

ANIMAL BITES

ISSUE 10
WINTER 2017

SAFEYOUTH
Kids' Voice 4 Animals



THE SAFE YOUTH NEWSLETTER

FOR KIDS WHO KNOW THAT ANIMALS MATTER.

This issue of *Animal Bites* is all about rabbits. Rabbits are amazing creatures; they are playful, smart and social. Sadly, they also face problems such as being used for animal testing. There are lots of ways you can help rabbits. Find out more in this issue.

A HOPPY-HAPPY BUNNY

Did you know that when bunnies are happy they binky? This is where they run, jump, twist their body and flick their feet.



ANIMAL PROFILE: RABBITS

Scientific name

Oryctolagus cuniculus

Lifespan

Wild rabbits live around 1-3 years.
Domestic rabbits live around 7-10 years.

Evolution

Lagomorphs, the group of animals rabbits belong to, evolved at least 40 million years ago.

Ancestry

Wild rabbits are thought to have been domesticated around 1400 years ago. The European rabbit is the only widely domesticated rabbit. They have been bred to be much larger than wild ones. Selective breeding has also led to a wide range of sizes of rabbits.



A bunny binky

RABBIT CHARACTERISTICS AND BIOLOGY

SOCIAL

Rabbits are very social animals that live in groups in burrows called warrens. Rabbit families are matriarchal, which means the females are in charge.

HEARING

Rabbits' ears can move independently of one another, which helps them work out where a sound is coming from. They also have excellent hearing and can detect sounds from far away.

EYESIGHT

Rabbits can see in nearly all directions around them with only a small blind spot in front of their nose. They are good at seeing things moving far away but do not have very good vision up close.

TEETH

Rabbits have 28 teeth. Their teeth are open-rooted, meaning they continuously grow throughout a rabbit's life, and are worn down by chewing on tough, fibrous plant material.

INTELLIGENCE

Rabbits can learn tricks, solve problems and react to cues, such as coming when called.

BODY SIZE

The European rabbit weighs about 1 to 2.5kg in weight while domestic breeds range from around 1 kg to 6.5kg.

SMELL

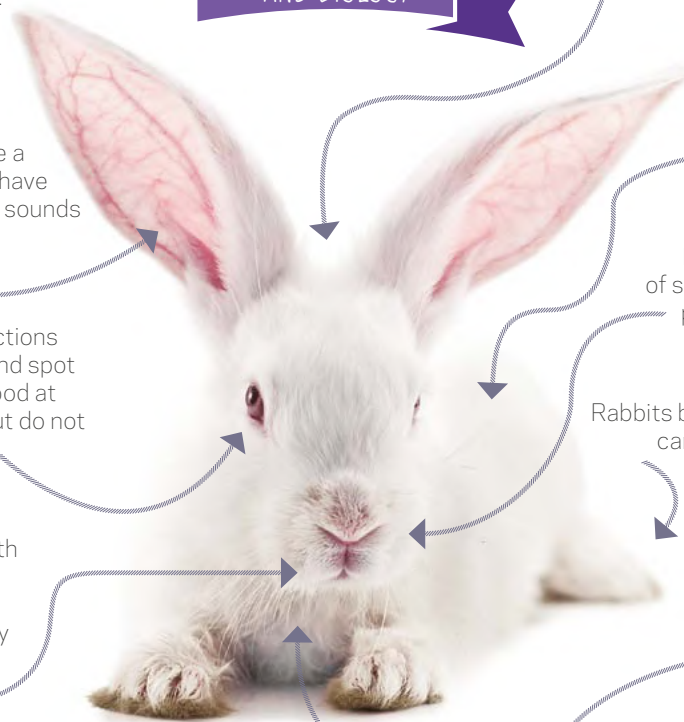
Rabbits have an excellent sense of smell. Wild rabbits will likely smell predators before they see them.

LEGS

Rabbits back legs are super strong. They can jump nearly three metres long.

EMOTION

Like most mammals rabbits are capable of emotions such as anger, fear, grief, contentment and love. Angry rabbits bite, growl and lunge with their front paws. Content rabbits flop and roll on the ground.



ANIMALS IN TROUBLE

ANIMAL TESTING

Though animal testing for cosmetics is banned in New Zealand, products tested on animals overseas can still be brought into New Zealand. Rabbits are commonly used for testing because they are small, gentle, and they do not have tear ducts so they cannot wash out harmful material from their eyes.

HUNTING

Sadly, wild rabbits are considered pests in New Zealand, so it is not illegal to hunt them. Hunting is cruel. Some animals suffer long painful deaths while others suffer from being wounded or injured.

COMPANION RABBITS

In January, this year the Auckland SPCA had over 60 rabbits in its care. This was twice what it would have normally. All around New Zealand there are many more rabbits in shelters that need homes. Sadly, some people get animals as Christmas gifts but do not want them and so they end up at animal

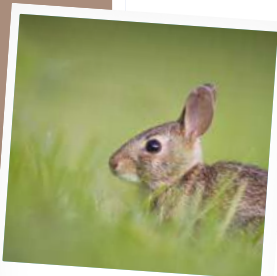
shelters. Other times people do not get their rabbits de-sexed and end up with unwanted litters that also end up at animal shelters.

RABBIT FUR

One breed of rabbit, called the Angora rabbit, is often kept for their fur. Life on fur farms can be awful for animals. They are kept alone in cages so their fur is not damaged. These cages do not allow the animals to express their natural behaviours. Around 90% of Angora wool comes from China where there are no real animal welfare laws protecting the rabbits. Angora fur is often pulled out by hand, which is extremely painful.

RABBIT CALICIVIRUS - DISEASE

In 1997, rabbit calicivirus was illegally released into New Zealand. This virus can also affect domestic rabbits. The rabbits can become paralysed, struggle to breathe, and take up to three days to die.



TIPS

TO HELP ANIMALS

1 BUY CRUELTY-FREE PRODUCTS – FREE FROM ANIMAL TESTING

Buying cruelty-free products (not tested on animals) is an easy way to help animals. If you need help finding cruelty-free products you can download SAFEshopper on a smart phone or find it online at safe.org.nz.



2 SAY NO TO HUNTING

Say no to hunting and encourage others to say no to hunting as well.

3 TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT HELPING ANIMALS

Talking to others about helping animals is really important. You can talk to them about avoiding fur in clothes or help them find some cruelty-free products for their house.

4 SUPPORT ANIMAL SHELTERS – ADOPT ONLY SHELTER ANIMALS

Getting an animal from a pet shop or breeder can mean the ones in animal shelters never get adopted. If you are looking for a companion animal check out your local shelter; there are always animals looking for forever homes.

5 SAY NO TO FUR

Fur farming is cruel. These animals are forced to live in small cages that do not let them perform their natural behaviours.



6 CARE FOR YOUR BUNNY

If you adopt a companion rabbit from an animal shelter it is important to make sure you take care of them properly.

1. Ensure they have safe housing and plenty of space to run around.
2. Provide fresh meadow hay, not lucerne hay.
3. Provide fresh greens, rabbit pellets, and water.
4. Groom your rabbit.
5. Learn your rabbit's behaviour and language.
6. Find a vet who knows about rabbits and get your rabbit spayed or neutered.
7. Vaccinate your rabbit against calicivirus.
8. If your rabbit spends time indoors make sure to keep electrical wires covered or about one metre out of their reach.
9. Rabbits are social so should not be kept alone. Only keep boys and girls together if they have been spayed or neutered.

TOP TIPS:

Rabbits are prey animals and so do not usually like being picked up.

As prey animals, rabbits hide illness well so learning their behaviour and looking for things that are not normal is important.

FOR MORE TIPS ON RABBIT CARE SEE:

www.kids.spcaeducation.org.nz/animal-care/rabbits

To learn more about rabbit language go to:
www.language.rabbitspeak.com



KIND FOOD

The best thing you can do for animals is to stop eating them. Try this stew, it is a great winter-warmer.



Winter Stew

UTENSILS:

- Knife
- Chopping board
- Something to stir with
- Measuring cup
- Blender
- Big pot

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 potatoes
- 1 or 2 kumara
- 3 cloves of garlic crushed
- 1 onion
- 4 stalks of celery
- 4 carrots
- 4 cups of vegetable stock
- 1 can tomatoes
- ½ C of soaked dates (4-6 dates)
- ½ tsp each of basil, oregano, thyme, sage, and rosemary

INSTRUCTIONS

- Dice the onions.
- In the big pot, sauté (fry quickly) the onions and garlic in a little bit of oil.
- Add the four cups of vegetable stock to the pot.
- While the broth heats, dice the potato, kumara, celery and carrots and add to the pot.
- Blend the tomatoes, dates and herbs then add to the pot.
- Season to taste.
- Cover the pot and simmer for 40 minutes to 1 hour.

ENJOY!

Code cracker

BREAK THESE CODES TO FREE THE RABBIT FROM THE CAGE.
THE FIRST LETTER IN EACH CODE IS PROVIDED TO GET YOU STARTED.



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THE KEY
IS AT THE
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PAGE SIX.

SAFE KIDS FOR ANIMALS

This is where we recognise your action for animals.

SAFE YOUTH
Kids' Voice 4 Animals

LILLIAN (10) AND ZARA (10)

Lillian and Zara have been doing a lot to help animals. They both went vegetarian at the start of the year. They have been putting up posters to raise public awareness about animal issues and have even started their own campaign called 'Say No To Animal Cruelty.'



They started a petition on change.org; you can find it by going to goo.gl/iWXLrC.

BAILEY'S (10) BUNNY, SPLASH

This is Bailey's bunny, Splash. He loves running and jumping about. He loves to eat vegetables and gets lots of them. He also binkies a lot, which rabbits do when they are happy.



LILY (11) WITH HER CAT GINNY AND HER RABBIT LOPSY

Lily saved up her pocket money this year and donated \$50 to SAFE. Amazing work, Lily. But that is not the only thing she has been doing, Lily is also part of an animal rights group at her school and they had a bake sale to raise money for SAFE.



MAZOE, JORJA, KAI, LILY, ZEN AND ELLA (THE WAIKATO WALDORF SCHOOL ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP)

Mazoe, Jorja, Kai, Lily, Zen and Ella had a vegan bake sale after school in the pouring rain. Even though it was raining they still managed to raise \$250.70. Amazing work, all of you!

SAFE YOUTH PROFILE

Name: Cerys

Age: 10

Hometown: Lower Hutt

Favourite animal: Dolphin

What got you interested in wanting to help animals?

I love animals. They are amazing and intelligent. They are just the same as humans. Animals are independent but human beings are making it harder for them to survive.

What is your favourite veg food?

Everything! Dahl, dumplings, pasta, tofu, rice.

Anything you want to share about animals?

I especially love sea life. Sharks are very misunderstood. Did you know that sharks have table manners? If great white sharks see a whale carcass they line up and take turns eating (some of them anyway!) When I grow up I want to be a marine biologist because sea creatures are amazing.



CERYS





by Isla (13)

Isla recently did a speech for her English class on animal testing, rights and abuse. Then she wrote a poem about animal testing and shared it with us. Here is her poem.

Over 100 million animals killed each year,
Cooped up in cages they shiver in fear.

Chemicals rubbed into shaved off hair,
Why do we treat them like this it's so unfair.

No pain relief after all this,
These animals are definitely not in bliss.

You can all help these animals if you care,
Some of the ways I've listed here.

This is for all animals treated bad,
They all must be so very sad.

Don't buy factory farmed meat,
To me these animals taste sad to eat.

Don't buy animal tested makeup,
How would you like to never wake up.

Don't support cruelty to these creatures,
The chemicals and beatings ruining their features.



These animals deserve to be treated better,
And I hope to help them through this letter.

IT'S FREE!

JOIN SAFE YOUTH

If you are 8-14 you can join SAFE Youth for free. Sign up online at SAFE.org.nz/safe-youth, or email alex@safe.org.nz.



safe.org.nz



TALKING ANIMAL TESTING WITH STEPHEN FROM SAFE

Stephen used to be the executive director of the New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society (NZAVS) which works to end animal testing in New Zealand. He is now a campaign officer and policy advisor for SAFE.

Why do people do animal testing?

Worldwide, animal testing is done for basic animal research, product testing (of cosmetics, household cleaners, all sorts of chemicals), and developing medicines for people and animals.

In New Zealand a lot of the research focuses on making more money for animal agriculture industries. Some of the most painful experiments involve traps and poisons, for 'pest' control.

What kinds of animals are used in these tests?

Around 300,000 animals are experimented on in New Zealand every year. Sheep and cows are the most common animals used, followed by rodents (rats and mice) and then rabbits, and fish. There is a small number of dogs and cats, chickens and other birds, goats, and possums used.

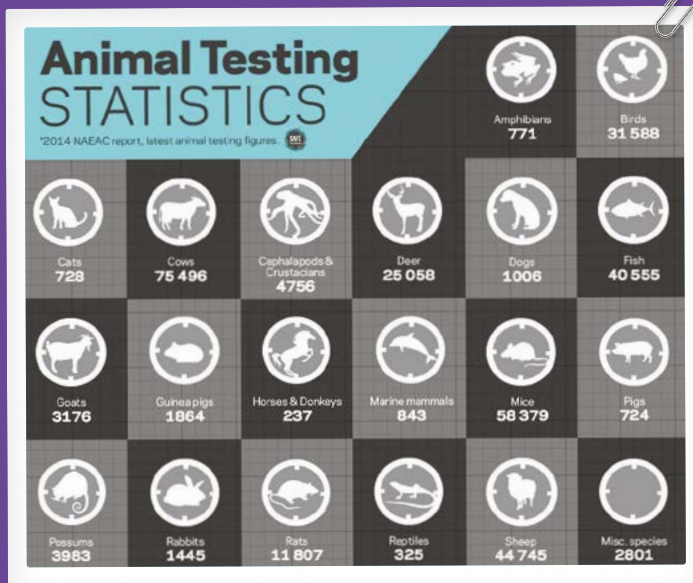
Why is animal testing bad?

Drugs and diseases often behave quite differently from one animal to another. For example, sepsis is a disease that causes swelling and pain that can kill people. After 20 years of research on mice scientists developed more than 150 cures for sepsis. None of them has helped people with sepsis. Some of the drugs they created have even made people feel worse.

It is not fair for us to use animals as pieces of lab equipment. When people were asked about animal testing recently in the United States, half of the population thought using animals for medical research was wrong.

What will replace animal testing?

Scientific tests that do not involve animals have existed for a while and new discoveries are being made all the time. Some scientists are now using 3D models of organs that include human cells. Some testing is done using 'organoids' - miniature, simplified models of organs also made using human cells. These alternative tests can give better results than animal tests.



For more information on animal testing go to safe.org.nz/issues/animal-testing.

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Code cracker key

