

RABBIT POPULATION INFORMATION & DATA

One of the frustrating aspects of tracking rabbit shelter population is nobody is keeping records. Rabbits are often placed under the "Other" category which includes anything not a cat or dog. I have also found that shelters will add wild cotton tails into the domestic rabbit intake numbers thereby skewing their results. When "rescue" says rabbits are the 3rd most abandoned animal in shelters what they don't do is prove it. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't, who knows because shelters are not keeping good records or breaking animals down into species. One thing is very obvious though, rabbits are not abandoned in the numbers of either cats or dogs. Activists want us to believe the rabbit abandonment issue is as big as that of dogs and cats, which documentation exists proving there isn't a cat or dog "overpopulation". This document lists data and population information from a variety of sources. What I do that the activists and "rescue" don't is tell you where the data is coming from.

USDA Data

The source of the following is a document titled Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Indiana June 15, 2005 Impact Worksheet created by APHIS.

-Total estimated domestic rabbit population in the US (2005) 9 million.

-Estimated value for all rabbit industries (commercial, research, and hobby) is \$745-\$831 million (2001)

According to the APHIS document there were 5.28 million pet rabbits-the figure comes from APPMA 2002. They were obtained from the following sources:

33% bought at pet store

13% obtained from friends or relatives

13% obtained from previous owner

6% were bred at home

6% bought from a Humane Society

The average purchase price was \$20-\$35. The document does not list where the other 29% were obtained from, breeders? APPMA publishes a yearly book with statistics but it's very expensive so I have never been able to obtain a copy. But given only 6% obtained them from a humane society one can understand why shelters wish to eliminate pet stores and breeders so they can increase their market share of pet buyers. Also of interest APPMA estimates rabbit owners spent \$116 on food, toys, supplies, and non-surgical veterinarian visits per year. This number based on 138 responses.

The document also discusses show rabbits. There they reference Bob Bennett and the cost to maintain a show rabbitry is \$942 per year. That number is probably accurate although old and would need to be adjusted. ARBA sanctions 4,000 shows per year as per this document.

According to APPMA 2001/2002 information rabbits are **not** the third most popular pet:

Type of Animal	2001-02 Number in Millions	2007-2008 APPMA
Dog	68	74.8
Cat	73	88.3
Birds	19	16
Freshwater Fish	12.2	14.2
Reptiles	9	13.4
Other	4.9	
Mouse/Rat	2.9	*Small Animal not broken down further 24.3
Pot bellied Pig	2.7	
Rabbit	2.4	

Gerbil	2.4	
Hamster	2.3	
Ferret	1.8	
Cavy (Guinea Pig)	1.4	
Chinchilla	1.4	

According to the 2007 edition of the AVMA's US Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook there are 6.2 million pet rabbits in the US¹. They say that is an increase of 1.4 million in 5 years.

6.2 million pet rabbits

1.2 million Hamsters

1.1 million ferrets

1 million Guinea Pigs (Cavies)

AVMA Information²

Species	2001 NUMBER	2007 NUMBER
DOG	61,572,000	72,114,000
CAT	70,796,000	81,721,000
BIRD	10,105,000	11,199,000
HORSE	5,107,000	7,295,000
FISH	49,251	75,898
RABBIT	4,813	6,171
LIVESTOCK	2,936	10,995
OTHER BIRDS	2,894	4,966
ALL OTHERS	2,013	3,664
TURTLE	1,070	1,991
FERRET	991	1,060
HAMSTER	881	1,239
OTHER RODENT	786	949
SNAKES	661	586

Shelter Data

Palm Beach County FL 2006 & 2007 intake:

Species	2006	2007
Dogs	9355	9079
Cats	10716	11253
Feral Cats	3255	3480
Livestock	556	656
Wildlife	1227	1551
Other	1660	1501
Other is broken down in 07		
Birds		500
Rabbits		102
Reptile		46
Rodent		76
"Other"		157

¹ Exotic Companion Mammal Specialty Receives Recognition AVMA News 5/15/08

² AVMA US Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook 2007

Also of note is the shelters "Returned to Shelter" 2006 was 229, and in 2007, 212.

According to the above shelter 45 rabbits adopted in 2006 and 48 in 2007. For dogs and cats the numbers were in 2006: 2,914 & 2,031. And in 2007 for dogs and cats 2,946 & 2,063. In 2007 number euthanized is as follows:

4,137 dogs 8,683 cats 3,468 feral cats 210 Birds 293 Livestock 69 Rabbits
 55 Rodents 30 Reptiles 669 "other"

OR Warenton Clatsop County Animal Shelter 2006 intake: 535 dogs, 507 cats, 3 rabbits. 2007 intake 530 dogs, 557 cats, 2 ferrets, 1 rabbit.

So much for the "3rd euthanized animal in shelters".

Loudoun County ACC VA July 2006-June 2007 Intake:

Cat	736
Kitten	733
Dog	796
Equine	6
Livestock	15
Other	91
Poultry	127
Rodent	185
Rabbit	77

Tidewater Rabbit Rescue VA 2006 Rabbit intake 8 VA state report

San Diego's Central Animal Shelter 2000: 157 rabbits taken in, adopted 138, euthanized 8 due to medical or temperament issues.

NYC From a "rescuer": "I also volunteer at a kill shelter and with their rabbits. You would not believe the number of rabbits that are surrendered and dumped in NYC alone." So I asked exactly how many? "I don't have exact statistics, but for the entire summer, we've never had less than 14 rabbits. We currently have 17, and that's after a local group pulled 5 since last week."³

LA Animal Services⁴

Year	Cat/Dog intake	"other" non-rabbit	Rabbits	Rabbits Adopted	Released	Euthanized
2008	54197	8450	1222	475	65	404
2007	44964	7708	1236	461	46	439
2006	46272	8093	1262	503	44	445
2005	47391	8653	1107	386	42	134
2004	47594	8720	903	389	37	176
2003	53722	7146	871	348	56	300
2002	55203	8543	697	248	50	251
2001	62536	6427	575	148	55	220

WI Monroe County Rescue

Year	Cats	Dogs	Rabbits	Birds	Wildlife	Farm	Other
1992	173	23	6	8	4	0	0
1993	286	5	5	5	4	0	1
1994	147	36	0	7	2	0	0
1995	223	6	1	7	1	0	1
1996	187	6	1	8	3	2	5
1997	170	2	1	3	6	0	0
1998	105	1	2	3	3	4	1

³ Oct 2, 2007 NYCbuns yahoo group post

⁴ Off website their pdf reports of shelter statistics

MN Shelter Report⁵

Rabbits	2002	2003
Intake	736	832
Adopted	468	539
Euthanized	267	238*

*Report says the common reasons for euthanasia was no room/space 28.4%, temperament 27.3%, health 26.1%.

North Carolina State Report 2002: Intake 446, 207 euthanized, 239 adopted or returned to owner. 25% of shelters take rabbits, 81% of shelters reported in take of 25 or less, 15% 26-50, 4% over 100.

Or, Eugene Greenhill Humane Society 2003 estimate 45 rabbits per year intake⁶

Oakland Animal Services Report 2007

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Cat	1774	1612	1885	1818	1945	1714	1944	2019	1969	2269
Dog	4220	3944	4283	4082	3343	3013	2429	2493	2765	3197
Rabbit	131	164	85	67	164	361	201	286	400	116

Rescue Organizations

Following table is based upon information from the HRS tax returns publicly viewable on Guidestar.org. In the returns numbers were listed for fostered, placed, in their sanctuary, and the final number was what they said were incoming rabbits who were examined by a veterinarian and spayed/neutered. I do not know if those were all new intake and "fostered" meant rabbits still in foster care from the previous year.

Year	Fostered	Placed	Sanctuary	Incoming w/ vet care
2002	697	348	537	438
2003	1269	463	480	802
2004	1082	533	411	660
2005	793	409	354	449

Rescue Organization Intake Table: Note "rescues" do not accept rabbits from the public rather they take rabbits from shelters.

Rescue/Year	Intake	Placed
MS 2005	243 from 50 shelters	144
North GA/2004		150
CO/2002	187	150
CO/2001	201	105
Columbus OH/04	55	60
Columbus OH/03	50	39
MA/2003	112	99
MA/2004	117	96
MA/2005	87	82
VA/2003	102	81
VA/2004	112	88

BUNS CA Best Friends forum stated at any given time 35-40 rabbits in their program.

⁵ New Rabbit Thymes Spring 2004 MNHRS

⁶ E-mail 7/8/04 from person who has asked a HS volunteer

“Other”

Cumberland County SPCA NJ listed in 2001 they took in 178 “other” animals. I contacted them and was told only 35 of that 178 “other” were rabbits.

Bergen NJ 1999 368 total other, of that 95 were rabbits (26%). In 2000 the total “other” was 2,691 of which 118 were rabbits (4%).

Associated Humane Network NJ 2001 “other” totaled 1,901 of that 475 were rabbits. But in that total were also counted wild rabbits as well as domestics.⁷

GCAS NJ 2001 1,220 “other” of that 44 were rabbits (4%).

Oregon Humane Society 1/24/05 for 2004 adoption rate for dogs 97% (3448), cats 74% (4557), small animals 87% (730).

Where people Obtain Pets:

Source	Poll: Where did you get your last pet? ⁸	APPMA	RES 1999 Survey	RES Health Survey 2001	HRS 8/29/00
Pet store	31%	33%	32%	50%	39%
Breeder	25%	----	27%	15%	21%
Rescue/Shelter	17%	6%	21%	35%	33%
Wild	4%	----	4% (stray)	20%	----
Found It	8%	----	----	----	----
Other	15%	----	15%	21%	7%
From Friend/relative	----	13%	----	----	----
Previous Owner	----	13%	----	----	----
Bred @ home	----	6%	----	----	----
Gift	----	----	----	5%	----
Fair/flea market	----	----	----	3%	----

Top Reasons Rabbits are unwanted: Kids aren't caring for it, allergies, have a new pet or baby, too busy, no pets allowed in rental, “too big”, aggressive or destructive, vacation, sick or injured and vet too expensive, school year ending.⁹

Rabbit Education Society 2000 Shelter Survey Data:

No time for 24%
 Kids don't want 20%
 Moving 17%
 Tired of caring for 17%
 Allergies 9%
 Too many 8%
 Misc 4%
 Too expensive 2%
 Disposition/behavior .8%

Shelter Report common reasons for surrender¹⁰:

Poor Planning/expectations 56%
 Stray 22.1%
 Owner's Health 10.2%

⁷ E-mail 1/7/04 with a representative

⁸ Website www.centralpets.com 2/6/06

⁹ Supposedly compiled by mary Cotter HRS from phone logs of 2,000+ calls to chapters in 3 parts of the US over several yrs.

¹⁰ New Rabbit Thymes Spring 2004 MNHRS

UK Rabbit Numbers

According To a Nov 2005 article Deadly Disease May Claim 9 out of 10 Rabbits in the UK there were 1.8 million pet rabbits in the UK. According to the Brand Republic website Campaign: Burgess Excel Tackles Welfare of Pet Rabbits Aug 2008 there are nearly 2 million pet rabbits in the UK. Also in the article there was a promo that include 700 veterinarians that provided 10,000 rabbits with a Healthy Hopper MOT. 3,500 of these were first time patients. On the flip side both the Rabbit Charity and Rabbit Rehome estimate there are 33,000 abandoned in UK rescue centers each year. That figure represents only 1.65% of the pet rabbit population.