

Has Anyone Seen The Rabbit?!

No sign of your pet rabbit? Try these places.

By Laura Doering

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Any place can be a potential hiding spot for a rabbit wanting to get away.

Your cute, little furry rabbit stands on its hind legs, pawing at its enclosure — a way of letting you know that it's itching to be let out of its cage or pen for a run around your living room. Being a considerate rabbit owner, you want a rabbit to enjoy the freedom to investigate and explore — so you happily oblige and undo the latch ... and out comes your bouncing bunny.

You enjoy hearing the pitter-patter of little bunny feet below as you relax on the couch watching your TV show. When a commercial comes on, you stride over to the fridge to get your pet a fresh vegetable treat. Kale — Rascal's favorite! "Rascal, look what I've got for you! Rascal? Rascal, where are you?!"

Some rabbits, it seems, were destined to be a magician's assistant, as they are adept at vanishing. Depending on the layout of your home and your decor, finding your pet can take just a minute — or it can take a couple of very frustrating hours.

To increase your chances of finding your rabbit before it gets into something you'd rather be left alone (like your wallpaper, rug, wood paneling or electrical cords), here's a look at the areas of the home most rabbits find most irresistible.

It's Curtains For Them!

If you recall from your childhood games of hide-and-seek, what better way to instantly disappear from a room than going behind a curtain? (Preferably a floor-length one at that — ever have your hide-and-seek location given away by your feet peeking out beneath a 34-length curtain?). Rabbits love to hide, too, and places they can burrow in or behind are preferable. Curtains to a pet rabbit are like stalks of hay to a wild rabbit as far as hiding goes — and sometimes just as taste-bud tempting.

What Lurks Beneath The Bed

Beds serve two purposes — for sleep and as a place for a rabbit on the lam in the home to hide. Your rabbit instinctively knows that under the confines of your bed, it can enjoy many more moments of leisure even after its location is discovered — because a house rabbit also instinctively seems to know the exact distance ratio between the spot it lies and how far (or little) your arms can reach under the bed. After an hour of amusing your rabbit by wriggling your arms just out of reach of it, your pet might give you renewed hope by finally making a move in your direction — only to give your hand a sniff (did she bring me a snack yet?) and then promptly receding back further into the depths of the bed's shadow.

Removing a rabbit from under the bed takes patience, but an enticing treat — just out of its reach — gives you the upper hand. You can eventually coax your pet out by moving the treat farther and farther into the open. Don't pounce on your rabbit once it is in the open, or you might end up with an injured rabbit and ruined trust. Instead, allow it to enjoy a bit of the treat, and then calmly pick it up while making sure it is fully supported in your arms.

If you see your rabbit hop under your bed and are thoroughly perplexed when it seemingly disappears for good in the darkness (even after a good search with a flashlight), take a closer look at the mattress bottom. My rabbit loved to burrow into the bed's white underlining. Like a butterfly in its cocoon, he evidently found the material used to cover the mattress board quite snugly, and a perfect place for a nap.

The problem with this scenario, besides the big hole in the mattress lining, is that the rabbit can catch a toenail on the material and/or become entangled in it if it crawls too deep into its meshy tunnel, causing panic. If your rabbit discovers this hideaway, repair the lining if it has a hole in it or retighten it if it hangs low to the ground due to your rabbit's weight and burrowing. And block your rabbit's access to the bed, because chances are good that your bunny will revisit this area if given the opportunity.

Tables & Chairs, Oh My!

You probably bought your coffee table and/or dining room set for your own comfort and ease. Your rabbit probably thought

you bought them purely for places for it to take cover. Low-lying tables are especially sought after, as are tables and chairs with wide legs, which are even better to hide behind. Don't be surprised to see your rabbit making a daily ritual of rubbing its chin against your table and chair legs, which is its way of claiming, "I got dibs!" Add a floor-length tablecloth and your rabbit will be a happy hider.

Check your table and chair legs for signs that your rabbit has been nibbling on them. If it has, block its access to them, because the lacquer and finish on home furnishings can be harmful if ingested.

Other Spots To Search

Just about any and every nook and cranny in your home (or attached garage if the opportunity exists) can be a potential hiding spot for your bunny. Areas that offer a tight space – such as behind the refrigerator, washer/dryer, bookcase or dresser – are appealing to a rabbit bent on exploring your home. Unfortunately, because most of these preferred areas are behind things — where electrical cords and wires are often hidden away — there's the potential danger of electrocution (appliances such as refrigerators, stoves and washer/dryers usually have wires and electrical hookups located in the back). If possible, wrap these cords and wires in protective tubing (found at most home improvement stores) or keep the room door closed.

If your rabbit is on the lam in your home, keep the doors/screens that lead outside shut to prevent your pet from venturing outdoors. Try not to panic — a level head and clear thinking will help you determine the most logical places. To find a bunny, you have to think like a bunny. Get down on your hands and knees and look at a room from a rabbit's point of view. And don't forget that rabbits also have great leaping ability, so don't rule out the top pantry shelf!