

Chicago-Area Rescues Urge Petland to End Rabbit Sale

Midwest rescues unite to expose the toll of pet-store rabbit sales and support the Rabbit.org Foundation's national Stop Rabbit Sales campaign

CHICAGO — Nov. 5, 2025 — Chicago-area rabbit rescues are joining voices in support of the national Stop Rabbit Sales campaign led by The Rabbit.org Foundation, calling on Petland to end live rabbit sales. The coalition of more than 100 rescues nationwide spotlights how retail rabbit sales fuel abandonment, neglect, and overcrowding at local shelters.

“Petland is a major source of rabbits who later end up abandoned or in crisis,” said Rachael Sanders, Director of the House Rabbit Society of Chicago. “Many arriving at rescues are thin, frightened, and ill after being surrendered or found outdoors. We regularly see intact, mis-sexed pairs purchased from stores that lead to repeated litters—‘rabbit explosions’—that local rescues must manage. While Petland profits, rabbits suffer.”

Two Schaumburg Hoarding Cases Tied to Petland-Origin Rabbits

“In May 2021, Schaumburg Animal Control called us about 47 rabbits in a hotel room,” said Toni Greetis, Vice President, Red Door Animal Shelter. “The owners told us their first two rabbits were bought at Petland Hoffman Estates in 2020. The conditions were unsanitary—fifteen were pregnant—and our team worked in masks and gloves to separate and stabilize them. Red Door took in 22 rabbits, DuPage County Animal Services received 25, and our medical costs exceeded \$7,000.”

“In July 2023, we responded to a Schaumburg home with over 40 rabbits; owners told investigators they’d purchased the original pair from Petland in Hoffman Estates,” said Erika Seibert, founder of It’s All About The Paws. “We walked into six to eight rabbits per cage, inches of waste, no hay or water; many were pregnant, and the smell was overwhelming. Within 24 hours, with animal control, we removed 29 (including newborns) and coordinated placements with HRS Wisconsin, Hoppy Haven Rabbit Rescue, and Lost Woods Animal Sanctuary.”

Data From the Front Lines

According to Red Door, more than 330 rabbits are on the owner-surrender waitlist; intake records and microchips link about 22% to Petland Hoffman Estates, 46% to other Petland stores, and the remainder to breeders. “We’re seeing the downstream reality of impulse purchases: rabbits arrive sick, pregnant, or dumped outdoors, and small nonprofits must find space, fund care, and prevent more litters,” Greetis said. “Within two years, we managed back-to-back mass-intake crises in Schaumburg—each beginning with owner-reported Petland-origin pairs—stretching volunteers, foster space, and medical budgets to the breaking point. These aren’t isolated blips; they’re predictable outcomes of selling unfixed rabbits to unprepared buyers.”

Regional Ripple Effects

“Even after those cases made headlines, the rabbits haven’t stopped coming,” Sanders said. “We’re admitting animals who are thin, frightened, and battling respiratory infections. What we clean up in basements and backyards often starts at a pet-store sales counter.”

Rabbits are widely recognized as the third most frequently abandoned companion animal in the United States, according to the ASPCA. Yet few municipal shelters have the resources or expertise to care for them. “This ongoing cycle of impulse purchases, overbreeding, and surrender strains volunteers and veterinary networks already at capacity,” said Paige K. Parsons, founder of The Rabbit.org Foundation.

Part of a Nationwide Effort

Nationwide, the coalition urges Petland to replace animal sales with adoption partnerships. Petland operates 90 stores in more than a dozen states, including Illinois. The coalition’s petition urging Petland to end rabbit sales has surpassed 6,000 signatures and has been covered by 140 media outlets.

A Call for Change

“We urge Petland to partner with rescues for adoption events instead of selling animals directly—models already embraced by Petco and PetSmart that enable adopter screening, education, and post-adoption support,” said Parsons.

Supporters can sign the national petition at **change.org/petland-rabbits** and learn more at **rabbit.org/activism/petland-chicago**.

Photos: Download press images (credit: Red Door Animal Shelter) — <https://rabbit.org/activism/petland-chicago#media>

About House Rabbit Society of Chicago

House Rabbit Society of Chicago is a nonprofit dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, and rehoming domestic rabbits as well as advancing rabbit welfare standards in Chicago and beyond. hrs-chicago.org.

About It’s All About The Paws

It’s All About The Paws is a foster-based nonprofit serving the Chicagoland area. The organization rescues, rehabilitates, and rehomes abandoned rabbits and other small animals. itsallaboutthepaws.org.

About Red Door Animal Shelter

Red Door Animal Shelter is a Chicago-based nonprofit focused on rabbits, cats, and dogs. Red Door supports municipal partners in large-scale rabbit intakes and provides rescue, rehabilitation, and adoption services. reddoorshelter.org.

About The Rabbit.org Foundation

The Rabbit.org Foundation is a nonprofit dedicated to improving rabbit welfare through education, advocacy, and collaboration with shelters, rescues, and veterinarians.

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Inside the Schaumburg hotel room during the May 2021 hoarding case: dozens of unaltered rabbits crowd a debris-filled space as responders enter masked and gloved to separate sexes and supply water and food. Forty-seven rabbits were removed—22 to Red Door and 25 to DuPage County Animal Services. Per Red Door, the caretaker said the first two rabbits came from Petland Hoffman Estates. **Photo: Red Door Animal Shelter.**



May 2021 Schaumburg hotel rescue: a nursing mother and her litter, stabilized on clean towels by Red Door volunteers during triage. Forty-seven rabbits were removed that day; fifteen were pregnant. According to Red Door, the caretaker reported the original pair was purchased at Petland Hoffman Estates. **Photo: Red Door Animal Shelter.**