seven years later. As she was slipping away, Sherlock spent that last evening showering her with kisses. He was so generous with his love.

Over the years, Sherlock had his share of medical issues. The most serious was a recurring upper respiratory infection, treated with a variety of medications. At the end, he also had heart problems and mobility issues. Vet visits weren't fun, but Sherlock found one favorite vet and always greeted him with little kisses.

And you know what? No matter what his illness might have been at the time, he never, ever skipped a meal. He could not resist his pellets, greens and hay. And he lunged to grab his Oxbow joint-support cookie each morning.

This is what I will remember the most about him: his zest for life – mainly food – and his enthusiasm about his family, his toys and his playtime.



He was full of love.

We loved to joke about him as a surfer dude because he often spent time at the Jersey Shore. He and I recorded videos each morning to send to other family members, discussing his menu, plans for the day and observations from his apartment window in the city.

My husband and two daughters had the deepest love for this special bun. My granddaughters were his favorites because they sat quietly with him, talked gently – and offered him pellets as snacks!

By writing this, I feel that Sherlock is still here. I know that he is gone from his pen in our living room, but he will

always be here in spirit to brighten our day. He was truly the highlight of our family's last decade. Nothing can compare, and nothing ever will.



My granddaughter, Clare, with Sherlock.

BonHomme Visits the Library

By Jackson Goldstein

Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group hosted an educational event in mid-March at Glen Cove Public Library, where we talked about house rabbits. First, we introduced our spokesbunny, BonHomme, and we gave the children the opportunity to interact with him.

BonHomme was a great spokesbunny because he was calm and let the kids pet him.

Then we started with our presentation, and I provided some general information about house rabbits. The LIRRG volunteers stepped in and discussed proper rabbit care and the need for good foster homes.



Photo: Corey Goldstein

BonHomme enjoys socializing with Jackson Goldstein, seated at left, and others at the library.

The children had a crafts session where they put pellets and hay in toilet paper and paper towel rolls and gave one to BonHomme as a toy. The remaining toys were taken back to other rescue bunnies.

The children then said their goodbyes to BonHomme one last time.

Another event was scheduled at Merrick Library in May and more will follow.

(Author Jackson Goldstein has chosen LIRRG for his mitzvah project in preparation for his bar mitzvah. He has two bunnies, Matt and Piper (LIRRG alum)).

Just Like Magic

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

We did it. At the beginning of March, we set a big goal: find nine foster spots in one month – for Magic and her kits.

That was far more than the typical month. It was one of those goals that, when you set it, you have no idea how you'll achieve it – but you know what you want and why you desire it.

So you take action every day. You align with belief (and realign as needed). You lean on your incredible support system.

We did it – because with friends like you, anything is possible. Binkies.

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab





Why it's important to establish a home base for your rabbit

Rabbits Need Safety as Much as Freedom

Rabbits are inquisitive by nature. They love chewing, digging, and jumping — but these activities can cause severe injuries. We hope to encourage you, as loving bunny parents, to keep them as safe as possible.

A well-appointed exercise pen — the kind pet stores sell for puppies, called puppy pens or X-pens — keeps them safe when you cannot supervise. It prevents them from chewing your rugs, furniture, walls, cords, and wires.

The Myth of “Free-Roaming Is Always Better”

Some owners feel bad or guilty seeing their rabbits confined. They'll say, “Oh, I don't believe in caging animals. I let my rabbit free-roam my apartment. Cages are cruel.” There are many reasons why that is a misconception.

Why a Pen Feels Safe—Not Restrictive—to Rabbits

Over the years we've observed how free-roaming rabbits tend to develop behavioral and/or health issues. When allowed to roam loose in the house

all day, most rabbits spend their time under a chair, couch, or something that feels like a burrow. Since rabbits are crepuscular, they spend their daytime hours bunny-napping, and after a few hours they can become territorial about that space.

This can prevent them from forming a bond with their owners, since the only interaction is often during mealtimes. Some rabbits even become feral-like, displaying behaviors such as lunging or biting when owners try to get them to come out.

A puppy pen doesn't feel like confinement to a rabbit. Rabbits are prey animals who crave safety above all else. A pen provides a secure “home base” where they can lounge, eat, drink, and use their litter box.

It's also a place to retreat from household activity, other pets, or eager children's attention.



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Encouraging Natural Movement & Mental Stimulation

Rabbits who are loose all the time can become bored because there's nothing new to explore. In contrast, rabbits who are confined part of the time perform a natural "perimeter security check" when let out.

They re-explore their environment as if it were new—checking furniture placement, scanning for dangers, and then sprinting into the ever-joyful "Bunny 500." This mirrors healthy, instinctive behavior seen in wild rabbits.

As a result, confined rabbits often move more, run more, and binky more.



Better Eating, Hydration, & Litter Box Habits

Free-roaming rabbits often settle far from their litter box, hay, and water. This can lead to reduced grazing and hydration, litter box issues, dehydration, or even GI stasis.

Living in a pen during less active hours keeps essential resources close and encourages consistent eating, drinking, and litter box use.

Earlier Detection of Health Issues

Pen living helps owners notice more quickly when something is wrong. A common emergency occurs when an owner realizes late at night that their rabbit hasn't eaten or drunk—but the rabbit may have been sick for many hours already.

When your rabbit has a predictable home base, changes in behavior are easier to spot early.

Reducing Household Dangers

Homes are full of hidden risks. Rabbits can be injured by recliners, box springs, cords, or interactions with other pets. Pen living during unsupervised times greatly reduces these dangers.

In emergencies such as a fire, knowing exactly where your rabbit is can be lifesaving.

How to Create a Comfortable & Enriching Home Base

Providing your rabbit with a safe, enjoyable home base in a puppy pen is one of the best things you can do for them.

Include:

- A rug for traction
- A generously sized litter box filled with fresh hay
- A heavy, tip-proof ceramic water crock
- Pellets and greens served inside the pen
- Safe chew toys like woven baskets, mats, cardboard, and untreated wood

Don't be timid about litter box size—go big! It's not just a potty, it's a grazing, digging, and enrichment space, simulating a meadow right in your home.

Make the pen a cozy sanctuary, and reserve free-roam exercise time for when you can supervise. This balance helps ensure many safe, healthy, and happy years together.



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Forever Homes Found!



Lumi.



Magic.



Freya.



Omar.

We are happy to report that Freya, Lumi, Berry, Ro, Magic, Delia, Kira, Omar and Eleanor were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!



Berry.



Eleanor.



Ro.



Kira.



Delia.

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

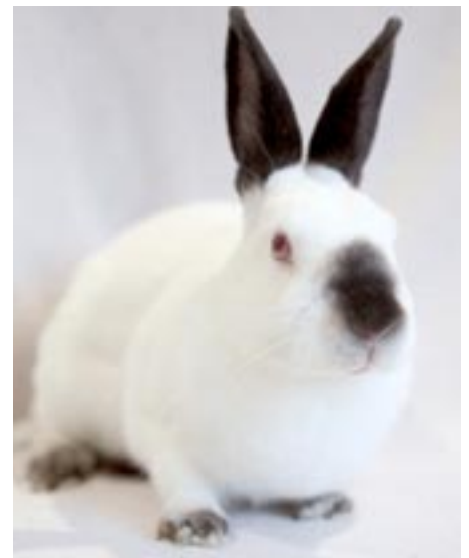
Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside and, wanting to help this poor bunny,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

(Continued on page 15)

ADOPTIONS

RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 14)

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.

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

Clara

Meet Clara, a dainty little lady with a soft spirit and a heart full of quiet charm. Rescued alongside a group of other bunnies in Suffolk County, Clara is now looking for a calm, loving home where she can truly blossom. Clara is gentle and a bit shy at first – she may need some time to feel safe, but with patience and kindness, her sweet personality begins to shine. She’s quietly dignified and most content in her own space, where she can relax and observe the world around her at her own pace. She enjoys simple pleasures, like playing with her tunnel and stacking cups, and settles in happily once she feels secure. One of her most endearing quirks is her soft, adorable snoring when she’s asleep – a sure sign she’s feeling safe and at ease. Clara would do best in a peaceful home that respects her gentle nature and gives her the time and space she needs to thrive. In return, she’ll be a calm, sweet companion with a lot of love to give.

Linden

Linden was rescued from a hoarding case, and while he’s safe and loved now, he still appreciates a calm, predictable environment where he can feel secure. He’s a very sweet bunny who enjoys a quieter space and tends to keep to himself at first. Because of his past, he startles easily, but with patience and respect for his boundaries, his gentle nature really comes through. Linden is wonderfully curious and loves to explore every corner



Clara.



Linden.



Rebecca.

of the house. One of his favorite things is finding dark, cozy hiding spots. He also has a bit of attitude and isn’t shy about expressing himself. Linden will happily thump to remind you that breakfast should not be late, and he makes his feelings very clear when it’s time for grooming (combing is not his favorite activity). His honest little opinions are part of what makes him so endearing. Linden would do best in a quiet, bunny-savvy home that understands sensitive rabbits and appreciates a companion with both sweetness and spunk. With time and trust, he’ll be a rewarding and fascinating friend.

Rebecca

Rebecca is a calm and quiet bunny who enjoys the simple pleasures in life. Though she may start off a little shy and reserved, with patience, she’ll warm up to you and show her true, loving side. She loves being petted once she feels comfortable and trusts you. Her favorite treats include sticks, banana and the occasional Timothy hay lollipop – but really, she’s a fan of food in general! When she’s not enjoying a tasty snack, you’ll find Rebecca lounging under the bed, couch or in her cozy bunny hut. She’s an independent spirit who loves to roam around the house, but she feels safest when everything is calm and quiet. Rebecca is easily taken aback by sudden noises or movements, so she thrives in a peaceful environment. She’ll often relax and lie down when the house is at rest, taking in her surroundings. If you’re looking for a gentle, sweet companion who enjoys a quiet life and some extra love once she’s comfortable, Rebecca just might be the perfect match!

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

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



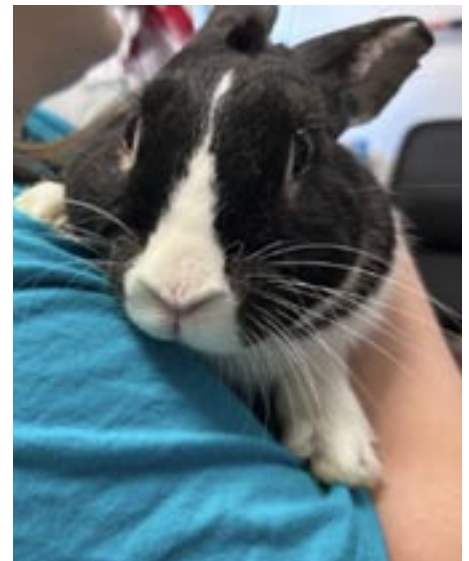
Cold Foam.



Blu.



Felix.



Barcode.



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

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



Coco.



Caramel Apple.



Bunny Holiday.



Mr. Tiger.



Brookie.

Urine Scald: A Symptom of a Greater Problem

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

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

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

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

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

Bladder sludge

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

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

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



Urine scald.



Urolith.

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

Bladder stone (uroolith)

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

Urinary tract infection (UTI)

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

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

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

Arthritis of the spine or pelvis

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

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

Rear limb/pelvic paresis

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

(Continued on page 20)

Urine Scald *(Continued from page 19)*

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

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

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

Uterine cancer

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

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

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

A Final Note: The Color of Urine

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

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



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

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

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

Photos: Mary Ann Maier



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

Adoptable Rabbits

There are lots of adoptable rabbits available in Manhattan, 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



Leo in his cave.

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 MAY 2026

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

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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

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

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

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