

Seeking to save Peter Cottontail from extinction

March 31 2013, by Stephen Kalin



New England cottontail at Crescent Beach State Park in 2010. Credit: USFWS

Conservationists want to make sure Peter Cottontail is around for many Easters to come.

The species that inspired a New England author to pen tales about a curious bunny is in danger. [Wildlife officials](#) say the New England

cottontail could face extinction because the shrub lands it calls home are disappearing.

The U.S. [Fish and Wildlife Service](#) has partnered with state agencies and private organizations from Maine to New York to restore its natural habitat and save the critter.

New England cottontails were abundant a century ago, but as neglected agricultural lands reverted back to forest, the population thinned.

Conservationists hope habitat management and [captive breeding](#) will prevent the species' decline, which would require a more costly response and restrictions on land use and hunting.

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