

# INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

## EASTERN COTTONTAIL RABBIT (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)



Photo Credit: Caleb Slemmons, Bugwood.org

### HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ANIMAL?

#### DESCRIPTION

Eastern Cottontail Rabbits...

- Are medium-sized, 39-48 cm long.
- Are brown to grey in colour on back and side, above a white underside.
- Have a distinctive rusty-coloured nape on back of head (distinguishing feature).
- Have long, black tipped ears.
- Have small fluffy, white tails with rusty coloured patches.

#### PRIMARY THREAT:

*Eastern Cottontail Rabbits impact native species through competition for habitat and overgrazing.*

**REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES**

**Download the App!**



[www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species)

#### SPREAD

Eastern Cottontail Rabbits have been intentionally introduced outside their native range for use as a food source and for sport hunting. During the day, Cottontails remain hidden from predators. At night, they feed on wild grasses and herbs, and are often found feeding in vegetable gardens. Over the winter months their diet consists of bark, twigs, and buds. Eastern Cottontail Rabbits can breed several times every year, producing 3-8 young per litter. Young rabbits are self-sufficient within 4-5 weeks and sexually mature within 2-3 months, allowing populations to grow at a rapid rate.

Eastern Cottontail Rabbits are often found along borders of open fields, meadows and farm pastures. They can also be found in forests and swamp habitats.

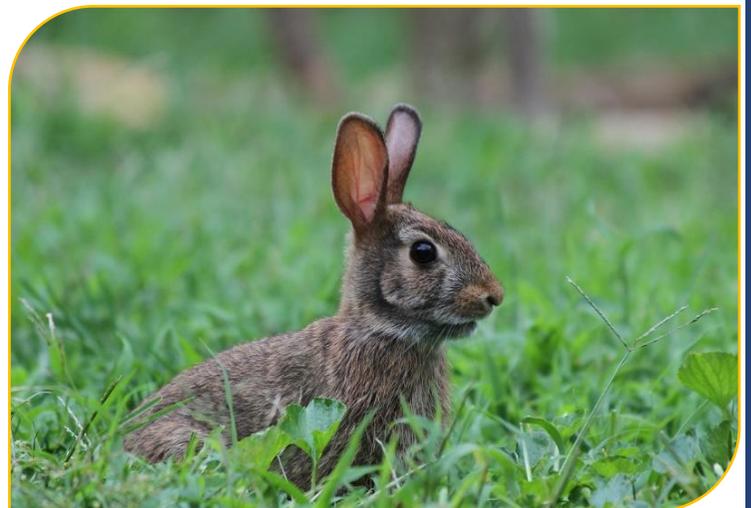


Photo Credit: Jim Capaldi, Flickr

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species>



# EASTERN COTTONTAIL RABBIT (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)



EASTERN  
COTTONTAIL



SNOWSHOE  
HARE



EUROPEAN  
RABBIT



HOUSE CAT

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## LOOK-ALIKES:

Eastern Cottontail Rabbits may be confused for Snowshoe Hares (*Lepus americanus*) in summer pelage and with brown forms of European Rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). In comparison to Eastern Cottontail Rabbits, Snowshoe Hares have **large hind legs and lack a rusty-coloured nape on the back of head**. European Rabbits **have longer ears, are heavier built, and do not have a rusty coloured nape** in comparison to Eastern Cottontail Rabbits.

## DISTRIBUTION & STATUS

Eastern Cottontail Rabbits have established in the Lower Fraser Valley, Vancouver and surrounding area, and Vancouver Island.

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Photo credit: Nhrabbitreports.org

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Do not release domestic rabbits into the wild.
- Raise awareness to avoid further spread in B.C.
- Fence off gardens and remove any food attractants.

### Removal

- Eastern Cottontail Rabbits can be hunted and trapped in B.C. Refer to Management Status on Species [Page](#) for more information.

## DID YOU KNOW?

When fleeing from a predator, Eastern Cottontail Rabbits will run in a zig-zag motion, leaping from side to side, trying to break their scent trail. They can leap 10-15 feet and run over 20 km per hour.

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