THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS SEPTEMBER 2026

Tidings From Cottontail Cottage and Rabbit Rescue & Rehab: There Should Still Be Tall Grass



A newly released cottontail takes in his new home at one of our privately protected release sites, connected to a larger wildlife corridor.



Two young cottontails alongside an adult after release onto protected habitat. This is what we work toward: not simply releasing wildlife but making sure there's still somewhere safe and wild for them to return to.

By Briggitte Dix
Executive Director,
Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab

If there's anything I am, it's obsessively hopeful. Maybe you have to be to do this work. Wildlife rehabilitation asks you to believe, over and over again, that there's still a chance, even when the odds aren't particularly good. I've held animals whose entire lives seemed to hang in the balance and watched them heal, grow stronger and eventually return home. I've watched newborn rabbits, once small enough to hold in the palm of my hand, grow up and race into tall grass without looking back. I've watched animals come to me frightened and broken and, weeks or months later, leave exactly as they were always meant to: wild, independent and free. After enough years of watching what can happen when someone is simply given the chance to survive, it's hard not to believe that even when things look hopeless, they don't have to stay that way.

That hope has changed the way I think about what it really means to save wildlife, too. For so long, the moment I've worked toward has been release. There's nothing quite like opening a carrier and watching animals realize there's nothing between them and home anymore. Sometimes they pause at the edge and take everything

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Photo: Sarah Shamash



Aria with her Halloween house in the background. She is looking for her forever home. (Please see page 12.)

Newcomer Cares for Divya and Garbo Pages 4-5
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Our masthead for September is one of our favorites. Photo: Mary Ann Maier.

Cottontail

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in. Sometimes they're gone before I even have time to say goodbye. I still love that moment every single time, but lately I've found myself thinking just as much about what's waiting for them on the other side of that open door.

I can spend weeks raising a rabbit, healing her injuries and preparing her for life in the wild, but at the end of all of that, she still needs somewhere to go. She needs tall grass to disappear into, brush to hide beneath, native plants to eat and enough connected habitat to move through safely. She needs somewhere to find a mate and someday raise babies of her own. I can give her every chance while she's in my care, but I can't give her back a meadow once it's gone. The longer I've done this work, the more I've realized that saving an animal and protecting the place he or she calls home were never really two different causes.

We tend to think of nature in terms of the spectacular places we've decided are worthy of protecting: mountains, ancient forests, national parks and sweeping stretches of wilderness. But so much of the habitat that wildlife depends on doesn't look spectacular to us at all. Sometimes it's the overgrown field we pass every morning, the wetland behind a shopping center, a strip of woods between two neighborhoods or the messy edge of someone's backyard. We call places like these vacant lots or undeveloped land, as though they're sitting empty, waiting for us to finally find a purpose for them. But they're not empty. They're already home. Rabbits are nesting beneath those grasses. Foxes are passing through at night. Pollinators are feeding there. Birds are resting in those trees. Amphibians may be raising their young in a shallow pool of water most of us wouldn't notice. Entire communities are carrying on with their lives in places we've taught ourselves not to see.

This is where environmental protections that can feel so distant from our everyday lives become incredibly personal. The Endangered Species Act, protections for wetlands and public lands, environmental review and the laws that preserve habitat can sound like pages of government policy that have very little to do with the rabbit outside your window. But behind all of that legal language is a fairly simple idea: There should be limits to what we're willing to destroy, and our wants shouldn't always outweigh the needs of every other species trying to survive alongside us.

So much of the habitat that wildlife depends on doesn't look spectacular to us at all. Sometimes it's the overgrown field we pass every morning.

Right now, some of those protections are being weakened, challenged or rewritten, and I think those of us who care about animals need to be paying attention. It's easy to become overwhelmed by environmental news, especially when decisions are happening far away from us, buried in regulations and court decisions, and controlled by people who seem to have far more power than we do. It's also easy to feel like whatever we do as individuals couldn't possibly be enough to matter. I completely understand that feeling. I just don't believe it's true.

Maybe wildlife rehabilitation has given me a strange relationship with hope, because I've seen how much can change when one person decides not to look away. Someone sees an injured rabbit on the side of the road and stops. Someone finds an orphaned animal and makes a phone call. A stranger drives two hours with a cardboard box carefully buckled into the passenger seat. A volunteer gives up an evening. A veterinarian squeezes one more patient into an already impossible day. None of those people can save every animal. They know that before they ever stop the car or pick up the phone. But nobody would argue that saving the one in front of them doesn't matter simply because there are others they can't save. I think conservation works much the same way.

Most of us aren't going to write environmental laws or personally preserve thousands of acres, but that doesn't mean we're powerless. We can learn what's happening in our communities before the bulldozers arrive. We can show up at planning meetings, submit public comments and contact the people who represent us. We can support land trusts and conservation organizations that protect habitat permanently. We can plant native gardens, protect mature trees, leave fallen leaves for the insects who overwinter beneath them and allow parts of our yards to stay a little wild. We can ask why a wetland needs to become another parking lot. We can speak up when protections for wildlife are weakened, and we can remind the people making those decisions that we're paying attention.

We can also stop believing that conservation belongs only to environmentalists, scientists or people who somehow know more than we do. If you care about animals, then you already have a reason to care about habitat. You don't need a degree to understand that a rabbit needs somewhere to live. You don't need to know the scientific name of every plant in a meadow to know that the meadow has value. And you don't have to wait until a species is disappearing to decide it's worth protecting.

There are plenty of reasons to be worried about the future of our natural world, and I don't think hope requires pretending otherwise. We've lost enormous amounts of habitat. Species are disappearing. Climate change is altering ecosystems in ways we're only beginning to understand, and decisions being made right now will have consequences long after the people making them are gone. I don't find any

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Cottontail

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comfort in ignoring those realities. What gives me hope is knowing that none of this means the rest of the story has already been written.

We've seen species recover because people decided extinction wasn't acceptable. We've restored wetlands that were once drained, brought native plants back to landscapes where they'd disappeared and protected land that otherwise would've been developed. Communities have built wildlife crossings over highways because enough people decided animals shouldn't have to die simply trying to move through their own habitat. People have fought for environmental protections that once seemed impossible and, because they did, there are animals alive today who might otherwise exist only in photographs.

That's the kind of hope I believe in. Not hope as the assumption that everything will somehow work itself out, but hope as a reason to participate. It's writing the letter even when you don't know whether anyone will read it. It's showing up to the meeting when staying home would be easier. It's planting the tree you may never sit beneath when it's fully grown. It's protecting a piece of land you'll never own and may never even visit because someone else needs it. There's something incredibly beautiful to me about caring for a future we may never personally get to see.

> When that carrier door opens and a rabbit runs home, I want there to still be tall grass waiting for her.

Eventually, I'll open another carrier and watch another rabbit return home. She won't know about the people who protected the field she runs into. She won't know who planted the native plants growing there, who argued against developing those acres, who donated to the organization that preserved them or who fought for the laws that made protecting them possible. She'll never know their names, and they'll probably never know hers. That's okay; that's not why we do it. She simply needs somewhere to go.

If there's anything all these years of caring for wildlife have taught me, it's that small acts aren't small to the individual whose life they change. None of us can protect every forest, restore every wetland or save every animal. But we can protect this forest. We can speak up for this wetland. We can help this animal and when enough of us keep choosing to do that, our individual acts of hope become something much bigger than any one of us.

The future of our natural world hasn't been decided yet. We're helping decide it right now, in what we protect, what we allow to disappear and what we're willing to fight for. And despite everything, I still believe deeply in what we can do for one another, for the animals who share this world with us and for those who'll come after us.

When that carrier door opens and a rabbit runs home, I want there to still be tall grass waiting for her.

I believe there can be.

Briggitte Dix is a wildlife rehabilitator, researcher, and wild rabbit expert with more than 15 years of experience working with wildlife. She is the founder and executive director of Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab, a nonprofit dedicated to wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, release, conservation and coexistence education. Her work focuses on improving outcomes for wild rabbits and other native wildlife while helping people better understand, protect, and coexist with the animals who share our world.

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



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

A Newcomer's Experience of Rabbits

(Robert Kulka writes: Two years ago, I decided I needed some help. I found a young man by accident that I thought I would try. I wanted someone I could trust in my rabbit household. Steven came once a week and did some cleaning and helped me start to purge what I no longer needed to get my life organized. He only did things that didn't require working with my bunnies as I am very protective of them. After several months of explaining about the care of rabbits, I began to have him help me with some rabbit care. He helped with organizing, cleaning and care from a distance. Finally feeling I could trust him, I allowed him access to their pens to help with more pen cleaning. Steven understood my protectiveness and the behavior of each of my rabbits. I thought it would be interesting after two years to get an inside look at the way a total newbie saw the life of rabbits and their care. I wondered if the way he sees things is what I may have felt 20 years ago around my first rabbit. Here are his observations.)





The athlete: Divya.





The sweet potato: Garbo.

By Steven Briggs

I first met Divya and Garbo two years ago when I was hired to help organize a studio apartment. Little did I know that most of our time would be devoted to doting on Divya and Garbo's every need. I was warned that much of this home was reserved for the two furry little friends, but it was still a shock to see nearly half of the 500-square-foot apartment sectioned off into pens, the carpet inside covered in hay. Garbo, the older one, moved only when she had to for food, water and hay and spent most of her time hiding in her tent. Divya, the younger one, felt safest inside a woven tent and would occasionally skitter around the inside of her enclosure, never stopping long enough to be seen unless there was a box of fresh hay. It took months for them to let me touch them, ever so gently, and always from outside the pen. The bunnies' caretaker said it was only after careful consideration that he decided to let someone new into their world. They seemed pretty low-maintenance to me but by the end of my first day with them, I quickly realized how much time and effort went into keeping them healthy and happy.

Every day, the rabbits receive no less than four types of hay in their boxes to chomp. The hay was delivered every few days from different farms, so that getting the new bags in and emptying them into the tower of plastic bins in the foyer was itself a complicated undertaking. The boxes each rabbit received also had to be wiped down between changes and were lined with paper towels and six interlocking sheets of newspaper each day. ABSOLUTELY no cleaning products were to be used around the bunnies, lest they ingest or inhale potentially harmful chemicals. The different types of hay in their boxes were mixed up like a salad, or else the rabbits would just dig for the type they liked the best first.

Hay inevitably littered the floor of the narrow foyer where the boxes were changed. Sweeping it up became futile as our socks – no shoes allowed – tracked the bristly stalks from the entrance to every corner of the apartment. Each time I cleaned the bathroom or kitchen floor, more hay would always appear to the point where I learned to accept it as a fact of life.

The most adorable poops I've ever seen.

Once the boxes are changed, the rabbits slowly emerge to nibble on the hay as the main course. In addition, each received a salad made of kale, radicchio, romaine, endive, butterhead lettuce and dandelion greens. I didn't even use that many different types of lettuce in my own salads!

Changing the bunnies' water proved equally exacting. They each consumed the same amount of water each day, down to the last drop – Garbo one cup and Divya half a cup. The bowls had to be rinsed and dried with a fresh paper

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‘He Thinks He’s Funny...’

By Samantha Rowan

We recently were in the U.K. for a family vacation/work trip and had to leave Truman, our roughly 3-year-old rescue bunny, in the care of our neighbors for about a week.

As far as lining up someone to care for Truman, our neighbors are about as perfect as you can get: responsible animal lovers who live next door and have a bunny of their own. Even better, they work from home and were more than happy to work out of our apartment to keep Truman company during the day and get a change of scenery for the duration of our trip. They would even give us daily updates!

It’s always funny to get someone else’s impression of your rabbit. Another one of our pet-friendly neighbors once took care of Lenny, our last rescue bunny, for a few days. Lenny’s temperament was famously less sweet than Truman’s and whenever our neighbor saw us afterward she asked, “How are Lenny and his sharp teeth?”

With Truman, the feedback was thankfully different. On our second morning in London, we got the following update:

Truman is great. We think he thinks he’s funny.

The update was spot on – we also think Truman thinks he’s funny. Most of his humor is expressed in putting paws on things he’s not supposed to, waiting for us to notice and then doing massive pops in the air as one of us comes over. To be clear, our apartment is about as rabbit-proof as it can get. But there are books to be chewed, table legs to be gnawed and loud noises to be made very early in the morning when the downstairs neighbors are sleeping. Most of those noises involve a loud thump and aggressive digging on a tiny part of the floor that’s uncarpeted.

Our neighbors had very positive feedback on Truman every day, with updates about how he was eating his hay, hungry for his kibble, eager for pets. It underscored that Truman is in many ways an easy rabbit. Lenny had his temper; our bunny before him, Simon, was largely disinterested in most things and chose to live much of his life under the couch and barely interacted with bunny sitters. Scratch, our bunny before Simon,

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Truman being silly.

just expected things and had a way of making bunny sitters do things for her, like get her a special pillow because she “liked soft things.”

We’re lucky to have such a sweet bunny and we’re also lucky to have built-in, reciprocal bunny sitting with our neighbors. We’ve always left our rabbits in the care of trusted friends and neighbors, but bunnies are more fragile than cats or dogs. Now if we can only get Truman to stop giving us the cold shoulder for a week every time we go away...

Newcomer

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towel twice after being washed to ensure they were spotless. Each rabbit had a large water bowl that was filled to the brim. Giving the rabbits enough water spared them the indignity of ever reaching the bottom of their bowl. Who hasn’t felt a tinge of depression slurping down the last of a drink?

Even when I wasn’t caring for them, I still had to be considerate of Divya and Garbo’s needs. It turns out that their long, fluffy ears aren’t just for show and are extremely sensitive to loud sounds, something I learned the first time I opened a new garbage bag with a loud whoosh. “She thinks you’re a hawk,” I was told about Divya, whose pen was only a few feet away. Running the vacuum in her enclosure was forbidden, which made some corners of the pen difficult to clean. Garbo, however, didn’t seem to mind and would usually lie still while I tidied up. Her mellow personality even had her approach a broom or the vacuum to check them out. I was told that a bullet blender was used in the bathroom behind two closed doors when a smoothie was made so Divya wouldn’t get upset by the noise. All this effort just to keep a bunny calm. I was a bit skeptical until I learned that Divya had lived in the wild for well over a month before she was rescued. That experience certainly formed her personality, making her more averse to sudden movement or noise.

It was easy to see why so much work was put into their daily routines. Cute, intelligent and alert, they could provide entertainment even when they weren’t doing anything at all. Each had her own personality and a soul built from lived experience. Sure, they might not always be at ease with being touched, and certainly not with being picked up, but I could always tell that they were just as aware of me as I was of them.

After my time around these two beautiful souls, I learned something I had not considered. Instead of just seeing rabbits, I saw that the bunnies had very individual and different personalities and responses that in fact made them just as individual as people. The only real difference was they never demanded anything but certainly let you know when they wanted something. After two years I saw that the world of rabbits was much more than most would understand, with only a few people having the opportunity to share their joy.

Ways to Protect Your Rabbit During the Autumn Season

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Bringing a bunny outdoors to romp in the leaves is never a good idea, and even bringing leaves inside for them to play in can be dangerous, too.

Poisonous plants

Before allowing your rabbit to eat or come in contact with any plant, you should be aware of the plants that are toxic to rabbits. Here's the House Rabbit Society list. Anything brought inside can also carry harmful pesticides and fertilizers. Although we see squirrels collecting acorns, both acorns and oak leaves are toxic to our bunnies. Many plants found in yards all over the New York region are also on the list, including azaleas, many ivies and evergreens, and the bark, twigs and leaves of cherry trees, to name just a few. Mold found on autumn leaves is toxic to rabbits.

Dangers from Backyard wildlife

Leaves can harbor fleas and ticks. Perhaps the deadliest parasite is raccoon roundworm: Rabbits who ingest leaves or grass where infected raccoons have visited are at risk. We never advocate bringing rabbits outdoors because they can easily fall prey to cats, dogs, raccoons and predatory birds in our area. They can be literally frightened to death even if they aren't touched, or they can be severely injured trying to flee.

We can instead enrich our companion rabbits' lives with toys as simple as an empty toilet paper roll stuffed with hay or a pile of junk mail to dig through – safer by far than the outdoor offerings of fall.

Litter Training Your Rabbit

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Rabbits can be easily litter trained. By nature, rabbits choose one or a few places to deposit their waste. Presenting them with a litter box in their chosen spot, usually a corner, is sometimes all it takes to litter train.

We suggest a large cat litter box lined with a few sheets of newspaper and topped with a layer of hay. Rabbits spend a lot of time in their litter box grazing on the hay. Each day, top off the litter box with fresh hay, and every few days empty the litter box and replace the newspaper and hay. You can clean the litter box with a paper towel and a spray of plain white vinegar, which neutralizes the ammonia in rabbit urine and helps dissolve any calcium residue in the litter box.

There are also commercial litters, but only paper-based products (Carefresh, Yesterday's News) or hardwood shavings (aspen wood) should be used. Extruded, pelleted plant-fiber litter (Feline Pine, Aspen Fresh) or chemical-free woodstove pellets are alternatives.

Some cat litters (clumping and clay) and pine and cedar shavings can cause major health issues in rabbits.

However, most of us prefer to use newspaper because it recycles, it's free, and it's safe.

Good news for gardeners: Most rabbit-safe litters are biodegradable and rabbit fecal pellets make wonderful fertilizer. The contents of the litter box can be thrown into a compost pile, used as mulch, or put directly into the garden.

For more information, go to https://rabbit.org/care/litter-training-faq/

In addition, two helpful YouTube videos are at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gP4IaOQsKl4 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oc51RrXXrmc

Peter Rabbit's litter box has been cut down so he can get in and out of it easily.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



RABBITS & RHDV2
WHAT TO KNOW

House Rabbit SOCIETY

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) is a highly contagious and deadly disease caused by a calicivirus that affects both wild and domestic rabbits. It's not contagious to people or other animals. Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus 2 (RHDV2) causes deaths in wild rabbits and hares native to North America and has spread throughout the United States, Mexico, and parts of Canada.

The virus is shed in urine, feces, and secretions from eyes, nose, and mouth, and remains present in fur and internal organs and tissues. The virus infects rabbits through the mucous membranes of their eyes, noses, and mouths. Sick rabbits and insects typically transmit the virus. While RHD only affects rabbits, the disease can be transmitted by people or animals through contact with contaminated objects, animals, insects, or feces. **Even if your rabbit is kept inside, they are still at risk of becoming infected with RHD.**

The virus causes death within 3-5 days of exposure, often with no symptoms. A sudden rabbit death is suspicious and should be reported to your veterinarian as a possible RHD case.

PROTECTING YOUR RABBIT FROM RHD

- Only allow your rabbit to have outdoor playtime if they're vaccinated, and only allow them to interact with other rabbits who are also vaccinated.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling rabbits.
- After contact with other rabbits, change your clothes and wash them.
- Leave shoes outside your home.
- Disinfect objects that may be contaminated, using a disinfectant that effectively kills the virus that causes RHD, such as Rescue Disinfectant.
- Keep mosquitos and flies out of your home with window and door screens.
- Know your sources of hay, feed, and greens, and avoid if located in areas where RHD is spreading among wild rabbits who may be carrying the virus.
- Quarantine any new rabbit for at least 14 days.
- Multi-pet households should take additional precautions to protect their rabbit, as the virus can be spread to a healthy, indoor-only rabbit by cats and dogs who go outside. **(see reverse)**
- Take your rabbit to rescues and vet offices that require vaccination for services such as boarding, grooming, and speed-dating.
- Use a monthly flea treatment for all animals in your home. Never use Frontline on a rabbit; Advantage II and Revolution are safe to use on rabbits. Visit **houserabbit.org/grooming** to learn more.



HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY | FOUNDED IN 1988 | HOUSERABBIT.ORG/RHDV

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GETTING YOUR RABBIT VACCINATED

Regular vaccination is required for continuous protection against RHD. Vaccination is low risk and is effective for the vast majority of rabbits. A small number of rabbits may become infected with rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV) without showing symptoms at all; this is called an "asymptomatic infection." Another very small group of vaccinated rabbits may develop mild symptoms and recover. This means biosecurity measures should still be implemented depending on your region and vaccination status of your rabbits.

Currently, a vaccine that protects against RHD is available in most states in the United States. Medgene Labs manufactures this vaccine and supplies veterinarians in states where the vaccine has been approved for distribution. The vaccine has been given emergency use authorization and further studies are needed to determine how often the vaccine needs to be administered, but at this time it is believed that it will be annually. Contact your veterinarian about the vaccine's availability and visit **houserabbit.org/rhdv** for more information.

MULTI-PET HOUSEHOLDS

Those who live with non-rabbit companion animals may need to take additional biosecurity measures to protect their rabbits from RHD, as pets who roam outdoors and are then allowed inside may transmit the virus that causes RHD to your companion rabbit.

We recommend using a monthly flea treatment for rabbits, cats, and dogs, especially in regions where RHD affects wild and feral rabbits. Advantage II and Revolution flea and tick treatments are safe for use in rabbits. **Never use Frontline on a rabbit**. Keep all household pets away from all wild, feral, and unfamiliar rabbits — for example, do not feed cats or dogs rabbit meat — the meat could harbor RHDV and could be spread to your rabbit when your cat or dog licks your rabbit or drinks from their water bowl. We recommend keeping cats and dogs indoors whenever possible to reduce the risk that they could bring RHDV into your home. Leashing dogs during walks can also reduce the risk that the dog comes into contact with wild or feral rabbits. You might also consider washing your dog's feet or training them to wear booties outdoors. Keeping your rabbit's play and living spaces separate from your dogs and/or cats may also reduce the chance the rabbit comes into contact with virus tracked into your house from outside.

LEARN MORE ABOUT RHD

Visit **houserabbit.org/rhdv** for the best information about RHD and how you can protect your rabbit from this deadly disease. Subscribe to our newsletter at **houserabbit.org/signup** to ensure that you receive timely alerts about RHD.

MORE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

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Last updated: 2/21/2024

Forever Homes Found!


Edward.


Marlin.



Layla.


Kip, now known as Bowie.


Maple, on the right.


Fred.


Oak, on the right.


Nadia, on the left.


Baby Mike.

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 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.



Dove.



Pink.



Skye.

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

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RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

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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.



Indigo.

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.



Lucy.

Carmela

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



Carmela.

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

Sal

Meet Sal (aka Salvadorable)! With his round little body, baby face and gentle personality, it's easy to see how Sal earned the nickname Salvadorable. Sal came into LIRRG's care in February 2026 at approximately 3 years old. Since then, he's shown himself to be a sweet, cuddly bunny who quickly blossoms once he feels safe with kind, patient people. While he may be a little shy at first, it doesn't take long before he's happily exploring his surroundings or settling in for what could be an endless session of head pets. This handsome Dutch rabbit is calm, playful and incredibly affectionate. He loves spending time in his favorite little fort, enjoys plenty of hay, and has excellent litter-box habits both in his condo and during free-roam time. He's the kind of bunny who appreciates a cozy routine and will happily keep you company while soaking up attention. Sal is also very food-motivated! The sound of pellets or treats instantly gets his attention, and he'll eagerly follow you around, sometimes even chasing your pant leg if he thinks dinner is on the way. He has come a long way in foster care and has learned that food is always coming, making him much more relaxed than when he first arrived. Sal has some scarring on his left eye and a healed laceration on his eyelid from trauma he experienced before being rescued. The injury is fully healed and doesn't cause him any pain, but he will need a small amount of eye lubricant once a day to keep that eye comfortable. He takes this routine in stride. If you're looking for a gentle, affectionate companion who loves cuddles, has wonderful house manners, and will make you smile every time his little round face looks up at you, Sal may be the perfect bunny for your family.



Sal.



Arthur.



Aria.

Arthur

You'd never guess Arthur's rough start! Found abandoned in a nightstand, this resilient bunny is incredibly social and sweet, adoring playtime and gentle pets. Arthur has a charmingly assertive side, though. He appreciates his space during meals and litter-box time, so a respectful approach is key. This delightful fellow will thrive in a home with an experienced rabbit owner who will cherish his outgoing and unique personality.

Aria

Queen of wherever she resides, Aria will be certain to claim not only your space, but your heart as well. With perfect litter-box habits, you certainly won't spend as much time cleaning up her area. In fact, she'd probably prefer you didn't, as she can be a little shy around humans. Moving items near her too quickly may upset her, and she expects you to earn her trust. Two ways of doing this that we've found most effective: lying down near her and letting her approach, and hiding food in her stacking cups – of course, she will expect you to re-stack the cups after she's disassembled them. If you're looking for a boss bun with a big personality, this little queen is sure to fit the bill. If Aria were a human: a boss babe who spills the tea and likes her space.

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

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



Carrots.



French Onion Dip.



Tostitos.



Bunny Bear and Twixiehop.



The Greatest Showman.

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


Jerry B.


Lucy the Rabbit.


Velvet Rain.


Carl.


Chubby Bunny Jr.


Coffee Cake.


Jeff.

Thanks to Foster Families

Photo: Lacey Vogt



For **National Animal Foster Appreciation Week** in August, the best way to thank Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group's amazing foster families was to show them how cherished our bunnies are in their forever homes. Lacey Vogt said: "Letizia Cinelli and Lauren Schulz Eddings, thank you for loving Dickens, on the left, and Stella as your own while they waited to find a forever with me. They are the light of my life."

Pre- and Post-Operative Care of Rabbits

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.
University of Miami Biology Department
House Rabbit Society of Miami

Any surgery can be physically and emotionally hard on both you and your companion rabbit, since there's really no such thing as a surgery that is 100% risk-free. I hope the following information will help you and your rabbit get through either emergency or elective surgery with maximal safety and minimal stress.

Pre-Operative Care

1. Be sure to schedule surgery with a veterinarian who is very familiar with the rabbit's unique anatomy and physiology, and who has had a great deal of experience and success with rabbit anesthesia and surgery. You might wish to start with House Rabbit Society Veterinarian Listings. (http://rabbit.org/rabbit-veterinarians-state-listings/) Veterinarians specializing in "exotic" species are often rabbit-savvy. But before you commit to surgery, make sure. The House Rabbit Society has an excellent site on how to find a good rabbit vet that should make this easy.

2. If possible, schedule the surgery so that you can bring your bunny home with you the same evening. Spending the night in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by strange people and the sound and smell of potential predators, can add unnecessary stress and lengthen your rabbit's recovery. Very few veterinary hospitals have 24-hour monitoring staff, and your bunny will probably not be watched for at least part of the night if s/he stays in the hospital. Home, where he can be monitored lovingly and regularly, is almost always best.

3. If your rabbit is bonded to another rabbit, it is important to *bring them to the hospital together* so that the mate can offer moral support in the pre-operative waiting period and during recovery. It also will help prevent the dreaded un-bonding phenomenon that sometimes occurs when one member of a bonded pair comes home smelling of Strange and Scary Hospital. The last thing you want your bunny to suffer after surgery is violent rejection by his/her own mate! Unfortunately, this goes for bonded groups, too. It is best to bring everyone in for moral support and to prevent post-operative social rejection.

If your rabbit is bonded to another rabbit, it is important to *bring them to the hospital together* so that the mate can offer moral support.

4. *DO NOT FAST YOUR RABBIT FOR ANY PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME (SUCH AS OVERNIGHT) PRIOR TO THE SURGICAL APPOINTMENT*, even if the person scheduling your appointment tells you to do so. Receptionists giving such instructions often recite the rules for dogs and cats, not realizing that the rules are different for rabbits. **Some vets now recommend removing food and water a couple of hours before surgery simply so the stomach is not hugely full. A very full stomach can interfere with breathing when a bunny is in supine position for surgery.** Here are the reasons why some (inexperienced with rabbits) clinic staff might suggest fasting, and why these reasons do not hold true for rabbits:

a. Some surgical anesthetics can cause nausea. One of the reasons veterinarians fast most animals pre-operatively is the risk of vomiting during surgery or recovery. This can cause accidental aspiration, the breathing of liquid into the lungs, which can be fatal. However, rabbits lack the vomiting reflex, and are physically almost incapable of regurgitation. In rabbits, the risk of aspiration due to vomiting is negligible.

b. Feeding your bunny before surgery helps the gastrointestinal (GI) tract remain active, which will speed recovery. Rabbits who become inappetent (i.e., not wanting to eat) after surgery are more difficult to "jump start" back to normal eating habits. Even relatively brief periods (24 hours) of anorexia can result in GI stasis and some liver damage in rabbits.

c. Some veterinarians may be concerned that food in the intestine will interfere with their obtaining a correct body weight, necessary for calculating the proper dose of injected anesthetic. This should not be a concern with rabbits because:

- Under normal circumstances, the intestine of a healthy rabbit is never empty, and should not be. Rabbit GI passage time is relatively lengthy (approximately 12 hours), so to get the intestine completely empty would take a very long time. Also, since an anorectic rabbit can begin to suffer liver damage in relatively short time when the GI tract is empty, it is not advisable to fast the rabbit before surgery.
- If the veterinarian is using isoflurane or sevoflurane, the gas anesthetic of choice, body weight is not an issue, since the gas is administered through the respiratory tract. Even though isoflurane gas is more expensive than injectable anesthetics, it is worth the extra cost to ensure a safer surgery and faster recovery.
- IMPORTANT NOTE: Although intubation allows much more precise administration and monitoring of gas anesthesia, and is safer in case of an

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Pre- and Post-Operative Care

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emergency cardiac or respiratory arrest during surgery, please be aware that intubation of rabbits is a delicate procedure requiring a great deal of practice and expertise. If your vet is NOT experienced with rabbit intubations, it is probably much safer for the isoflurane to be administered via mask. You might wish to ask your vet about this before you schedule the surgery.

- Injectable pre-anesthetic doses are not likely to be affected by the slight difference in weight of a rabbit with a full intestine.

5. Take a bit of your rabbit's normal food (pellets and hay) along as well as a small bag of favorite fresh herbs. Ask that the foods be offered to your bunny after the anesthesia has worn off. The sooner bunny starts nibbling after surgery, the quicker the recovery.

Don't hover. A bunny after surgery may feel groggy and unhappy, and not in the mood for cuddling.

Post-Surgical Care

Pain Management

— Any surgery, including a neuter or (especially) a spay, will make bunny sore for one to several days.

— Pain management in rabbits is critical to uneventful recovery.

— Most experienced vets routinely administer analgesics such as metacam/meloxicam, Banamine (flunixin meglumine), buprenorphine, tramadol, etc., before or shortly after surgery, so the bunny will be as comfortable as possible while waking up.

— Ask the veterinarian about this before scheduling surgery. If no pain medications are going to be given to your rabbit, you should probably seek a different vet!

— Before bringing your bunny home, ask your vet about follow-up pain management at home, when the initial dose wears off.

Post-Surgical Monitoring and Care

1. Warmth

— Immediately after surgery, keep your bunny warm and quiet.

— Provide a warm water bottle or other heat source (that can't leak, burn or cause injury) wrapped in a soft towel for bunny to lean against or move away from, at his/her discretion. DO NOT use any type of electrical heating source that could be an electrocution risk, should bunny chew on it!

— Rabbits will tolerate a soft, light blanket better than a heavy one.

2. Post-Surgical Contact and Handling

— Don't hover. A bunny after surgery may feel groggy and unhappy, and not in the mood for cuddling.

— Unless you know that your rabbit wants cuddling, it's best to let him/her recover quietly and without more human interruption than is necessary to ensure that all is well.

3. Post-Surgical Monitoring for Trouble

— Be sure to carefully (and gently) check the sutures daily for a few days after surgery to be sure the bunny isn't chewing them.

— Many vets use subcuticular (under the skin) sutures that cannot be chewed out, and may even put a line of surgical glue over the incision for extra strength. Ask your vet about this before surgery, so you will know what to expect.

— Be alert for excessive bleeding (a bit of oozing is not unusual, but outright bleeding is a cause for concern)

— Excessive redness or signs of infection such as swelling or pus are not normal.

— If you see anything that causes concern, call the vet immediately for further instructions.

The Healing Process

If all goes well, your bunny will start to perk up noticeably by the second day after surgery. Healing begins quickly; adhesions (normal tissue repair) usually start to form within 24 hours of surgery in rabbits. In the case of spay/neuter, a male will usually recover more quickly, since a neuter is less invasive than a spay.

— A male is usually ready for normal activity within a few days of surgery.

— A female might take a bit longer to recover from a spay.

Recovery time will depend on the type of surgery, the surgeon's technique, the surgery itself, and any complications.

1. Post-Operative Preventive Care

— Under normal circumstances, rabbits do not require post-surgical antibiotics to prevent infection.

— Except in very unusual cases, an E-collar ("Elizabethan collar" – that plastic cone around the neck that prevents suture chewing and makes your companion look like a satellite dish) is not necessary for a rabbit, and will cause more stress than it's worth.

— If your bunny does try to damage her incision and ends up wearing an E-collar for a day or two, you will have to hand-feed cecotropes, since s/he will not be able to reach them for normal ingestion.

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2. Monitoring the Poop: Signs of Recovery or Trouble

— It is not unusual to see a few soft or mucus-covered stools after surgery. Fecal pellets should return to normal within a day or two, once your bunny has regained normal eating habits.

— If you continue to see mucus in the fecal matter beyond a day or two, or if fecal production stops, consult your veterinarian immediately.

— If your rabbit hasn't eaten anything within 24 hours of surgery, contact your veterinarian.

— Monitor the output of fecal pellets closely. If fecal output slows or stops after surgery for more than 36 hours, your bunny may be suffering from ileus, an uncommon but serious post-surgical complication. If this happens, refer to Gastrointestinal Stasis: The Silent Killer for emergency information. (http://rabbit.org/gastrointestinal-stasis-the-silent-killer-2/)

Post-Surgical Social Interaction

— Keep your rabbit quiet for a few days after surgery, but try to maintain normal feeding and bonding times.

— *There is no reason to separate bonded pairs or groups as long as the bunnies interact calmly.*

— A post-surgical bunny will usually manage his/her own activity quite well, and knows not to "push it" too soon.

— If your bonded pair continues to mount or play too roughly after surgery, then it might be necessary to physically separate them for a day or two to avoid injury. *This is almost never necessary.*

— However, if you must separate the bunnies, be sure they can see, smell, and touch one another even if they don't have full physical contact.

— Remember: the rabbit who has undergone surgery needs the emotional support of his/her mate for an uneventful recovery. Allowing them to be in contact reduces the chances that they will fight upon full re-introduction.

Post-Surgical Nutrition

— Offer your rabbit a heavy ceramic bowl of water, even if you usually provide a sipper bottle. A rabbit needs to drink after surgery, but often won't do so if s/he has to "work" for water. A well-hydrated bunny recovers more quickly and feels better in the process.

— If your bunny is reluctant to eat after surgery, offer a favorite treat. Fragrant herbs such as basil, parsley, dill and mint seem to appeal to a bunny recovering from surgery.

Fragrant herbs such as basil, parsley, dill and mint seem to appeal to a bunny recovering from surgery.

— Rabbits seem to prefer healthy foods such as fresh greens and hay while they are recovering, rather than starchy treats, which is all for the better.

— If your bunny does suffer complications from surgery that cause him to stop eating, you may need to hand-feed for a few days afterwards to help get the GI tract back to normal. Ask your veterinarian for advice about whether this is necessary. Products made specifically for recovery feeding include Critical Care (Oxbow Hay Co.) and Critter Be Better (American Pet Diner). Or you can make your own recovery food:

- Pour warm water or chamomile tea over a 1/4 cup of pellets in a bowl
- Allow to sit for about five minutes, letting the pellets "fluff"
- Add additional water or chamomile tea and mix well to make a pudding-like slurry

Always use any type of recovery food "slurry" with caution:

- Never force too much. Allow bunny time to chew and swallow.
- Use a wide-bore syringe or plastic dropper with the narrow tip cut off to safely administer.
- If the tip is too narrow, larger bits can get stuck. Forcing a stuck chunk through the tip can cause a huge blob of food to enter the mouth too quickly, and could cause aspiration.
- Squirt the food into the mouth sideways, behind the incisors, not straight back.
- NEVER try to force feed an animal who is not swallowing normally. Consult your veterinarian immediately if this is the case.

Special Notes for Neuter Surgeries

The de-sexing of a male animal is known as a castration, or neuter. It involves removing the testicles and some associated structures. (Some tubules and other structures are left behind, as they are located in the lower abdomen.) The purpose of neutering is to remove the main source of testosterone and to permanently stop the production of sperm. While testosterone has its subjective benefits, it also has its risks: it suppresses the immune system, increases aggression, and generally shortens the lifespan of the individual producing it. For this reason alone, your male bunny may live a longer, more peaceful life if he is neutered.

— Although most rabbit-savvy vets perform pre-scrotal neuters, in which

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the scrotum is not cut, a few old-fashioned practitioners still remove the testicles directly through the scrotum. If your male bunny has undergone a scrotal neuter, he may be very sore and swollen (which is why the pre-scrotal method is preferred; ask your vet beforehand, so you will know what to expect.)

— A sitz bath in a dilute solution of Betadine (about 1 tablespoon of povidone iodine per cup of lukewarm water) can be very soothing to a bunny who has undergone a scrotal neuter. But wait until a day after surgery to do this, to allow some recovery from anesthesia and the stress of the surgery itself.

— NOTE THAT MALES MAY HAVE VIABLE SPERM FOR SEVERAL WEEKS POST-NEUTERING! Do not place your male with an intact female until a minimum of three weeks after his neuter surgery! Some males can retain viable sperm for even longer.

The key to success in any elective or necessary surgery is good preparation and attentive care afterwards. A rabbit-savvy veterinarian can make this process as anxiety-free as possible, and will give you all the advice you need for follow-up care.



Squirrelley.



Shy bunnies under the furniture.

Adoptable Rabbits

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

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

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

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the Queens Animal Care Center at 1906 Flushing Ave. in Ridgewood..

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

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

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

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

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

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Milly.

Donations

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

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

THUMP SEPTEMBER 2026

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

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

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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

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

Long Island (continued)

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

Joi Pacchiano, DVM
Michelle Frascati, DVM
Massapequa Hospital for Animals
4186 Sunrise Highway
Massapequa, NY 11758
(516) 271-1581
thrivepetcare.com/…/Massapequa-hospital-for-animals

Robert Monaco, DVM, DABVP
McKayla Smith, DVM
Old Country Animal Clinic
669 Old Country Road
Plainview, NY 11803
(516) 938-7218
oldcountryanimalclinic.com

Gabriela Zonenshine, DVM, MPH, EMPA, CVA
Wandering Wings Veterinary
Concierge Veterinary Care
(516) 743-0823
wanderingwingsvet.com

For emergencies only

If your rabbit is a client of Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital, they have explicit instructions to call this vet:

Veterinary Emergency Group, 204 B Glen Cove Road, Carle Place, NY 11514 • (516) 693-8859 • veterinaryemergencygroup.com