



HARELINES



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Fall 2015

Slowing Down

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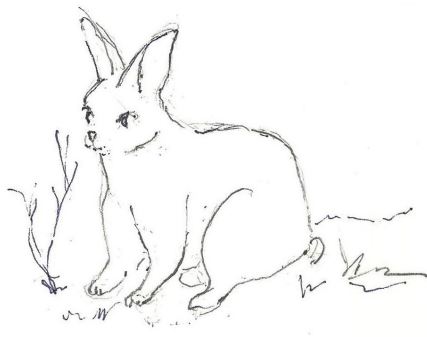
When I started writing this article about aging rabbits, I was on CD# 11 of 13 of an audiobook recording of Richard Adams's *Watership Down*, a tale about the adventures of a group of rabbits that he composed as a bedtime story for his young daughters. An avid reader all my life, I'm not sure how the book escaped my notice before I saw it as #2 on a list a Facebook friend posted of 25 books you need to read (before you die). Since down is a geographical term for hill, and I've been feeling a little "over the hill" lately, I found this book very engaging and some of the more famous quotes of Adams's book quite fitting into this discussion of aging changes in rabbits.

All quotations are from *Watership Down*, and some are quotes that appear in *Watership Down*.

"Rabbits (says Mr. Lockley) are like human beings in many ways. One of these is certainly their staunch ability to withstand disaster and to let the stream of their life carry them along..."

People and animals, as biological systems, all experience aging in a similar fashion. Systems and tissues that were once moving and flowing smoothly start developing leaks and gaps that must be plugged and tweaked in order to maintain a steady state. As we age, steady state is more and more difficult to maintain. However, rabbits are much more capable of overcoming disease and distress and a lot heartier than is generally thought.

"The rabbits mingled naturally – they did not talk for talking's sake, in the artificial manner that human beings or even dogs and cats do, but this did



not mean that they were not communicating; merely that they were not communicating by talking."

Rabbits can speak volumes simply by being – all you need to do is pay attention, observe, and know what is normal for your rabbit. Changes in posture, gait, activity level, elimination, eating and drinking habits, and personality can all be early warning indicators that the normal flow is disrupted and adjustments need to be made.

The things we see most commonly in older rabbits are the same things we see in older people. Many of these things are interrelated and there can be a cause and effect where one leads to and blends into another. The main issues common in older rabbits include:

1. Arthritis - A life of bunny binkies can wreak havoc on the rabbit spine. Pain from arthritis can inhibit your rabbit from properly re-ingesting cecotropes; less activity can lead to bladder sludge, gastrointestinal stasis, and weight gain.
2. Bowel and urinary tract impairment - Aging GI and urinary tracts become a bit more persnickety about what can and cannot be tolerated. Less nutrient cycling due to arthritis can cause intermittent soft stools, GI stasis, bladder sludge and/or stones, difficulty and pain on urination or defecation. Intermittent soft stools become more common with age. Kidney or liver compromise can cause general malaise, anorexia, and dehydration.
3. Dental disease and decay - Teeth are tough, but life is tougher. Decreased appetite can lead to malocclusion and dental disease, and the pain associated with it often causes a downwards spiral.

In this issue

Tips for a Well-Groomed Rabbit.....	3
Holiday Raffle.....	5
It's Fair Season.....	6
Somebunny Needs YOU! ..	8
Adopted.....	9
Traveling with Rabbits ...	10



Continued on page 4



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Special Thanks to:

Sue Milewski, for her thoughtful donation in memory of her beloved **Robbie**.

The following members, whose monetary and in-kind donations allow us to meet our ongoing fostering and educational goals:

Karyn Harshbarger, Bob Piekarczyk, David and Joyce Weaver, Judy O'Neil, Marjorie Aleva, Clay and Nancy Pasternack, Junko Rogers, Jim and Nancy Reed, Norma Jean Mudry, Cynthia Slezak.

Our new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors! These special rabbits, who will spend the rest of their lives in foster care due to serious medical conditions, have you kind and generous people to thank!

As always, the **Monks Copy Shop** of downtown Columbus, for their discount on printing our newsletter.

Whole Foods to Stop Selling Rabbit Meat by the End of 2015!

A heartfelt thank you to all our members who signed petitions, drafted letters, sent emails, made phone calls, carried placards, and supported this huge collective effort in so many other ways. Every one of you helped make this happen!

Rabbits win!!!

Tips for a Well-Groomed Rabbit

By Rob Lovicz

Adult rabbits shed quite often, so it is essential that rabbit owners keep their little friends well-groomed to ensure good health for a long lifetime. Here's an overview of the shedding process as well as proper grooming techniques.

Shedding Cycle

Rabbits shed regularly at different stages of their lives. The adult's coat will develop around 4-5 months of age. Sheds occur naturally with the change of seasons; as a rule, most bunnies shed every three months or so. The heaviest shed generally occurs at the end of winter when they no longer need the protection of dense fur to combat the cold. The next heaviest shed happens at the end of summer when their winter coat is growing back. Even though your bunny lives indoors where the temperature remains fairly constant, s/he is genetically programmed to shed. The shed usually develops in different spots across the body and it is not uncommon for your bunny to have bald patches in those areas while shedding. Do not be alarmed if this occurs. The patches will grow back in no time. My satin rabbit, Rodger, usually has a bald spot somewhere on his body.

Sometimes it may appear that your rabbit is always shedding in certain spots of his body -- above the tail, for instance, or on his haunches or belly. This may be just a normal part of his shedding cycle and you'll need to groom accordingly. In some cases, however, it could be brought about by stress or poor diet, so make sure you're providing unlimited high-quality grass hay, a variety of fresh leafy greens, and limited high-fiber pellets.

Grooming Routine

It is vital that you groom your bunny at least once a day during heavy shedding and at least twice a week during non-shedding times. Because rabbits cannot throw up hairballs like a cat can, any loose fur they ingest has to pass through the digestive tract and be eliminated with stool. Ingesting loose fur can be VERY dangerous and can lead to potentially-fatal GI stasis. Always keep a close eye on your bunny's stool to ensure that s/he is not passing large amounts of fur. If so, increase your brushing schedule and be sure to feed lots of fresh leafy vegetables and grass hay to help that hair pass through the digestive system.

During the 10-to-15 minute grooming session, you can assess your rabbit's overall health and make sure all is well. The grooming routine should consist of brushing as well as monitoring feet, eyes, and ear health. Place your bunny on a towel on a table or on your lap. (For his safety, never leave your bunny unattended on a table.) In addition to brushing, get to know your rabbit's body from head to toe, checking for lumps, bumps, cuts, fleas, mites, overgrown teeth or nails, or any other changes in appearance. Consult your veterinarian if you find anything unusual.

Grooming can be done in several ways; find the combination that works best for your rabbit. Obvious loose fur can be gently plucked. Typically the fur will release quite easily. Make sure you do not pull too hard. Wire brushes can irritate a bunny's delicate skin and work best for cleanup after plucking is completed. Again, be gentle! A rubber brush can also help remove dead fur. Do not brush over bald patches. As an alternative, stroke your rabbit with damp hands to pick up those stray bits of hair not caught by the brush.

A note of caution: NEVER bathe a rabbit unless a veterinarian instructs you to. Rabbits do not like getting wet and take a very long time to dry off. A wet rabbit can go into shock.

Check your rabbit's feet for cuts, sores, or matted fur and keep toenails short. If you've never trimmed your bunny's nails, ask your veterinarian to show you how. If your rabbit has light-colored nails, the quick -- the blood inside the nail -- will be easy to see. With dark nails, use a flashlight before cutting to see where the quick is. If you do accidentally trim too deep, apply pressure with a cotton pad to stop the bleeding. Styptic powder (available at pet supply stores) or cornstarch will also work. In most cases, nails will need to be trimmed about every two months.

Monitor teeth and eyes for anything out of the ordinary. If you notice eye discharge or overgrown or broken teeth, take your bunny to a rabbit-savvy veterinarian. Bunny ears should also be checked regularly. Ears should be clean and smooth with no odor or irritation. If the ears are scaly or red, your bunny may have mites. Your rabbit vet will give an accurate diagnosis.

Finally, a grooming routine can be a good way for bunny and human to become better acquainted and bond together. Not all rabbits love grooming, but it will help develop trust and allow you to care for your companion in a reduced-stress environment.

4. Immune system breakdown - Aging immune systems allow invading (bacterial or viral) infections or resident marauders (such as *Pasteurella* and *E. cuniculi*) to get a foothold and exert their negative influences. Cancers can form from chronic inflammation and exposures to everyday toxins.

5. Sensory deficits - Most people, as well as rabbits, experience some loss of hearing or vision as they age. Head tilts, cataracts, glaucoma, and clogged nasolacrimal ducts, are all things more common in our older friends.

6. Weight fluctuations - Up or down, this can be a problem in itself, but also a complicating factor in the other above categories.

Inevitable as the aging process is, there are ways to help slow its progress or at least lessen the impact. It is extremely important to get your elder bun in to see your veterinarian **AT LEAST** twice a year, even if s/he is seemingly fit as a fiddle. Your observations and detailed history, along with a complete physical exam, help determine if all body systems are functioning properly. Physicals are so named because they require your vet to use physical senses – seeing (discolorations or general appearances), listening (heart, lungs, gut sounds), feeling (normal or abnormal structures), and even sometimes smelling (animals with kidney disease all have a characteristic smell, and the smell of infection is unmistakable), measuring (size, weight, temperature, shape, growth). Comparing physical exam findings to previous findings and established norms helps determine change or progression. Based on conversations and consensus, your vet may wish to run additional tests such as blood panels, radiographs, or urinalysis to be sure all is well.

"I'd rather succeed in doing what we can than fail to do what we can't."

There are many things that can help make the

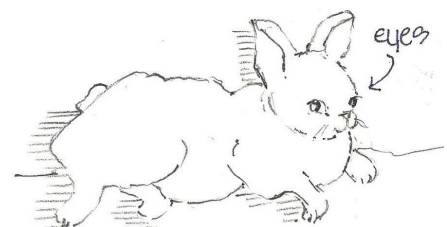
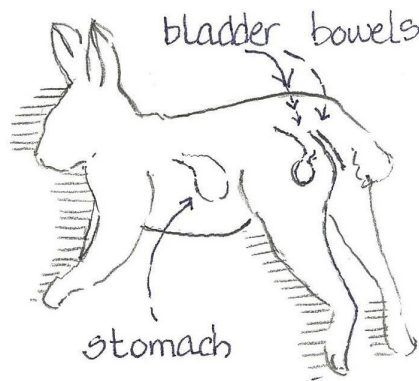
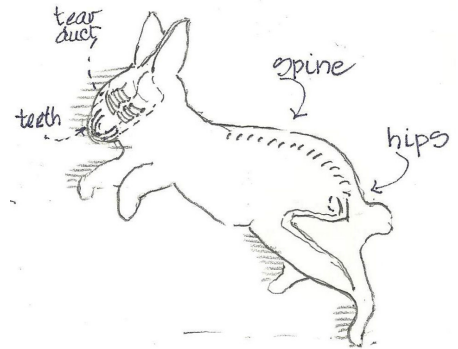
aging process less painful, such as anti-inflammatory medications, acupuncture, laser therapy, vitamins, minerals, and fiber supplementation.

It's amazing how much of a difference a little Meloxicam (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) makes in older rabbits' activity level and demeanor (similar to me after a dose of ibuprofen). I have seen great success stories with both acupuncture and laser therapy, which we find has also helped with the healing of surgical wounds and injuries. Because very few medications are specifically labelled for use in rabbits, it may be necessary to get medications formulated by a compounding pharmacy into a format (such as banana-flavored liquid) that is easy to administer and causes less stress for your rabbit AND you. Some older rabbits enjoy eating supplements as treats (my rabbits look forward to their nightly Oxbow Immune Supplement), or out of your hand, or Critical Care from a dish. You and your vet need to work together to find the combination of modalities that will work the best for your bunny individually. Not all therapies work for all the same way, and a combination approach usually is most effective.

"We all have to meet our match sometime or other."

And, even as it is said that "age is not a disease" in itself, it certainly allows other disease processes to take their toll. When it is clear you can no longer keep your rabbit comfortable, and s/he no longer enjoys typical rabbit things, then hard as it is for you and his/her bond mate or other attachments, it's time to let go.

"My heart has joined the Thousand, for my friend stopped running today."



I finished reading *Watership Down* the day before I did my final edit of this piece. I was pleased that in the end the rabbits found a place where they could live their lives peacefully and with the promise of cooperation by rabbits with similar goals but different ways of achieving those goals. It struck me that the various characters and warrens featured in this book could all be substituted for animal rescue volunteers and groups – all have similar goals of health and happiness for the animals they care for, but each has a slightly different idea of how to go about it, what is acceptable and what is not. And sometimes it is necessary to fight for what one feels is not only acceptable, but ideal. And at the end of the struggles, acceptance of variations and differences with tolerance and cooperation amongst all.

"Love the animals. God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Don't trouble it, don't harass them, don't deprive them of their happiness, don't work against God's intent." Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov"

– Richard Adams, *Watership Down*

Dr. Dornbusch Cron has been practicing small mammal medicine for 22 years. Credit for authoring this article should also be given not only to the rabbits that have been part of her family now and over the years, but also to the many rabbit rescue volunteers, caretakers, and patients that have each affirmed why we do what we do.

Holiday Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!

For our tenth annual holiday raffle we proudly present this beautifully-patterned, handcrafted bunny quilt. Full of personality, it can be displayed on a wall or simply laid on a bed. The pastel colors are perfect for any child's (or even an adult's) room.



Dimensions: 4 feet, 10 inches tall x 4 feet wide

All proceeds will go directly to our foster program and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe and happy holiday season while they await the ultimate gift, a permanent home. Tickets cost \$1 each and you may buy as many as you wish. **All entries must be postmarked no later than December 10, 2015.** Please include your phone number and email (if available) with your check or money order and indicate it's for the raffle. Mail your request to: Buckeye HRS, P.O. Box 5767, Athens, OH 45701. If you prefer, you may pay by credit card through our website -- www.ohare.org/wordpress/support/our-raffle -- for ticket purchases of \$5 or more. The lucky winner will be notified mid-December and will receive the prize in time for holiday gift-giving.



It's Fair Season – Take Action!

Why Fairs Are Not Fair to Rabbits
By Shawwna Lemerise

Step right up and win a baby bunny! It's county fair season and you may find that for a small fee and an impulse, you can play a game of chance and win a rabbit. Since rabbits are often thought of as "starter" pets, their cuteness provides great attraction to carnival games. The bunnies are used to lure children, which encourages impulse buying. However, rabbits are a ten-year commitment and responsibility and there is no way for fair vendors to screen new owners for suitability. Families who take a bunny home from a fair have unknowingly made the common mistake of trusting the misconception that a rabbit is a good pet for a child. So, when a rabbit is won or purchased at a fair, with no instruction on how to care for her, her outlook is grim.

The carnival/fair event staff may not be aware (or care) that this practice is occurring and that it is unethical – which can be devastating to the rabbits involved. In Ohio, there are no laws prohibiting the practice of selling rabbits at auction for fundraisers or giving them away as prizes, or even outlining the conditions in which bunnies should be kept. So, what does this mean for bunnies?



Although the "Animal Scramble" game is no longer practiced in Cottage Grove, Oregon, rabbits are still given away as prizes. Photo courtesy of rabbit.org.

- Many rabbits end up being abandoned and released outside to fend for themselves when taken home by individuals who do not know how to take care of them.



Baby bunnies given as prizes. Photo courtesy of rabbitwise.org.

- Domesticated rabbits cannot fend for themselves outside. They are likely to suffer from starvation and sickness and are easy prey for predators. Unless they are rescued, abandoned rabbits will not survive.
- Fair rabbits won or purchased on impulse are more likely to end up in poor conditions due to a lack of education on proper care. They may end up alone and forgotten in a small cage with little interaction once the child's interest has worn off.
- Of those rabbits that are not released into the wild, they may be surrendered to shelters. However, rabbits are euthanized at alarming rates in animal shelters each year. Selling and breeding domesticated fair



Carnival game featuring rabbits as prizes by a company (Family Attractions Amusement Co. LLC) that operates in North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. Photo courtesy of Peta.org.

rabbits contributes to this overpopulation crisis.

- There is no screening of individuals who take home prize rabbits, which only makes it more likely that the rabbit will not be properly taken care of, neglected, or abandoned.

What can you do to help?

- Attend your local fairs and carnivals and look for booths or stands that have rabbits on display. They may be in a large pen or in cages. The operator of the stand will be either selling rabbits or offering them as prizes in games of chance. Be sure to take note of the conditions.
- Familiarize yourself with your local (city and county) laws against animal abuse and offering live animals as prizes. Although it is not illegal to use rabbits as prizes, abandonment of a companion animal is a punishable offense in the state of Ohio. Violations of abandonment should be reported.
- Report violations to the humane society,

animal control, or the police, especially any injured, sick, mistreated, or abused rabbits.

- If you can, take pictures and document information about the incident to make a case, such as location, time, name of the vendor, and name of the event. Record conditions that the rabbits are in such as absence of food, water, or protection from weather.
- Contact the fair information booth or manager and explain why rabbits should not be sold or used as prizes. Ask if they can speak to the vendor about discontinuing using rabbits.
- Talk directly to the booth operator/vendor about safe care of the rabbits. Print flyers on basic rabbit care and offer them to the vendor to give to new owners.

• Contact your city or county representative to ask for a ban on using live animals as prizes. Cite the offense that took place. If there is no local ordinance against this practice, start a petition to get one passed!

- Call and/or write letters to sponsors of the event and urge them to enact a policy of not using live animal prizes. Encourage others to do the same – the more support, the more likely change will happen.

Remember to stay calm and polite when taking any action and speaking as an activist. Individuals may not be aware that they are doing anything wrong. If you offend or anger someone, arguing with them will probably not help your case and definitely will not help the rabbits. Information and education is our best tool in helping fair rabbits. Our goal is to educate and help people provide better care to rabbits and ensure that they end up in a safe and happy home. And with your help – maybe we can save somebunny!



Somebunny Needs YOU!



Meet **Raven**, she is a big, beautiful and sweet rabbit with shiny black fur. Although shy at first, she is curious and playful. If Poe had met this Raven, he would have rewritten

his poem for her ... Quoth the Raven, "my forever home." **Please contact Michele Roth (bhrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.**



Nikki is a Dutch/English Spot mix with unique black and white markings on her fur. The most adventurous of all the Indiana babies, she is friendly and will be your best friend (for the low, low price of one baby carrot). **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Meet **Lacey**! The mother of the Indiana babies, Lacey was dumped on the porch of a cotton-tail rehabber only to give birth to eleven kits the next day. (She raised the seven babies who survived right here in our foster home.) Lacey is looking for her fur-ever home. She loves baby carrots, cardboard boxes, hay munching (and long walks on the beach – just

kidding). **White bunnies with pink eyes are the hardest for us to adopt out.** Please give her a chance at a life she deserves and show her that she is anything but disposable. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



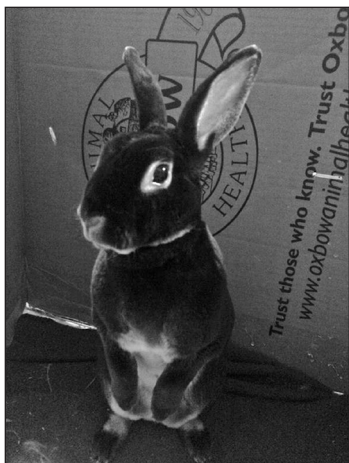
Hello, I'm **Aurora**! I'm an affectionate, super-soft mini rex who craves pets and attention. Bring me home and give me lots of cardboard boxes to destroy, room to run, and an occasional banana slice and we'll be best friends forever. **Please contact Herta Rodina (bhrs-herta@ohare.org) 740-797-3085.**

Humphrey is a very busy boy. He is only about one year old and loves free time away from his pen. He doesn't care for being held (because that takes time away from his freedom to explore, you see). He does love attention and is very people-friendly. Humphrey enjoys shredding up newspaper inside his cardboard box. This little goof ball is sure to make you laugh. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**





Somebunny Needs YOU!



Charlie is a five-year-old mini-rabbit who was previously adopted, but returned three years later due to no fault of his own. He is incredibly soft and loves attention. His energetic spirit is contagious and guaranteed to make you smile. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Guinness is the color of the beverage and has the spunk of a wee Irishman. About one year old, he is adorable and, although very small, he has the personality of a giant. He is sure to delight you with his charm. This great escape artist loves people and food

and will do anything that he can to find either. Guinness will require lots of free range time and attention. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Jameson is the sweetest, most gentle rabbit I have ever met. He will just melt for pets and cuddles. He enjoys every minute of your company. Jamie is about two years old and a little on the small side. Spend some time with this irresistible bunny and you'll fall in love! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

Adopted!

The cows, **Kinsey and Dok** (black and white spotted rabbits), have found a family to love and adore them for years to come. Susan, Jonathan, and their girls Josie and Ella couldn't be happier! ♥ **Cookie Monster**, now known as **Fibonacci** (famous mathematician), is binkying for joy with her forever family. Chelsea, Tim, and new feline friends Breeze and Bella are all thrilled with her arrival. Fibbers couldn't have found a more wonderfully perfect home. ♥ Handsome **Milo** has found his forever home in Southern Ohio with the Wren family. Doug, Amy, their kids, and Bentley the dog are all so happy to have found Milo. Of course Milo is basking in the glow of non-stop attention and love. ♥ **Mr. President (Lincoln)** has found the perfect family for his quirky and brave personality. With his new buddy, Snickers the cat, they are learning more about each other every day (although Snickers still doesn't understand why Mr. President's ears are so big). Congratulations Duffy on the arrival of your new son! ♥ Best bunny pals, **Mia and Mozart** are composing lots of fun in the home of Scott Edwards. ♥ We are happy to announce that long-time foster bunny **Addison** has found her forever home. She is now the Queen she always wanted to be. Congrats, Rushad! ♥ Tiny **Sierra** hopped her way into the hearts of the Sulen family. ♥ **Pee-Wee** has a new home with the Kalvitz family. His new human best friend, Allison, reads him a bedtime story every night. ♥ **Princess Buttercup** found her forever home with Buckeye HRS's own Shawwna Lemerise. The Princess now has three new bunny friends – Booboo, Reese, and Sunday. They are all a big happy family.



Traveling with Rabbits

By Stephanie Ash

Traveling with your hopper can be a harrowing experience, but with preparation, both humans and rabbits can have an enjoyable trip. This article details how to travel with your furry friend by car and airplane. Special thanks to Jessica Wolfinger of Hawaii who provided her experience and insight on flying with four rabbits.

Pre-Travel Preparation

Whether you'll be on the roads or the skyways, there are a few key things every bunny parent should do before traveling with his/her rabbit. First, take your rabbit to the vet for a wellness visit and ask about any special travel considerations you may need to make. While at the veterinarian, fill all prescriptions, stock up on Critical Care, and inquire about a recommendation for a vet at your destination, just in case your rabbit has an emergency. It is also a good idea to get copies of your pet's medical records.

Traveling between states or countries sometimes requires extra paperwork. For instance, when Ms. Wolfinger travelled to Hawaii, she had to obtain a health certificate for her rabbits. Although this is probably not the case for most domestic destinations, it is important to ask your veterinarian and obtain this paperwork if necessary. Ms. Wolfinger also recommends asking the vet about giving your rabbit subcutaneous fluids before air travel since flying can be very stressful and unexpected delays can happen. By giving subcutaneous fluids before flying, you can rest a little easier knowing that your rabbits are hydrated.

Second, pack your rabbit supplies. Besides an emergency kit (I purchased mine at Midwest Bunfest last year, but many are available online), you should include your rabbit's food (pellets, hay, fresh vegetables, and so forth), water and food dishes, toys, litter/bedding, and any other items which will keep your rabbit comfortable. In addition to packing an emergency kit when flying, Ms. Wolfinger recommends packing fresh vegetables and everything you need for your bunnies in your carry-on in case of flight delay.



Secure in her kennel, Sassy is ready to hit the road.

Lastly, do your homework on airline policies and hotel accommodations. Ms. Wolfinger, who flew with two bonded pairs on two separate flights to Hawaii, travelled on United Airlines and recommends researching pet policies thoroughly. According to her, "the carrier counted as one of our carry-on items, and we had to pay \$125 for each animal as their ticket. Each airline has its own pet policy, and because of all sorts of scheduling restrictions, we had to book United. They allow only one animal per carrier in cabin, except for birds, and despite our explaining that our bonded bunnies would be most comfortable sharing a carrier, they insisted that they be separate. United also allowed us only one animal per human passenger, which posed a whole different issue, since there were two of us and four bunnies." Besides different pet policies, each airline has different fees associated with flying with pets and you may save some money by researching different options.

During the second leg of her trip, Ms. Wolfinger used United's Petsafe Pet program, where animals fly in the cargo hold instead of the cabin. She explained, "The Petsafe carrier dimensions are much nicer for



giving the bunnies room to move about and the policy dictates that someone check on the animals at intervals and make sure they have water. Using Petsafe, we were able to put the bonded rabbits together in large hard-sided carriers, so they had their friend with them for the scary plane ride and plenty of room to hop around, should they so desire. There are horror stories from all sides about traveling with pets, but we had a good experience." Although some may be nervous about having their rabbits fly in the cargo hold, Ms. Wolfinger says she had a much better experience with the rabbits in cargo than flying in the cabin with her.

In regards to hotel accommodations, it is my experience that most places that accept dogs will also accept rabbits, but you may need to call the hotel (if booking online) to make sure everything is approved before arrival. About half of the hotels we have travelled to with a rabbit have charged us a pet fee and the other half did not if we promised to keep the rabbit in a cage or kennel. During our recent move to Madison, Wisconsin, we stayed at a Hyatt Place and a Best Western; both had reasonable pet policies and fees and were very accommodating for us and our furry friends.

Traveling the Roads

We recently moved to Madison, Wisconsin and took our dog, Salsa, and rabbit, Sassy, in the car with us. It is about a nine-hour trip, so we decided to break the journey into two four-hour days. Maneuvering our rabbit Sassy into and out of the hotel rooms and car was easier with her in a hard-bottomed kennel, so that is what she travelled in. She had her litterbox and soft bedding to keep her comfortable during the ride, and while I would not say she enjoyed traveling, she was a trooper! We made sure to secure her kennel so that it would not move around while we drove, and the passenger checked on her throughout the trip. In case of an emergency, we also packed her carrier so we could easily transport her to a vet. Thankfully, this was not necessary, and it served as a great container to hold all of her supplies.

The traveling was mostly uneventful. We would drive for a couple of hours and then stop for about 45 minutes to give the pets a break. During each break, I would offer Sassy a bowl of water to hydrate, and provide lots of pats and kind words to soothe her. To cut down on the amount of stop-and-go with the car, we also invested in an EZ Pass transponder so we could bypass the long toll lines and keep driving without interruption. This seemed to work well for

both animals and I would highly recommend it to anyone driving on toll roads with pets.

Traveling the Skyways

When Ms. Wolfinger travelled to Hawaii she travelled with soft carriers since they fit under the airline seats. However, in her opinion, traveling with a hard carrier would have been ideal since they are safer, but size restrictions limited her to using soft carriers. She recommends putting "a soft layer on the bottom of the carrier, since air travel takes a long time and you want the rabbits to be as comfortable as possible. We layered puppy pads on the bottom of our carriers to absorb the pee, and then stuffed the carrier full of hay. You could potentially attach hanging toys to the sides of the carrier to amuse the rabbit, and definitely bring travel-friendly water and food dishes."

Most of us stress about going through security, and going through security with rabbits seems like it would be very challenging; however, according to Ms. Wolfinger, "security was fine." She describes the process: "Security makes you remove the rabbits from their carriers and we just went through the metal detector, holding the pet. The carriers themselves went through the luggage x-ray and were inspected. Security didn't actually touch the bunnies, which was better for them and us. Once through the scanners/belts we were able to put the bunnies back."

Boarding the plane with rabbits can be a bit tricky, so Ms. Wolfinger recommends asking to board the plane first. "Putting luggage in the overhead and making sure the bunnies are comfortable is quite time consuming. The rabbit carrier has to go all the way under the seat. I was very happy that we took up our own row, because I can't imagine dealing with extra persons needing to get in and out of the seats with the bunnies there." She also recommends packing water and hay in your carry-on in case there are lengthy delays in boarding the plane. This happened to her and it was difficult to find water to refill her rabbits' dishes.

Let's Go!

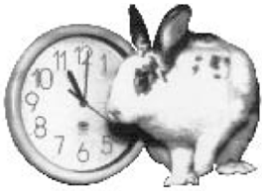
Traveling with rabbits can be an enjoyable experience as long as you make the necessary preparations in advance. Talking with your vet, packing the proper supplies, and doing your homework are key to a hassle-free trip. Taking frequent breaks when driving and knowing your airline's pet policy are great ways to make traveling a pleasant experience. Whether you are driving or flying, safe travels to you and your bun!



Buckeye House Rabbit Society

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