

NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2006 - 2021

*Adopted by Commissioner and Advisory Council
June, 23, 2006*

POPULATION GOAL

Ensure the long-term viability of the New England cottontail in Maine, and expand its current range throughout its former range in Maine.

Population Objective 1: By 2016, maintain and/or create a minimum of 18¹ core populations (with densities 1 rabbit / 2.5 acres) in habitat patches \geq 25 acres, each connected to 2 to 5 satellite patches within one half mile of the core area.

Population Objective 2: By 2016, establish at least two of the core populations in each of the following counties: York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, and Sagadahoc County.

HABITAT GOAL

Maintain current New England cottontail habitat at or near existing sites, create new habitat throughout its historic range in Maine, and maintain or create connectivity between habitat patches.

Habitat Objective 1: By 2009, evaluate the existing 53 sites for New England cottontail, and begin negotiations with landowners to manage the most viable sites.

Habitat Objective 2: Of the 53 current New England cottontail sites, identify and conserve those habitats and corridors that contribute to the 18 core areas and satellite habitat patches identified in Population Objective 1 by 2011.

Habitat Objective 3: By 2016, create and/or conserve additional sites to compliment existing sites to ensure that Population Objective 1 is met.

Habitat Objective 4: By 2016, test and evaluate methods of habitat management for New England cottontail².

¹ Currently there are 6 existing core populations. We propose to triple that number.

² The public working group suggested that this project could be done on the Scarborough Marsh Management Area.

New England Cottontail Management Goals and Objectives

Habitat Objective 5: By 2016, permanently conserve 12 of the 18 core areas to benefit New England cottontails and other early successional species.

OUTREACH GOAL

Work with landowners and the public to conserve and manage habitat for the New England cottontail.

Outreach Objective 1: By June 30, 2006, develop and distribute educational materials to all towns having New England cottontail habitat (e.g., brochures, posters, press releases, articles in newsletters, and conference presentations). Inform the general public, landowners with New England cottontail habitat, and town officials about the importance and management of early successional habitats for New England cottontails and other early successional species.

Outreach Objective 2: By 2009, develop and deliver landowner incentive programs to promote management of NEC on private and public lands. This should include information about landowner protection programs (e.g., Safe Harbor agreements).

Outreach Objective 3: By 2007, develop an educational program about the dangers of importing eastern cottontail rabbits.