

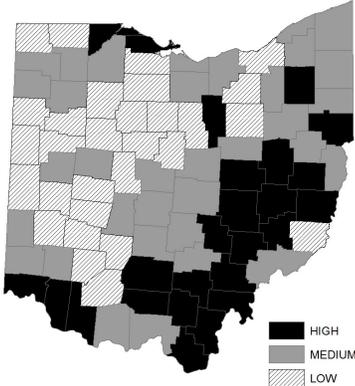


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Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

2014 POPULATION UPDATE

DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE



Rabbit populations remain strong and stable throughout Ohio

The Eastern cottontail rabbit is one of the most common wildlife species in Ohio. Although native to the state it was not as nearly widespread prior to European settlement. As with several other species of wildlife, the Eastern cottontail was a beneficiary of settlement; the clearing of wood lands and the establishment of more open areas along wooded borders provided an ideal environment. This brush land edge species is Ohio's most popular small game animal. Its adaptability to a variety of habitat types and conditions has allowed it to maintain reasonable numbers in spite of human population growth, habitat loss, and intensive land use.

In Ohio, rabbit populations have been monitored annually each spring and summer since the 1950's through the Rural Mail Carrier (RMC) survey. These surveys have shown a relatively stable long-term trend, although populations do fluctuate annually depending on weather patterns which affect winter survival and spring production. Cottontail rabbits occur statewide today with highest densities in southern and eastern Ohio.

Summer RMC surveys indicate that rabbit populations have remained stable since 2013, with a statewide index of 10.87 rabbits observed per 1,000 survey miles. Strongest populations were observed in the northeast hills, southeast, and south-central portions of Ohio. Populations tend to be lower in the glaciated farmlands of western and northwestern Ohio where intensive agriculture provides less grassland and brushy habitat for cottontails and other upland game.

SEASON:

NOV. 7, 2014 —
FEB. 28, 2015

DAILY BAG LIMIT: 4

OPEN: STATEWIDE

BEST COUNTIES FOR HUNTING:

COLUMBIANA
BELMONT
COSHOCTON
MUSKINGUM

OLENTANGY WILDLIFE
RESEARCH STATION

1201 U.S. 23 North
Delaware, Ohio 43015

