

# Unwanted surprise litter?

Hi there, I hope you can help!

During the floods late last year, we rescued a tiny little gorgeous feral rabbit from a storm drain. Of course my teenagers wanted to keep it, so we did. Bought a 'you beaut hutch' and spoiled the feral little jack rabbit rotten!

We took 'her' to a vet for a check up and vaccination - he assured us (at about 10 weeks) that she was a she. So we bought a dwarf she to keep 'her' company. . . well you know what I am going to say . . . don't you???!!!

Two days ago there was a lot of blood in the litter tray . . . we thought there had been some 'rough play' so we separated them. (I inspected "BINDI" (the feral) and I found a willy and 2 wonkas!!! So . . . he is destined to go back into the wild tomorrow!

The other one "Curly" (dwarf) had also started losing fur (well we thought losing) today. I was cleaning the cage, and low and behold there are 2 little black rats in the fur. . . oh dear!!!



I guess from the pics on your website that they are 2-3 days old. They are totally black but still the same size and shape as you 1 day olds . . . so what to do? I suspect these are going to look like feral rabbits, not cute dwarfs? And, they will be skittish and nervous like Bindi. S/he just never quietened down AT ALL, despite being cuddled and handled every day!

If I take them to the vet to euthanise them, will Curly be OK? Do they get mastitis? Or fret? I am so embarrassed. We just can't help but pick up all the busted animals around the traps! I have hand reared two rosella and a lorikeet this summer, and helped with a few other wounded locals! I don't want any more rabbits . . . and really thought (on the vets advice) that I had a (feral) girl = 2 girls! Please let me know what you think, without being too hard on my stupidity!

Ta Jaine

Hi Jaine,

Rest assured, there's no way in this world you should feel embarrassed or the slightest bit stupid. You simply and naturally placed faith in the opinion of an 'expert' - but unfortunately, pet shops (main culprits) and vets (some) are notorious for getting it wrong.



Oh, if only someone gave me a dollar for every same sex bunnies that ended up producing babies - I would very well off indeed! So yes, your story is very common and this problem will no doubt continue, as long as the unwary walk through the doors of people who should really make an effort to know better . . . ☹️

However, I believe the more people complain or report back to the experts about the consequences of their miss diagnosis then the more chance of them making an effort to re educate themselves!

In the meantime best **not to entirely trust anyone** is my advice - second and third opinions are worth a go, or better still bunny owners ought to learn how to check sexes themselves!

Anyways in response to your immediate dilemma . . .

- Euthanising the kits? Frankly you're asking someone who is an advocate for 'life' - especially since it's not the babies fault that humans 'stuffed up'. I'd give them the chance to enjoy what we humans take for granted and what most of us hold sacred. Since there are only a couple of kits you could let mum rear them, then when about eight weeks old you shouldn't have too much trouble finding a caring new home. Alternatively if they are does (real ones!) they can live companionably with their mum.
- Your doe 'Curly' is an individual and therefore there is no way anyone can predict if she will end up with mastitis or not. Same too goes for whether anyone can predict if she'll be fretful if they were taken away. With some does you can tell they are sad about losing their babies while others appear unaffected.
- Your rescued feral, which although is not as tame as a majority of pet bunnies hasn't grown up as a feral however nor had any practice at surviving in the wild. Before releasing him to fend for himself, please consider that chances are he will be destined to a shorter lifespan - averaged to be maximum of 4 years. A couple of other arguments against releasing your fella, are the facts that the local rabbit colony typically reject and attack/fight any trespasses coming into their territory. If indeed rejected it would make it even harder for him to survive on his own.
- On the other hand, there is a possibility it was illegal to have kept him as a pet in the first place! Could make enquiries about that with authorities such as your local council.

Hope info has been helpful!  
Christine

Hhmm, yes, I have had a very restless night thinking about this situation! I too am not in favour of euthanizing . . . that is why I pick up all the busted locals, I guess! But, I just don't know what to do!

I guess I just have to give them a chance and see what happens. I just tend to think they will not be so cute . . . especially if they take after the dad! That will make it hard to find them homes . . . you never know tho, we fell in love with Bindi! I'll let you know!

I actually haven't seen her feed them, so I don't even know if they will survive, although she seems to have done all the right stuff so far. Pulling fur and bedding them down in the warm part of the hutch. One is a little more 'active' than the other, but I guess kids are always different!

It's -4 here at the moment, so I'll go and see how they are when the sun has melted all the frost. The hutch is in a lovely warm spot tho, under cover and the sun is beaming down on it. They are just so bloomin cute!

Thanks for taking the time to get back to me . . . altho you have only said what I was already thinking!

Just one thought. Maybe I could get Bindi 'done'? Do they get on OK if the male is 'fixed'? The vet we used seems very reasonably priced for little pets such as these. . . it was only \$12 each for vaccinating, worming and whatever else he did (including incorrectly sex it!!)

Thanks again!  
Jaine

P.S. and thanks for not making me feel like an irresponsible pet owner!!!

Cont'd . . . I just went out to check them, and they are both bright and noisy, and seem to have poddy little bellies, so I guess she's doing all the right stuff! Hubby isn't happy, but he seems to have resigned himself to the fact that they might be staying?

Glad to hear you've decided to let nature take its course Jaine!

I am sure you and your children will thoroughly enjoy watching them grow day by day, not to mention learning so much about them.

It's not often that we get to see does feeding the bubs, cause it only takes a few minutes, though checking if they have a pinker, more swollen tummy (as you said 'poddy little tummies') confirms they've had a good feed.

Your vet was certainly very reasonably priced with their vaccinations, as they usually add on about \$40 for a consultation fee.

Yes, if you don't want to house the fella in a separate hutch it's a good idea to have him desexed. Be sure to wait for about up to a month after the op - just to make sure there's no residue sperm hanging around . . . ! Sometimes bunnies (male and female) don't seem to be aware that they are unable to procreate and will occasionally go through the motions.

You mentioned frost in your area . . . recently here in Canberra we had minus 6 degrees etc, so I always bring the nest box in overnight (but you don't necessarily need to bring in the mother) to make sure newborns will be warm enough.

Try to see if you can borrow my book from the library - if they don't have it, let them know that you really need it! There's stacks of information to help advise all about baby bunnies and so on. Alternatively, of course, you could get a copy from me or I've recently converted chapters into e-books at \$15 each.

All the best  
Christine

Velvet and Liqueur are doing well. One eye is almost open on one, parents, too are coping, although Bindi is really trying to dig out of 'solitary'! We will sort him out very soon and will get him to the doc.

I have seen Curly feeding! The longest she stays is about 15 seconds, but she does it VERY frequently. The bubs are growing like weeds, and their tummies are always poddy. One peed on me the other day, and the wee was very watery and clear, and there was lots of it! What a stream! I am pretty sure the hydration was more than adequate!

Also, I have put the hutch in the shed where there are electric fridge motors running: the room is always much warmer than outside, so they will be warm and snug there. They are always soooo warm when we nurse them! That fur is really a very efficient 'doona'

Just thinking . . . the little 8 year old boy that we bought Curly from, sold four rabbits that day. We have been in touch with all the other buyers (to compare notes etc and he got 100% for sexing his rabbits! Shame that 6 year uni degree didn't work for the vet!!!? Perhaps he should go see the 8 year old! LOL!

Thanks again for your help! I look forward to the book/s (old and new!)

Regards Jaine