

Species: Appalachian Cottontail (*Sylvilagus obscurus*)  
Global Rank: G4  
State Rank: SNR  
State Wildlife Action Plan Priority: High-level Concern Species  
CCVI Rank: Not Vulnerable/Presumed Stable  
Confidence: Very High

Habitat:

Appalachian cottontail is associated with dense cover of heaths, particularly blueberry and laurel, and with conifers at the higher elevations in the Appalachians (Whitaker and Hamilton 1998). The species has a discontinuous distribution in the Appalachians from southwest of the Hudson River, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky south to Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama (Whitaker and Hamilton 1998).

Current Threats:

The main threats to this species are alteration of habitat by human activity and the range expansion of the eastern cottontail. Also, populations are small, scattered, and isolated (NatureServe 2010).

Main Factors Contributing to Vulnerability Rank:

Although Appalachian cottontail is at its northern range in Pennsylvania and prefers cooler microsites dominated by mostly heath species, the CCVI does not suggest that abundance and/or range extent within Pennsylvania will change (increase/decrease) substantially by 2050. However, actual range boundaries may change. The CCVI suggests that abundance could shift within the defined range boundaries. The species is capable of dispersing long distances and has a low dependence on processes likely to be altered in the short term by climate change.

References:

NatureServe. 2010. NatureServe Central Databases. Arlington, Virginia. USA.

Whitaker, J.O. and W.J. Hamilton (editors). 1998. Mammals of the eastern United States. Third Edition. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York. 583pp.

