



# RABBITS

## Rabbits in Richmond

and beyond

Community Awareness

Richmond, BC

2015-2016



# **RABBITATS Rescue Society**

[rabbitats@gmail.com](mailto:rabbitats@gmail.com); [www.rabbitats.org](http://www.rabbitats.org); 604-608-1300; Vancouver, BC

**Rabbitats Rescue Society** is a non-profit that promotes sanctuary rescue for abandoned pet rabbits and their feral offspring by developing predator-proof, sustainable, visually appealing and gently interactive colony environments for the rabbits focusing on low maintenance and sustainable care.

The organization was formed by key entities involved in the rescue and relocation of close to 1000 rabbits from the University of Victoria campus in 2010 and 2011, and we just wrapped up the rescue of 400 rabbits from the Richmond Auto Mall.

The organization built and maintains a sanctuary south Surrey, BC., and has implemented a number of smaller 'rabbitats' around the lower mainland.

Our headquarters -- our office and a rabbit holding area -- is temporarily housed at the Richmond Auto Mall, but we are currently in need of a new space.



***Abandoned Domestic rabbits and their feral offspring:  
Love them or hate them, they don't belong out there.***





# What Is A Feral Rabbit?

- Rabbitats considers rabbits 'feral' when they are born outside and not contained.
- "Abandoned pets" are rabbits born in captivity and then set loose; the ferals are the offspring of abandoned pets.
- We differentiate between feral rabbits, house rabbits and farm or hutch rabbits because we try to provide housing based on their comfort zones. A rabbit born outside prefers outside, house born rabbits prefer life inside. (Farm and hutch rabbits can go either way).
- Ferals are still domestic, they like to stay near humans (and away from predators) and remain friendly (until you try and catch them)
- A rabbit showing no fear may still be a feral rabbit, while a very skittish rabbit may be a dumped pet.

-(con't)



# Feral Rabbit? Or Dumped Pet?

- Rabbits that stand out to us also stand out to predators, so they rarely last long in the wild.
- If you're looking at a big white rabbit with pink eyes, a bunny with floppy ears, one with tiny ears and a flat face, fuzzy or long-haired rabbits, or rabbits with 'manes', 'mutton chops' or 'mule ears,' these are probably recently dumped pets.
- Some white rabbits do survive, but often for only for a few generations.





# Or 'Wild' Rabbit?

- All non-brown rabbits are domestic.
- Brown rabbits can be wild or domestic.
- A 'wild' rabbit in BC is an Eastern Cottontail or one of the native hares found in the area.
- Their brown 'ticked' colour, called 'agouti', can also be the colour of a domestic rabbit, but the cottontails are more angular with thicker hind legs.
- Cottontails don't burrow other than to make shallow impressions in the ground for their nests, which are often on flat ground, and their kits born with fur.
- Loose domestic rabbits (all descended from wild European rabbits not found here) tend to burrow on hillsides and under structures and give birth to naked babies underground.
- The Eastern Cottontail is not native to BC and also considered invasive.

*Pictured: clockwise from top – Eastern Cottontail, European rabbit (wild in Europe), domestic Netherland Dwarf, Flemish Giant*



# History

Why are the rabbits a problem now when they weren't before?

- The rabbit issue in BC (like other areas) is relatively new and likely influenced by the formation of the House Rabbit Society in 1988, 30 years ago.
- The California-based organization, now world-wide, has been heavily promoting rabbits as house pets.
- Unfortunately this leads to more rabbits and more abandonment.





# Invasive Species

- The rabbits are classified as an invasive alien species.
- It only took Australia 50 years to go from the release of 24 rabbits in to needing a 3,256 km rabbit-proof fence so there is good reason for this.
- However, even the Invasive Species Council and recent programs announced by both the City of Richmond and the Province of BC fail to mention the domestic rabbits, much less allot funds to help with their control.
- The have, however, conducted educational campaigns and printed information sheets warning people not to release their pets.



## Invasive Species Action Month Don't Let it Loose

June 2015

### FACT SHEET

#### Invasive species are moving across BC and Canada at a rapid pace:

- In Canada, invasive species include at least 27% of all vascular plants, 181 insects, 24 birds, 26 mammals, 2 reptiles, 4 amphibians, several fungi and molluscs, and 55 freshwater fish.
- The cost of invasive species to Canada is between \$16.6 billion and \$34.5 billion per year. Invasive species cause increased maintenance costs to public parks and private property, devaluing real estate.
- Just six invasive plants caused an estimated combined damage of at least \$65 million in 2008. With further spread, impacts will more than double to \$139 million by 2020.
- Some of the most serious invasive species were originally sold as pets or plants for water gardens and aquariums.



#### Releasing pets into the wild is both inhumane and dangerous:

- British Columbia is home to several introduced invasive pet species; pet owners release these species thinking it is a humane way to get rid of the animal.
- Although most released exotic pets will die from starvation or be killed by a predator or a car, however several species have the ability to thrive and reproduce in their new environment. Along with impacts on the environment, releasing invasive species has many economic and social impacts.
- Releasing an exotic pet into an unsuitable habitat is considered animal cruelty and charges can be laid (BC SPCA).
- Charges for neglecting a pet, including releasing it into the wild, can include a fine up to \$10,000 and/or up to 18 months in prison (BC SPCA).
- The following exotic pet and plant species are commonly released into the wild, and have had serious impacts on BC's native ecosystems and natural flora and fauna:
  - Red Eared Slider Turtles
  - European Rabbit
  - Goldfish
  - Eurasian Watermilfoil
  - Parrot Feather
  - American Bullfrog
  - Brazilian Elodea
  - Koi Carp
- Plants and animals should never be released into the wild: For information on actions to take visit [www.bcinvasives.ca](http://www.bcinvasives.ca) and [www.bcinvasivesmonth.com](http://www.bcinvasivesmonth.com)
- Any sightings of these or other invasive species should be reported to the local invasive species committee. (<http://bcinvasives.ca/about/partners/>).



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# So Who Is Responsible For the Rabbits?

- Cats and dogs are simply 'pets,' but rabbits are classified as pets, farm animals and wildlife leading to confusion and large cracks in the system.
- **Provincial policy** greatly contributed to the feral rabbit issue.
- While pets and farm rabbits fall under the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations deemed loose domestic rabbits 'wildlife' (Schedule C) when 'not continuously contained since birth'.
- Until recently, they stated that a permit application was required to pick up even recently abandoned pets, but permits weren't granted unless the rabbits were exported to the U.S. thus handcuffing non-profit rescues.
- It also created confusion at the municipal level, while some shelters embraced rabbit control, others did not, citing the provincial 'wildlife' designation.
- Recently FLNROUD eased the requirements so while the European rabbits remain under Schedule C, anybody can trap and possess them without a permit.
- We still do NOT support the wildlife designation nor this ministry's control of the rabbits as it's still creating confusion, loopholes and ambiguous responsibilities .
- Most recently actions dealing with a virus affecting domestic rabbits that would normally fall under agriculture ended up with FLNROUD because the first rabbits affected were feral, creating a greatly fragmented response.
- This has nothing to do with 'saving' the rabbits, any government can order them destroyed, but everything to do with consistency and cutting red tape.



## Rabbit rescue group fears bunny boom

It's spring and it's Easter and that means one thing in particular for the Lower Mainland—lots of rabbits!

And this year's mild winter may mean burgeoning numbers this summer.

The abandoned domestic rabbits and their offspring are running amuck in areas throughout Richmond.

A quick tour of Richmond shows baby bunnies everywhere including such unlikely places as the Richmond Auto Mall and even busier downtown boulevards and parking lots.

Why is Richmond so lucky to have all these rabbit feet this year? Their close proximity to densely populated centres help them ward off predators, but along with the unusually mild weather, the area is suffering the fallout from last year's Year of the Rabbit. Heightened interest invariably leads to an equal percentage of subsequent disinterest.

Pet stores no longer sell rab-

bits in Richmond, but the friendly ferals were easy to catch, albeit illegally.

The wildlife office, now under the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources, considers the pet rabbits feral and 'wildlife' (and an invasive alien species) as long as they're not contained.

The ministry supports trapping the rabbits for euthanization only. They have indicated they will not support possession, even if the rabbits are sterilized and have secure new homes.

Rescue groups like Rabbitats, which is designed to trap, sterilize and promote sanctuary housing for the rabbits, are being discouraged which also eliminates control over sterilization and containment.

Rabbitats will be hosting an Easter Bunny Fest at the Richmond Auto Mall on Sunday, April 8 (Easter Sunday) from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an information table, a garage sale and a bake sale to raise awareness and funds for sanctuaries and shelters.



October 24, 2012

# THE VANCOUVER SUN

## BC rules out more sanctuaries for feral rabbits at Richmond Auto Mall

METRO VANCOUVER - Feral rabbits in Richmond can be humanely killed, adopted as pets or exported to rabbit sanctuaries in the U.S. but not allowed to live out their lives in sanctuaries in B.C., according to a wildlife biologist with the provincial government.

Brent Gurd said once rabbits are released by pet owners in B.C., they're considered feral animals — non-native invasive species.

Gurd considers the sanctuary established to solve the rabbit problem at the University of Victoria in 2009 to be a one-off solution.

"We're not looking to run large number of sanctuaries for large numbers of rabbits," he said.

In Richmond, feral rabbits remain a nuisance at the city's auto mall, which wants to find new homes for about 300 rabbits.

Gurd said if the auto mall is willing to pledge financial support for the rabbits in a sanctuary, the ministry might consider looking at that option. But he said the ministry hasn't had any discussion with Richmond Auto Mall about supporting a sanctuary.

Gail Terry, the mall's general manager, said what the mall wants to do is catch the rabbits, spay them and contain them in a secure home where they can't escape. But she feels she's come up against a brick wall with the provincial government and its refusal to allow the rabbits to be caught and sent to a sanctuary, as was done with the rabbits in Victoria.

"I'm an animal lover and animal welfare advocate and I'm trying to do the right thing," she said. "There is no way I could ever be the one to give the word to an extermination company to round up all these guys. That is what the provincial government would like us to — unequivocally.

"They can't stay in the auto mall — they're getting run over. It's just not the right place for anyone's pet to hang around."

Not only do the rabbits eat plants on the manicured grounds, they get killed by cars as they cross Jacobs Road into the wooded Richmond Nature Park near Westminster Highway.

Terry said the auto mall is willing to contribute toward covering the cost of spaying and neutering and help develop rabbit habitats, or "rabbittats," to house the animals.

"This is not back in the early 1900s where we didn't have the knowledge of other ways to come up with solutions," she said. "Let's make it happen and do the right thing for animals."

Gurd said running a sanctuary is a huge financial undertaking. The sanctuary in Coombs on Vancouver Island hasn't been without its problems, he said. Some rabbits have escaped into the wild and neighbours have complained.

Gurd said running a sanctuary is a huge, long-term undertaking. Although people try to take on the burden, they often don't have the resources to look after them, he said.

"It is expensive and often there isn't the money available," said Gurd, who works in the resource management branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. "People want to take it on but don't have the resources to look after them."

The organization the Richmond Auto Mall wants to work with in solving the feral rabbit problem is Rabbittats Rabbit Rescue operated by Sorelle Saidman.

Based on a sanctuary that a friend of Saidman's ran in Maine in the U.S. called Rabbittats for Humanity, Saidman proposes a bulk rescue idea for 50 to 80 rabbits at a time. She said if the provincial government was willing to allow the sanctuaries on agricultural land, she would be able to operate them on sites already offered in Surrey, Delta and Maple Ridge.

Susan Vickery runs the Earth Animal Rights or EAR sanctuary at Coombs located west of Parksville. It's home to about 600 rabbits that used to roam at the University of Victoria. After EAR raised about \$80,000, the rabbits were captured and spayed and taken to the sanctuary starting in 2009.

Vickery said the province did make her jump through a lot of hoops to set up the sanctuary. She said that was necessary to make sure the rabbits have a long-term home.

"You have to have the animals sterilized, secure sanctuary. You have to show sustainable support. They're not going to have you house them someplace and starve them to death."

Vickery said she didn't have any objections to the ministry's guidelines on setting up her sanctuary.

"They're absolutely good," she said. "The ministry has a huge interest in seeing these projects are successful and that these animals don't suffer."

# RICHMOND news

## News

### Rabbits wrapped in red tape

Delay has multiplied problem of remaining feral population at auto mall

By PHILIP RAPHAEL  
praphael@richmond-news.com

Wrapping up an attempt to rescue and relocate a group of Richmond's feral rabbits in red tape is just plain wrong.

That's the view of officials at Rabbitats who said a delay at the provincial level has multiplied the problem — literally — at the Richmond Auto Mall.

Rabbitats has already trapped a government-mandated quota of 50 bunnies from the 65 or so feral rabbits living in and around the auto mall, but has been prevented from collecting the remainder whose numbers have since increased.

The problem stems, Rabbitats claims, from a delay while officials at B.C.'s Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Branch sort out their internal policies.

Rabbitats had a permit to transport the 50 rabbits to a sanctuary in Washington State, which adhered to gov-



JOHN CORREIA  
Special to the News

**The rabbit population** has multiplied at the Richmond Auto Mall, while a rabbit rescue group waits for B.C.'s Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Branch to sort out its policies.

ernment's export only policy.

But some of the bunnies proved too small and fragile to be housed at the Washington facility. And that prompted Rabbitats to ask for those rabbits to be relocated to homes in B.C. first.

And while the province has okayed private adoptions, they have denied permission for so-called "sanctuaries" to take them.

The sticking point is the government's definition of "sanctuary," said Rabbitats' Sorelle Saidman.

"Is a hobby farm a sanctuary? I don't think so," she said. "These people are wanting to adopt the rabbits and care for them for life. This isn't a non-profit rescue, it's just people with the space and money adopting a family of abandoned rabbits."

The permit for Washington State has now expired, meaning all the rabbits are now in limbo.

"The delay is an incredible burden on the Auto Mall and the rescue," said Richmond Auto Mall man-

ager Gail Terry.

"We had spay/neuter and long-term support budgets, and homes lined up for every rabbit — and then some — when we started. We have 'Rabbitville' set up in a building scheduled to be demolished in the fall.

"The breeding rabbits mean we're going to have to trap mothers and leave babies in the nest, which is upsetting. The budget is going to balloon. It's a terrible hardship on all of us. It's insane."

No one from the B.C.'s Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Branch was available for comment.



Send us your  
feedback





# Richmond rabbit rescue runs aground on shoal of red tape

JESSICA BARRETT, VANCOUVER SUN 08.02.2013 |

A local rescue organization says its efforts to help a colony of feral rabbits live happily ever after have been handcuffed by government red tape.

Fifty of the furry creatures have been stranded in a spare garage at the Richmond Auto Mall, while officials with the province's fish and wildlife branch determine whether they can issue permits for their transfer to safe harbour in B.C.

Meanwhile, 15 rabbits that remained in the wild have bred like, well, rabbits and have now become another colony of 50, said Sorelle Saidman of Rabbitats Rabbit Rescue.

Her group trapped the first 50 rabbits, the maximum allowed under provincial law, around the Auto Mall in January and February and secured a permit to transfer them to a rabbit sanctuary in Washington state.

When it became apparent some of the animals weren't healthy enough to make the journey, Rabbitats found local homes willing to adopt them, mostly hobby farms and acreages offering to take small colonies. This caused internal debate at the government branch as to whether adoptive homes break its policies.

The province said it would no longer allow rabbits to be housed in sanctuaries in B.C. after 500 rabbits rescued from the University of Victoria wound up at an animal sanctuary in Coombs a few years ago. At issue in the case of the Richmond rabbits is whether hobby farms constitute adoptive homes, which are allowed, or sanctuaries, which are not.

"All we need is five homes taking 10 rabbits and all of the rabbits would be housed," said an exasperated Saidman. "We thought this would be really easy, but no. They will not allow sanctuaries in B.C. and they haven't figured out internally their definition of sanctuary."

While the province haggled over definitions, Rabbitats' permit to transfer the rabbits to the U.S. expired, and officials now appear unsure of how to issue another one, Saidman said.

"It should be easy. This is just paperwork," she said, noting the government has clear policies allowing people to trap and kill rabbits, but appears mired in bureaucracy when it comes to helping them survive.

However, Brennan Clarke, spokesman for the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, said the terms of the original permit stated that the rabbits would be



The 15 rabbits that remained in the wild at the Richmond Auto Mall have bred like, well, rabbits and have now become another colony of 50, said Sorelle Saidman of Rabbitats Rabbit Rescue. GERRY KAHRMANN / PNG

moved to a sanctuary in Washington state. "Staff have been working with them to complete the conditions of the original permit agreed to, after which future options may be explored."

Clarke said that characterizing the failure of the applicant to fulfil the agreed conditions of the permit as government red tape is a "deep misrepresentation of ministry staff's efforts on this issue."

Referring to the prospect of adopting the rabbits out to private homes, Clarke noted that the feral European rabbit is non-native, known to destroy property (including agricultural crops) and detrimental to native wildlife and their habitats.

"For these reasons, the province's wildlife experts recommend the options of either: 1) sterilization and relocation to a secure facility out of province, or 2) humane euthanization."

He said the province supports local government initiatives to pass bylaws limiting the sale of rabbits in their communities, and does not support the release of any feral European rabbits into the wild, public parks or wildlife management areas as they compete for food and habitat with native species.

"The province reminds the public that the feral European rabbit is listed under the Wildlife Act for good reason: it is a non-native species, which requires certain management actions."

Meanwhile, the remaining rabbits on the Auto Mall grounds are procreating at an exponential pace. Rabbits become sexually mature in just four months, Saidman said, and can have litters as frequently as every 31 days. With August statistically the month with the highest rate of pregnancy for rabbits, a population boom may well be on the way.

Saidman said the lag time caused by the government has eaten up a window when the population was relatively low due to a wet spring in 2012.

Gail Terry, manager of the Richmond Auto Mall Association, said she's frustrated the government is standing in the way of community efforts to "do what we feel is the right thing."

Many volunteers have raised funds and fed the trapped bunnies, which have been spayed and neutered and are well cared for, but time is running out to get them to their new homes. The Auto Mall has budgeted \$60,000 to care for the rabbits, she said.

August 2, 2013  
Pg A4

THE VANCOUVER SUN



## **Richmond Auto Mall** rabbits at risk because of government red tape

By [Christine Tam](#) Global News



Government red tape is preventing an animal rescue group from trying to tackle the growing rabbit population at **the Richmond Auto Mall**.

[Rabbitats Rabbit Rescue](#) wants to trap and relocate the abandoned domesticated bunnies, but they say government policy is stopping them.

"We had a permit to ship 50 rabbits to a sanctuary in Washington State," said Rabbitats director Sorelle Saidman. "The government policy is to only export the rabbits, for some reason they won't let us set up sanctuaries in B.C."

Saidman said they ended up with around 20 rabbits that were not healthy enough to go to the Washington State sanctuary, so they asked for changes to the permit so the bunnies could go to private homes in B.C.

Although the rescue group has had numerous offers to take in the rabbits, including a hobby farm and homes with acreage, the Department of Forests,



Lands and Natural Resource Operations has denied permission.

"They're trying to help... but right now these little guys are classified as wildlife and there's just nowhere they can go according to the government," Saidman said.

Meanwhile, the original permit has expired, leaving the fate of all 50 rabbits in limbo.

Although the ministry told Global News they are committed to getting all of the rabbits into safe homes, right now many are still at the auto mall – a dangerous place for a bunny to be.

The issue of the over-population of bunnies is also frustrating for the auto mall.

"The breeding rabbits mean we're going to have to trap mothers and leave babies in the nest, which is upsetting. The budget is going to balloon. It's a terrible hardship on all of us. It's insane. There's no common sense here," said Richmond Auto Mall manager Gail Terry in a statement to Rabbitat. While the bunnies wait to be saved, they will continue to multiply.

"We left 15 or 20 on the grounds thinking we'd be able to trap them before anything happened, but they started breeding and multiplying and soon enough we'll be back where we were," Saidman said.

*With files from Jennifer Palma*



# Fur flies over B.C. rabbit rules

**WILDLIFE:** Advocates pushing for updated regulations concerning feral bunnies

STEPHANIE IP  
THE PROVINCE

Local animal advocates are pulling out their 'hars' over what they're calling outdated wildlife rules surrounding the capture and rescue of feral rabbits.

Patricia Tallman, an environmental policy consultant, and a group of local animal-rescue societies and stakeholders are calling on the provincial government to change parts of the Wildlife Act that declare open season on rabbits that run amok after being abandoned by their owners.

Feral rabbits, which are known to multiply quickly, have led to expensive problems in various municipalities, including Delta and Richmond.

In 2012, Delta suffered \$350,000 in damages to the property around city hall and its recreation centre because of about 500 wild rabbits.

The Richmond Auto Mall has also long since dealt with a quickly growing rabbit population, many of which destroy the mall's landscaped property.

"Once a rabbit leaves the enclosure of a home, they're considered wildlife because the province has listed the ancestors of these domestic rabbits, the European rabbit, as an alien and invasive species," Tallman said.

"Because they're labelled as an invasive and alien species under Schedule C, once they are loose in the city and in the parks, people can hunt them, they can shoot them, they can kill them."

Under federal law, species that aren't native to North America — such as the eastern cottontail and the European rabbit — aren't protected.

In B.C., animals listed under the act's Schedule C, which includes those two species of rabbits, are considered invasive and can be trapped and killed at any time.

An individual doesn't need a hunting licence to hunt or kill an animal listed under Schedule C.

Tallman is hoping the province will remove rabbits from the list and put



Patricia Tallman feeds rabbits at the Rabbitat sanctuary in Surrey on Wednesday. GERRY KAHIMANN/PHOTOGRAPH

in place new regulations that would allow animal-rescue societies to set up habitats and micro-sanctuaries that can help curb the rabbit problem in various B.C. communities.

She acknowledged that re-homing rabbits would be a challenge simply because of the sheer number of rabbits,

but cited volunteer-run animal sanctuaries as a better alternative than leaving the rabbits to the wild or to be hunted.

According to Tallman, animal-rescue societies are not allowed to actively pick up abandoned or wild rabbits, but many will accept rabbits

that are brought to them. "These problems were created by pet owners that obviously obtained these rabbits here in B.C., so we should deal with these problems here," she said.

However, the ministry says there are no plans to remove rabbits from

**video**  
Learn more about the rabbit sanctuary at [theprovince.com](http://theprovince.com)

the invasive list. "Behaviourally, feral rabbits are indistinguishable from wild rabbits and do not make suitable pets," said Greig Bethel, spokesman with the Ministry of Forests.

"The feral European rabbit is listed under the Wildlife Act as an invasive species for good reason: it is a non-native species that destroys property, including agricultural crops, and is detrimental to native wildlife and their habitats."

Bethel said the province doesn't recommend "relocation of rabbits to facilities within the province," but does support "local government initiatives to pass bylaws limiting the sale of rabbits in their community."

"Experience has shown that even rabbit shelters cannot meet the demands necessary, and overcrowding creates an inhumane living environment and inadequate standards of care," Bethel said.

"The ministry does not support the release of any feral European rabbits, whether sterilized or not, into the wild, public parks or wildlife management areas as they compete for food and habitat with native species."

Delta city council, fed up with the rabbit population around city hall, made the move to bring in a local animal shelter to help capture and sterilize the rabbits before re-releasing them at a feral-rabbit habitat.

The University of Victoria has also been known for its large population of free-roaming rabbits, which was estimated to be as high as 1,600 at one point. Many were rounded up and sent to a Texas ranch and other sanctuaries beginning in 2009.

Richmond, Victoria, Kelowna, and Coquitlam are among the B.C. municipalities that have put in place bylaws banning or regulating the sale of rabbits.

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[twitter.com/stephanie\\_ip](https://twitter.com/stephanie_ip)

# “Told Ya So”

- Rabbitats’ research showed biologists predict that rabbit populations explode every seven to 10 years.
- The University of Victoria and Kelowna’s issues were both in full bloom by 2008, and now, as predicted, 2017 was a ‘boom’ year and 2018 is even worse.
- As evidenced by these news articles, we warned the province (and municipalities) of the dire consequences – both to the rabbits and the environment -- of doing nothing to curb them.
- While it’s still the municipalities on the hook for animal control, we are putting the majority of the blame on the provincial government.
- We think they should step up to the plate with plans and funding.
- We are urging people to suggest sanctuary rescue support to FLNROUD.
- Also, please participate in their pending wildlife management review.

**P** The Province | 24 Sep 2015 ▾



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR CANUCK PROSPECT **BRENDAN GAUNCE** PAGE 77

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# The Province

10

## HARE-RAISING RULES RILE RESCUERS

Animal advocates say antiquated wildlife regulations are blocking their efforts to tame feral rabbit populations  
**PAGE 3**

GERRY KAPFMAN/PHOTOGRAPH BY





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# Provincial Review Press Release

## Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development **Have your say on wildlife management, habitat conservation**

**May 22, 2018** -- The Government of British Columbia is starting a discussion on improving wildlife management and habitat conservation, Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, has announced.

"The diversity of wildlife in British Columbia is one of our province's greatest treasures," said Donaldson.

"Working with Indigenous peoples, wildlife stakeholders and the public, we want to build a strategy that more effectively manages our wildlife for future generations. We've dedicated \$14 million over three years to do so."

The province's unique landscapes and climate is home to one of the richest wildlife resources in North America. Three-quarters of Canada's mammal species are found in B.C., with 24 of those species exclusive to B.C. In recent decades, alteration of habitat due to expanded human populations, expanded natural resource development and impacts from climate change have placed increasing pressure on certain wildlife populations, some of which are now in decline.

As part of the government's commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, collaboration with Indigenous peoples is an integral part of developing a new provincial wildlife strategy.

The discussion paper, Improving Wildlife Management and Habitat Conservation in British Columbia, poses eight questions for discussion. Engagement is the first step in a four-step process to develop the strategy:

Hold online engagement and face-to-face sessions with Indigenous communities and key stakeholders.

Develop policy options to address priority concerns emerging from the engagement.

Release a policy intentions paper for public engagement.

Implement a new wildlife management and conservation strategy in 2020.

The comment period will end on July 31, 2018. The public is invited to provide input by visiting: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/wildlifeandhabitat>

# Rabbitats' Position

- Rabbitats would like to see the rabbits taken out of the wildlife designation entirely, but in terms of this review, we are interested in four of the eight areas they have outlined for concern:
- [Challenge 2: Increasing Involvement and Shared Stewardship](#)
- [Challenge 6: Better Information](#)
- [Challenge 7: Human-Wildlife Conflicts](#)
- [Challenge 8: Funding](#)
- Rabbitats is particularly interested in providing more information about the feral rabbits and forming partnerships with the government and other agencies.
- We're also very interested in the funding section. We have developed a partnership model that shares responsibility and funding among a number of sources including governments, businesses and rescues.





# The Role of the Municipalities



-- The Union of BC Municipalities in 2012 asked the provincial government to regulate the sale of unsterilized rabbits, province wide.

-- The province pointed out that under their regulations, as an 'alien invasive species' the municipalities were free to control and eradicate the rabbits, and the municipalities were also free to dictate sterilization and sales.

-- They in effect punted the rabbits back to the control of the municipalities.

- However, cities like Richmond cite the wildlife designation as a reason to not control the rabbits.

- Confused? Yup! Us too!

Year	Number	Resolution Title
2012	B123	Regulating the Sale of Unsterilized Rabbits
<b>Resolution Text</b>		
WHEREAS many municipalities are facing the problem of rabbit abandonment and proliferation in city parks and public areas; AND WHEREAS feral rabbits can cause significant property damage, and pose a hazard to public health and safety: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to implement legislation to regulate the sale of unsterilized rabbits.		
<b>Provincial Response</b>		
Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development Under the Community Charter s. 8(3)(k), municipalities have the authority to adopt bylaws to regulate, prohibit and impose requirements in relation to animals, subject to any provincial regulations. B.C. Regulation 144/2004 "Community Charter Spheres of Concurrent Jurisdiction - Environment and Wildlife Regulation" identifies rabbits as "alien invasive species". Therefore, municipalities are authorized to control and eradicate those alien invasive species, except in cases where the species is part of a farm operation as defined under the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act. Additionally, Community Charter s. 8(6) authorizes municipalities to regulate in relation to businesses. In relation to a bylaw banning the sale of puppies and dogs from pet stores, the British Columbia Supreme Court in <i>International Bio Research v. Richmond (City)</i> , 2011 BCSC 471 found that this authority could be used to prohibit such sales provided there is a valid municipal purpose for doing so and the bylaw is not unreasonable or otherwise impermissibly discriminatory. Given the potential scope of municipal regulatory authority, the Provincial Government does not intend to pursue legislation to regulate the sale of unsterilized rabbits at this time.		

# Richmond Animal Control Overview



- Richmond Animal Control is overseen by the City of Richmond Parks department.
- The contract was given to the Richmond Animal Protection Society (now Regional) in 2007 after years with the BCSPCA.
- According to the contract, animal control is mandated, among other things, to:
  - *provide, maintain and staff a fully equipped animal shelter at the City's shelter facility for animals located within the City that have strayed, been abandoned, or otherwise delivered to the Contractor;*
  - *receive, impound and hold for claiming by the owners, any animal delivered to the shelter by bylaw enforcement officers, RCMP or residents of the City;*
- Our interpretation is that surrendered or stray rabbits must be accepted by the shelter (there's no way to determine if they're pets, farm animals or feral rabbits), however, they have no obligation to trap feral rabbits (as wildlife).
- In reality, the City Shelter has no room and the City of Richmond is pressuring RAPS to adhere limits.
- Animal Control is not designed to hold animals long term, they are designed to adopt out (or euthanize) the animals in their care.
- Rabbit adoptions have been slow as the agencies try to find homes for individual rabbits, however, the rabbits can be adopted out in colonies to hobby farms, institutions, green businesses, etc.



# City of Richmond – Animal Bylaws

- The City of Richmond may be dropping the ball on the bunnies, but Richmond has very progressive bylaws addressing identification and sterilization of cats.
- These points will also work well for rabbits.
- Kelowna has successfully controlled their rabbits through financially supporting rescue efforts (after a failed attempt at lethal control) AND changing their bylaws to provide stronger controls on rabbits.
- We also argue the two pets per household rule – we would like that increased and encourage people to take in more rabbits in secure enclosures

2.2.1.1

Every owner of a cat must:

- (a) ensure that such cat bears sufficient identification to enable any person finding the cat to contact the owner;
- (b) where such cat is actually or apparently over six months of age, ensure that such cat has been spayed or neutered, as applicable, by a veterinarian, unless the owner holds a valid cat breeding permit for the cat; and
- (c) ensure that where such cat is not spayed or neutered, such cat is not permitted to be running at large.

2.2.1.2

The identification required under clause (a) of subsection 2.2.1.1 may take the form of, but is not limited to, a collar and tag, tattoo, or microchip implant.

## Cat Breeding Permits

2.2.2.1

Every owner of an un-spayed cat who offers to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership or dispose of the offspring of such cat must:

- (a) obtain a cat breeding permit in accordance with the provisions of subsection 2.2.2.2; and
- (b) include the number of such cat breeding permit in any advertisement regarding the offspring.

# Regional Animal Protection Society

- The Regional Animal Protection Society has the City Animal Control contract with the City of Richmond which dictates matters relating to animal control and the city shelter, but RAPS does much more as a society unrelated to City Hall.
- RAPS operates the largest cat sanctuary in Canada and it just opened a veterinary clinic and neither are governed by the City.
- The Society operates at the pleasure of its membership and executive, if the membership so chooses, they can also build and operate a rabbit sanctuary but are under no obligation to so.
- The society is currently showing little interest in rabbits, they are prioritizing a dog sanctuary over a rabbit sanctuary.
- Low cost spay/neuter programs are rarely extended to rabbits anywhere in the Lower Mainland and Richmond is no different.
- The vets at the society's new animal hospital only treat cats and dogs.
- We are urging members to ask the society to provide more considerations for rabbits.





# RAPS Current Status

## Note from the Shelter Manager:

RAPS cannot accept any surrendered rabbits until the virus has run its course (at least 4 months from the time of the virus reaching RAPS, which would be around September 2018) and after consultation with the BCSPCA and the Ministry of Agriculture and the City of Richmond. All three need to approve our next steps.

RAPS needs infrastructure in place (rabbit area, cages, etc) and new intake protocols before being able to accept any domesticated rabbits. We have no idea on the time frame for this. While the virus is still present in Richmond, RAPS cannot safely take in any injured or uninjured rabbits. This would only serve to re-contaminate the shelter and extend our quarantine period by another 4 months.

DOA bodies from determined hot spots will be sent in for testing and confirmation of being infected with RHD via the Ministry of Agriculture.

The City of Richmond (Works Yard) is picking up dead rabbits in Richmond and dropping them off at a bio-secure bin at RAPS, who then cremates the bodies using careful bio-security handling protocols.

RAPS is working with the City of Richmond to find a contractor to attend to injured rabbit calls.

# CRITICAL ISSUE!

Rabbits in Richmond have no where to go!!

Given the current housing crisis, people cannot always keep their pets, but without surrender options, the only alternative is euthanizing beloved pets or turning them loose.

Injured rabbits are suffering, there is no where for them to go! Please urge the CITY of RICHMOND or RAPS to make other provisions for these rabbits!





# Success Story: Kelowna

- The City of Kelowna was overrun with feral rabbits and in 2008 the City called an exterminator in spite of protests from the local community.
- The exterminator's cost was \$52,000.
- The protests greatly escalated when the exterminator was caught stomping a rabbit causing the City to redirect to a local rescue group.
- Roughly 800 rabbits were eventually housed in a number of enclosures hosted throughout the area.
- The city passed a bylaw requiring all rabbits for sale or adoption to be sterilized
- After three years Kelowna was virtually rabbit-free
- The rabbits remain under control.



# Success Story: UVIC

- Two thousand rabbits were estimated to be inhabiting the University of Victoria campus at it's peak.
- UVic initially paid \$20,000 for a failed rescue/research program, then ordered a lethal cull. After the first 100 rabbits were killed, protests, injunctions and provincial regulations delayed the project allowing rescuers to find sanctuary space and raise \$125,000 (including a \$50,000 grant for spays and neuters from Fur-Bearer Defenders)
- The actual final tally was 1000 rabbits -- the surviving 903 were all successfully re-homed.
- The majority of rabbits went to a sanctuary in Coombs, BC, on a property that had previously occupied by a petting zoo.
- Only additional fencing was required, and over 600 rabbits were cared for by one woman with limited assistance.
- The project was funded for life (in advance) via donations, grants and investments.

Con't ...





# UVic con't

- 225 spayed and neutered rabbits were taken to an existing sanctuary in Texas and housed in a barn and purpose-built pens.
- 50 more UVic rabbits went to a family farm in Cowichan Station with a couple with small children and full time jobs who easily took the rabbits housed in a converted pig barn and run, no additional support was required.
- 50 joined a feral colony at a rescue in Washington State, no additional support was required.
- An additional 50 went to another WA sanctuary along with a one-time \$5000 donation.
- At least 300 hundred of the surviving rabbits rescued from UVic and Canmore have since been relocated to a doctor's hobby farm in Alberta.
- Several entities wanting UVic rabbits didn't get any either because of the arduous government process involved in getting a permit, or there were no more rabbits available.



# Success Story: Delta

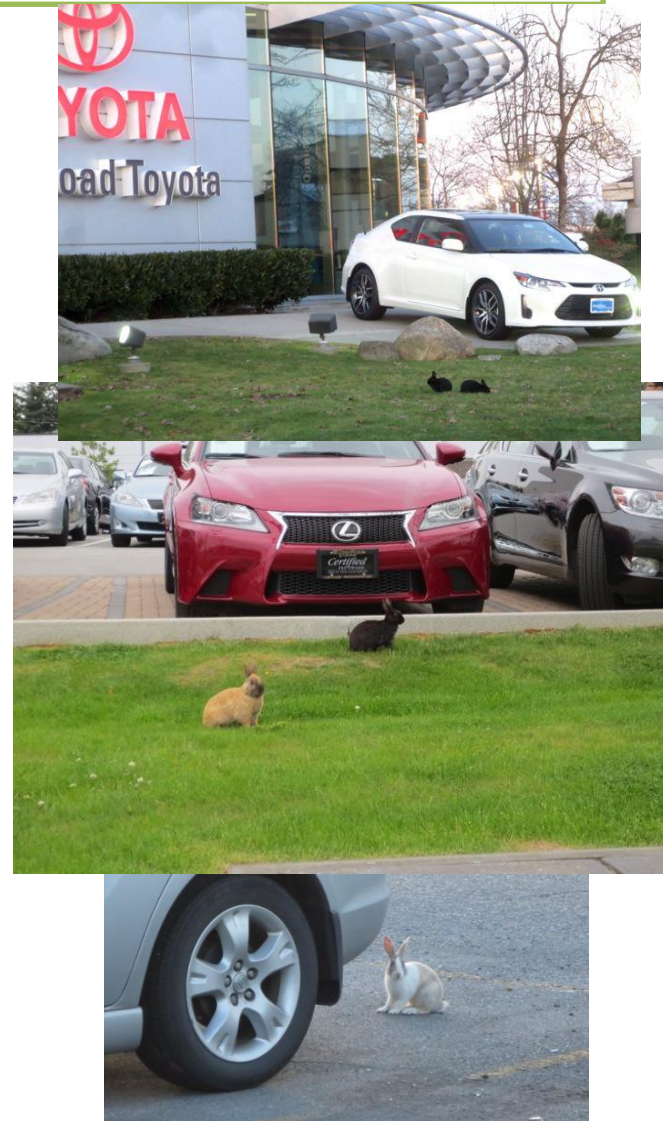
- Delta successfully trapped and sterilized hundreds of rabbits and released them into a contained park to live out their lives.
- The budget was set at \$60,000; however, with veterinarians discounting their services and the many volunteers who helped out, actual costs were much lower than expected.
- The municipality noted that cost of the rabbit management program was also far less than the annual costs of repairing the damage caused by the rabbits in the civic precinct.
- Prior to the round-up, Delta had incurred approximately \$350,000 in costs to repair damages caused by the rabbits to the buildings and grounds in the civic precinct.
- Similarly, in 2011, the Delta Hospice spent approximately \$70,000 to repair landscape damage caused by rabbits.
- A spay/neuter law and diligent animal control has kept the rabbits in check.





# Success Story: Richmond Auto Mall

- Rabbitats was looking for an inaugural rescue project at the same time the Richmond Auto Mall was looking for a solution to their rabbit infestation problem.
- Rabbitats approached the Richmond Auto Mall Association, a body representing the 14 dealerships on site, with our plan and a proposed budget covering five years of ongoing support to be split amongst the businesses, public donations and event fundraising.
- A holding space in an empty dealership was used to house the rabbits.
- Permanent space was initially found at a farm in Delta, but a better option surfaced in South Surrey.
- A sanctuary to house 120 of the estimated 250 rabbits was built at that location.
- The remaining rabbits were adopted out in smaller groups.
- A semi-permanent garage was eventually offered to the rescue as a shelter and we began accepting rabbits from other areas.



# South Surrey Sanctuary

- Rabbitats South Surrey sanctuary houses 100 to 125 Richmond Auto Mall rabbits.
- It was built for less than \$4000 (including a 20-ft shed) in a rescue partner's courtyard with additional space in their barn using wood, wire, road base, netting, and later acrylic roofing panels.
- A volunteer built custom bunny houses and feeders.
- The sanctuary is secure from human and animal predators.
- The set-ups ensures easy maintenance.
- A volunteer spends 60 minutes a day on rabbit care with extra cleaning sessions on weekends.
- The rabbits eat roughly 12 bales of hay and 40 lbs of pellets a month, and donated produce cast-offs, grass, tree branches, etc. daily.





# SALI's Farm

- The Semiahmoo Animal Rescue League (SALI) provides animal therapy for at-risk children using rescued at-risk animals.
- SALI and Rabbitats teamed up to build an indoor/outdoor 'rabbitat' housing eight rabbits who provide endless joy and healing to the kids.



# Costs and Care

- The highest rescue costs are sterilization fees averaging around \$75 per rabbit, and treating ailing rabbits.
- There is now an additional \$10 per rabbit annual cost for the RHD vaccine.
- Rabbits are cheap and easy to feed, however.
- Daily produce (pre-compost) is readily donated by produce stores and markets.
- Their main diet is unlimited hay.
- They are fed a limited amount of rabbit pellets.
- Edible tree branches augment their diet.
- In the summer the rabbits can eat pulled tall grass from nearby fields.
- Construction costs have so far been minimal as much of the supplies needed to build enclosures are scrounged or donated used.
- Care is relatively easy, our 125 sanctuary rabbits takes less than an hour a day; one person easily cared for over 600 UVic rabbits.
- NOTE: Rabbitats strives to adopt out small colonies of rabbits, we remain responsible thus if the placements don't work out, the rabbits can return to the rescue.





# Partnerships and Sustainability

- Feral rabbit rescue cannot be random, complete areas need to be cleared and monitored to make sure they're not repopulated, thus Rabbitats' will not trap part of a colony or an entire colony where other colonies are close by.
- Businesses, property owners and stratas willing to fund the removal of the rabbits from their properties will find their efforts wasted without governments willing to do their share.
- The Richmond Auto Mall involved 16 dealerships who pulled together and pooled resources to come up with a sizeable investment for the humane removal of 300 rabbits.
- They supplied spay/neuter and full vehicle support, and several dealerships also provided free space.
- The rabbits are now much easier to control, but having new rabbits making their way to the Auto Mall from uncontrolled city property is hardly fair.





# Rabbits: An Attraction, Not A Pest!

- The rabbits can be a bonus for businesses looking to attract a customers, including farm markets, garden centres and developments.
- Institutions, care homes and other venues can have controlled colonies as therapy.
- City Parks can position the rabbits as a 'hands off' calming attraction overseen by Rabbitats volunteers.
- Developers can also incorporate low-maintenance 'Rabbitats' onto 'Green roofs', garden courtyards and other innovative projects giving them an added feature – and a lot of extra attention.



# Bunny Love



- The rabbits are often the area's most famous residents. Both UVic and the Richmond Auto Mall saw travel and entertainment sites list them as an attraction and provide directions for people wishing to visit.
- Animal and eco-tourism trends are especially popular today, and housing rescued rabbits in an awesome environment will fit with animal welfare trends.
- The rabbits have historically been media magnets, the subject of a dozen stories or more a year.
- The rabbits are also social media stars. Rabbitats is one of the most active and popular rabbit rescues on Facebook and is expanding its social media reach.

# Public Events

- Rabbitats is well versed in presenting frequent and successful events that can enhance the attraction to hosts and sponsors
- City events will be well-served to include the Rabbitats 'Mobile Bunny Village' and their hands-off, humane, Bunny Meet n' Treats.
- These events also raise funds to help support rescue efforts.



## Easter Bunny Fest!

At the Richmond Auto Mall

Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> ~ 11 am to 4 pm  
Indoor Area ~ Rain or Shine

Come Meet the Easter Rabbits!  
See our magnificent hand crafted  
Richmond Auto Mall "Rabbitville"

All proceeds support Rabbitats Rabbit Rescue  
Bring your bunny for playtime, or just come and watch!



FREE Shuttle Bus from Richmond Centre  
Richmond Centre to Richmond Auto Mall  
AM 9:15, 10:15, 11:15  
PM 12:15, 1:15, 2:15, 3:15, 3:45  
Richmond Auto Mall to Richmond Centre  
AM 9:00, 10:00, 11:00  
PM 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 3:30  
\* Richmond Centre Stop - outside Old Navy

### FEATURING An all-day Bunny Hop!

ADMISSION BY DONATION  
Donations of bottles, pennies, craft  
& Canadian Tire \$ are all welcome!

### Activities for Kids, Adults & Rabbits

- Face painting
- Raffles & door prizes
- Human treats too!
- Garage sale items & crafts

### ALSO

- Rabbit treats & supplies
- Adoption information

by Richmond  
**REVIEW**

Crescent Beach  
Veterinary Clinic

Nutrena  
Shops & Supplies

Little Prince  
Animal Clinic

Whole Foods  
HUB

**RICHMOND  
AUTO MALL**

**RABBITATS**





# Rabbitats Current Status

**NB!!**

- After being hosted by the Richmond Auto Mall since 2013 and trapping all the rabbits, Rabbitats is looking for a new headquarters.
- While our sanctuary is stable and more space isn't as hard to come by, a home for our headquarters is proving difficult.
- Our most pressing requirement is a heated space to house our rescued indoor and special needs rabbits.
- We need to comfortably host volunteers, potential adopters and other visitors and ideally sell supplies and other items.
- Additional space for rabbit colonies in secure outside enclosures or outbuildings would be a bonus.
- We are also in need of storage.
- Options include farms, warehouses, retail space, houses, acreages, large garages, barns, heated sheds and modular buildings like portables, trailers and storage containers.
- As a non-profit, we have a limited budget.
- We're very happy to occupy spaces on a temporary basis. The longer the better, but even a few months in a building scheduled for demolition would be fine.
- Once Rabbitats gets settled into a new space with a holding area, we can resume taking in rabbits.

# What NOT To Do

## DO NOT FEED THE BUNNIES – FOR THEIR OWN GOOD!

- They get plenty of the right kind of food where they are.
- Carrots and treats will only make them fat and slow and more at risk.
- Starvation is not one of the risks!
- Survivors will give birth to larger litters, dooming even more babies to death from predators and cars.
- The food makes a mess and attracts unwanted consumers like rats and bugs.
- It is illegal!





# Don't Dump Them

## PET RABBITS ARE NOT WILDLIFE!

A domestic rabbit is a clear target for predators, bows and arrows, BB guns and firearms as well as other rabbits, pest control companies and governments who target them for extermination as an alien invasive species.

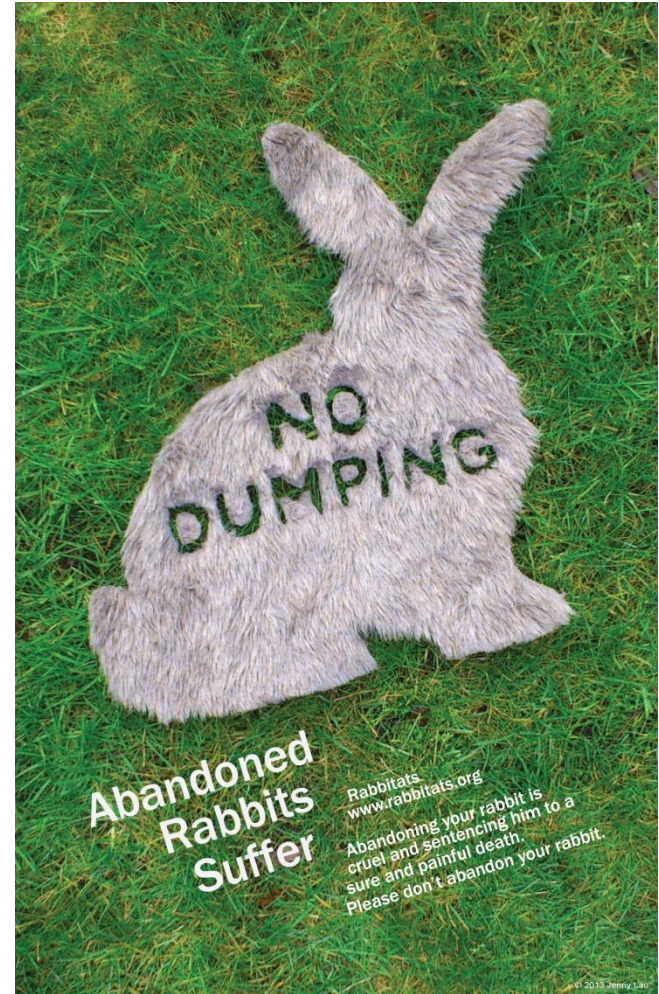
**DON'T RELEASE THEM!**



[rabbitats.org](http://rabbitats.org)

[rabbittatsemail.com](mailto:rabbittatsemail.com)

[facebook.com/rabbitats](https://facebook.com/rabbitats)



**Abandoned  
Rabbits  
Suffer**

Rabbitats  
[www.rabbitats.org](http://www.rabbitats.org)

Abandoning your rabbit is  
cruel and sentencing him to a  
sure and painful death.  
Please don't abandon your rabbit.

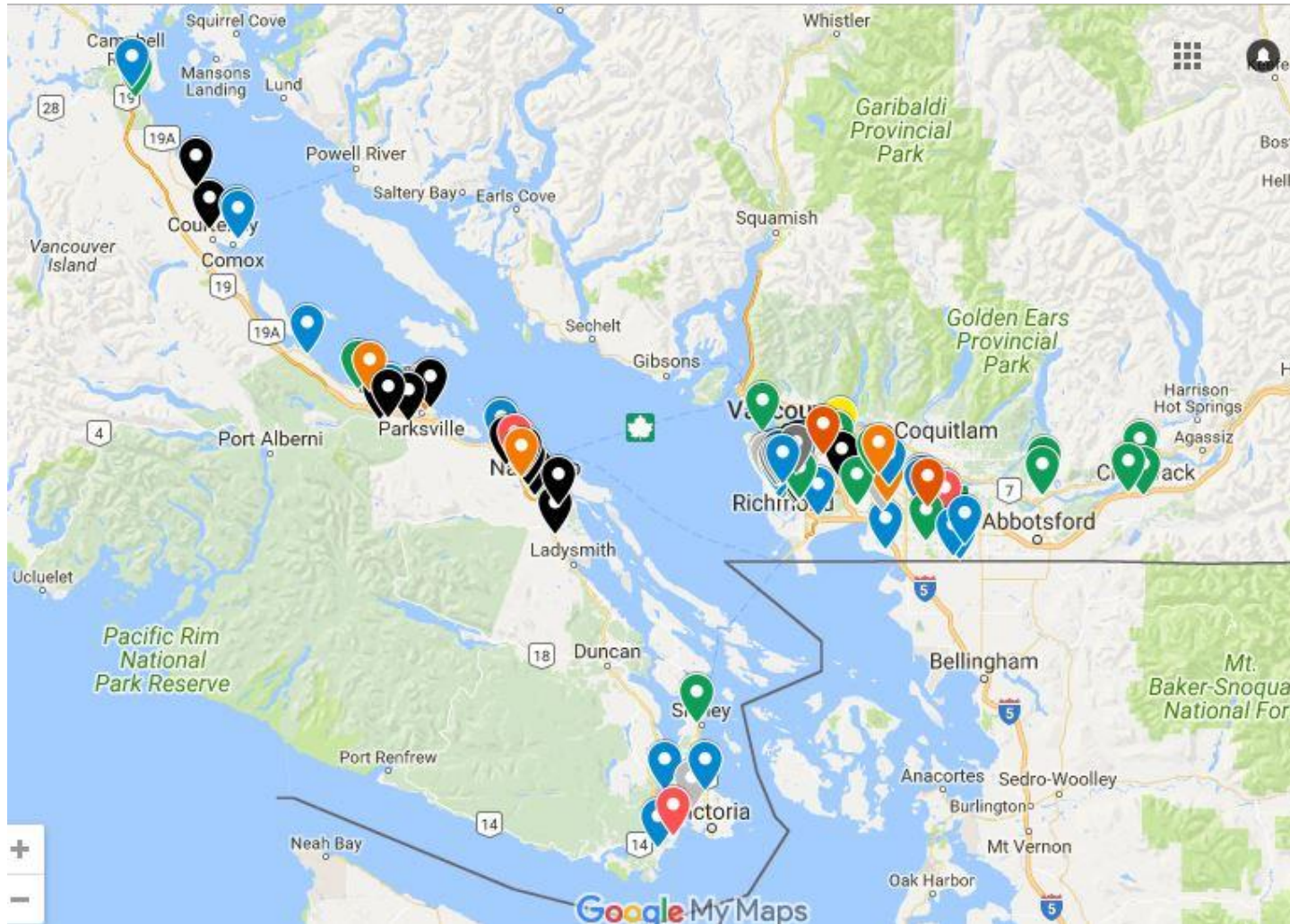
© 2013 Jenny Shaw



# Rabbit Tracking Map

[www.rabbitats.org/abandoned-rabbits](http://www.rabbitats.org/abandoned-rabbits)

Our map flags abandoned rabbits, feral colonies and RHD deaths. A form is provided for people to report all sightings.



## RHDV-2

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV2), which only affects rabbits, appeared mid-Vancouver Island and Annacis Island simultaneously in mid-February, killing all the domestic colonies rabbits in those areas.

- Sometime between mid-March and April 1<sup>st</sup>, it killed a large colony of rabbits on Dyke Road near No. 5 Road.

- This spread to the RAPS shelter infecting several rabbits and resulting in the euthanization of 64 rabbits.

- It may have also affected Richmond Country Farms over a month ago.

- No new infections have been reported.

- It needs to be carefully tracked! Please report ALL dead rabbits to RAPS, or the City of Richmond, City Works.

- Rabbit breeders and pet owners are affected too.

- This virus is new but it has been known to jump to wild hares in Europe which could mean it's capable of wiping out an entire link in the food chain.

Attn: Richmond Residents!

# WARNING!

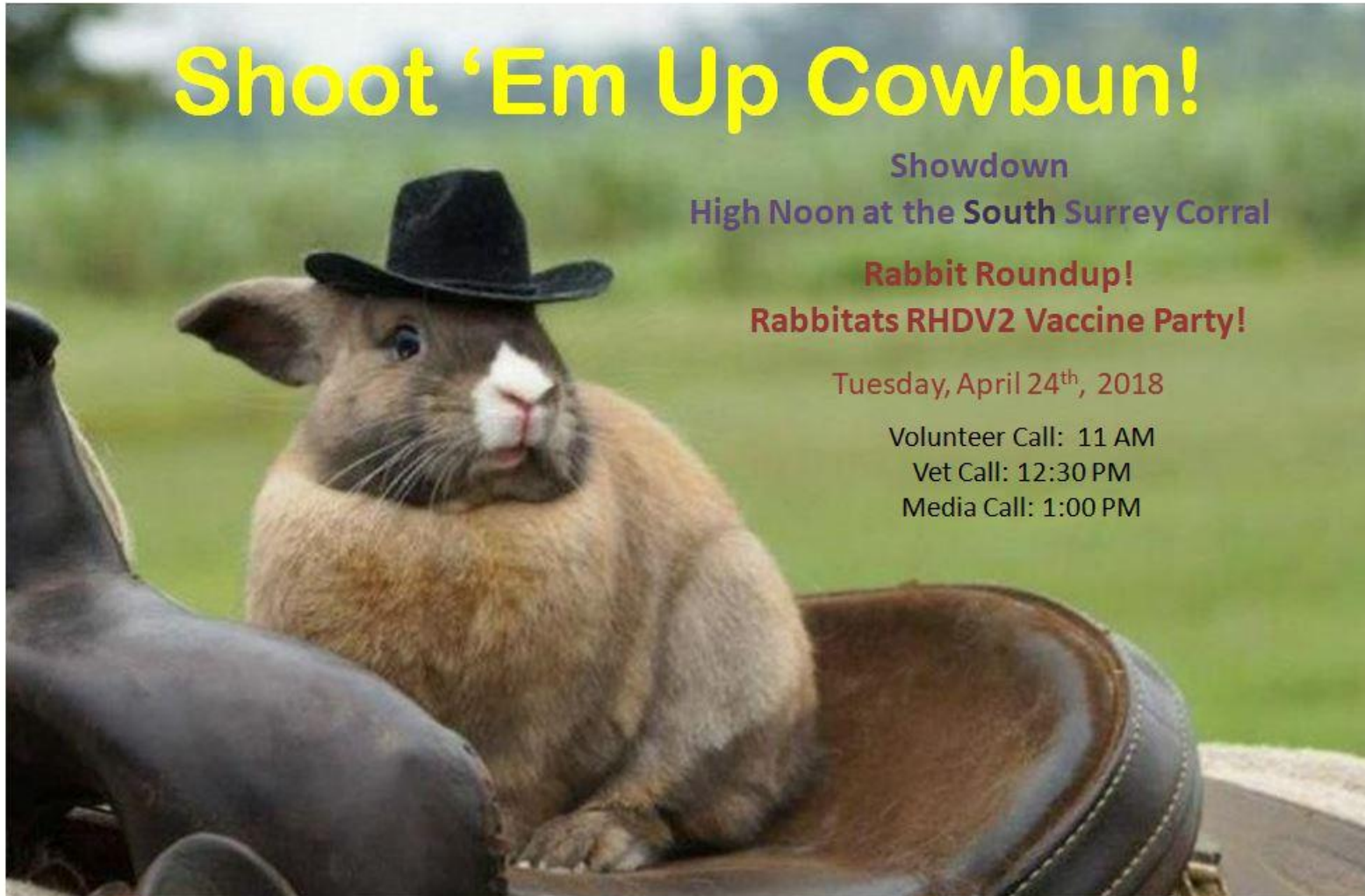
## Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus is a Silent Killer

Rabbits may be dying in Richmond. Large colonies of loose rabbits can simply disappear with no bodies in sight. A group of 50 may turn into two survivors almost overnight. This virus can affect house bunnies and farm rabbits, it must be tracked. Keep your distance but watch for unusual deaths and substantial drops in numbers and please report them immediately to Richmond Animal Control and list them on [www.rabbitats.org/abandoned-rabbits](http://www.rabbitats.org/abandoned-rabbits)



## RHDV-2 con't

There is a vaccine for the virus and all rabbit guardians are urged to get their rabbits vaccinated. The drug costs vary greatly depending on whether it's in a single dose or a pack administered to a large group, check with your veterinarian.

A brown rabbit with a white patch on its nose and chin is wearing a black cowboy hat. It is sitting on a brown leather saddle, which is part of a horse's tack. The background is a blurred green field.

# Shoot 'Em Up Cowbun!

**Showdown**  
**High Noon at the South Surrey Corral**

**Rabbit Roundup!**  
**Rabbitats RHDV2 Vaccine Party!**

**Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Volunteer Call: 11 AM**  
**Vet Call: 12:30 PM**  
**Media Call: 1:00 PM**

# Lethal or Non-Lethal Solutions?



- Not everyone wants to save the feral rabbits. Many people would prefer to see them killed. And for good reason.
  - The rabbits can and will form a conduit for the virus that will greatly affect rabbit farms and hobby breeders.
  - Property owners are livid about the damage and the mess.
  - Taxpayers must not be too happy about the rabbits damaging city property.
- So, what to do?
- The rabbits stick close to urban areas, they can't be shot.
  - Poison will affect a large number of other species and taint the environment.
  - One solution is to hire a trapper to humanely euthanize historically at a cost of well over \$60,000 a year.
- SO... The key point to remember here is that even a lethal cull will cost money.
- There is no downside diverting those funds to a responsible rescue who can sterilize and contain the rabbits.



In the meantime...

## Gardening Tips

Unfortunately the rabbits are very random when it comes to attractions and deterrents. They will devour one kind of plant in one area but not eat the same plant in the bed next to it.



### *Gardening Tips, Advocacy*

## LANGLEY TIMES

### **Rabbits running wild in Langley residential areas**

Wildlife advocate wants long-term humane option to deal with problem

- NATASHA JONES
- Aug. 13, 2012 2:00 p.m.

Some residential areas of Langley are slowly being overrun by rabbits, but a wildlife advocate is calling on residents to resist using inhumane means to control them.

"Lethal means to eliminate wild rabbits are only quick fixes because they do not address the underlying cause of the problem which is the attraction factor in terms of food sources (foliage, flowers, and grasses) and shelter (bush piles, thickets)," said Dr. Patricia Tallman.

"As well, the poisons people may use invariably manifest in slow agonizing deaths of up to three days which is extremely cruel."

A more long-term humane option is to consider non-lethal control measures, she suggested. Among them, erecting an exclusion fence with one-inch wire mesh buried one foot below ground and rising two to three feet above.

However, Tallman suggested, it might be more viable to simply protect specific plants and small areas rather than the entire yard.

Place empty soda bottles or milk cartons (with bottoms cut out) over seedlings for protection, or buy plant guards.

Protect trees with commercial tree tape or surround the base with wire mesh in a cylindrical fashion with a circumference large enough so that rabbits cannot lean up against the wire mesh and nibble on the plants.

For cases where it may not be cost effective to put up fencing, consider scare devices such as Mylar tape above locations of potential damage, or pinwheels at ground level.

For more than a year, Tallman has been lobbying the Township to create wildlife corridors and to retain sufficient relief habitats so that animals displaced by development are not killed by vehicles as they search for new habitat.

Tallman said that non-toxic repellent sprays can be made by blending hot peppers in a blender, then adding water to create a liquid. Next, add one to two tablespoons of vegetable oil, with one to two drops of dishwashing liquid. Another safe non-toxic repellent is pureed garlic and water.

Also, planting plants that are rabbit-resistant is another measure. While individual rabbits have different tastes, the following in general are not well-liked: allium, anise, hyssop, astilbe, bee balm, daffodil, daylily, iris, lamb's ears, lavender, peony, salvia, yarrow, oregano, thyme, mints, rosemary, sage, salal, germander, snapdragon, borage, calendula, lobelia, lupine, stock, marigold, heather, honeysuckle, columbine, butterfly weed, daisy, bellflower, black-eyed Susan, hardy geranium, euphorbia, bleeding heart, flax, lungwort, sedum and trillium.

As well, removing brush and rock piles, shrubs and thickets will reduce shelter provision for the rabbits.

"Most importantly, we must educate people that these creatures are not pests because they pose an inconvenience," Tallman said.

Using lethal methods to address human-wildlife conflicts is cruel and short-sighted, she said, adding that poisons used in suburban settings pose a significant public safety health hazard not only to children, but also to domestic pets and other unintended wildlife.

"Human lethal intervention is usually the least effective as it upsets the natural balance of nature."

## Gardening Tips (2)

- Keep your grass long and green to help keep the rabbits away from the flowers and the garden.
- Cage the plants, not the rabbits
- Planting plants that are rabbit-resistant is another measure. While individual rabbits have different tastes, the following in general are not well-liked: allium, anise, hyssop, astilbe, bee balm, daffodil, daylily, iris, lamb's ears, lavender, peony, salvia, yarrow, salal, germander, snapdragon, borage, calendula, lobelia, lupine, stock, heather, honeysuckle, columbine, butterfly weed, daisy, bellflower, black-eyed Susan, hardy geranium, euphorbia, bleeding heart, flax, lungwort, sedum, trillium, cleomes, vincas, wax begonias.
- Vegetables: [asparagus](#), [leeks](#), [onions](#), potatoes, [rhubarb](#), [squash](#), [tomatoes](#)





# Gardening Tips (3)

## Things to Try:

- An exclusion fence with one-inch wire mesh buried one foot below ground and rising two to three feet above.
- Empty soda bottles or milk cartons (with bottoms cut out) over seedlings for protection, or buy plant guards.
- Commercial tree tape or wire mesh in a cylindrical fashion with a circumference large enough so that rabbits cannot lean up against the wire mesh and nibble on the plants.
- Scare devices such as Mylar tape above locations of potential damage, or pinwheels at ground level.
- Strong scents of predators; pet or human hair or cat litter in a defensive circle around shrubs, garden beds or trees. Replace weekly and after rains.
- Non-toxic repellent sprays can be made by blending hot peppers in a blender, then adding water to create a liquid, adding one to two tablespoons of vegetable oil, with one to two drops of dishwashing liquid.
- Another safe non-toxic repellent is pureed garlic and water.
- Fencing off structures, trees, hedgerows and dense shrubs will reduce the shelter options for the rabbits.
- As well as letting grass grow longer, leave weeds and other rabbit delectables around the edges of your yard to provide other opportunities for food.



# Rabbit Love

- Remember... rabbits make great pets!
- Rabbits rarely if ever bite.
- Rabbits don't carry diseases.
- They are not rodents.
- Rabbit droppings have no odor, they are dry and have no residue.
- Rabbits will use litter boxes or specified areas.
- Rabbit droppings are considered the best 'cold' fertilizer available.
- Rabbits eat hay, grass, weeds and greens and can be inexpensive to feed and house.
- Rabbits are sociable, naturally curious and friendly little creatures.
- They deserve better!

