



New England Cottontail Identification Training

Thursday, December 17, 2009
10:00 am - 2:30 pm

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Visitor Center, 149 Waquoit Highway (Route 28), Waquoit

The New England Cottontail (NEC), the only endemic cottontail found east of the Hudson River, is a management concern. Once considered common throughout southern New England, this species can no longer be found in about 86% of the range it occupied in 1960. This decline has been primarily attributed to habitat loss and fragmentation. Other threats to the species include competition from the introduced eastern cottontail, invasion of shrub land communities by non-native vegetation, and habitat modification by deer, among other factors. Concern for the species has prompted conservation agencies to begin taking management action. These agencies agree that habitat management may reverse species decline. To be effective, resource managers must identify the locations where existing populations occur and are therefore seeking assistance toward this end.

This workshop will provide information on the status, habitat need, and biology of the NEC, as well as survey methods that may be used to identify existing populations. Information on habitat management techniques will also be made available. The goals of the workshop are to raise awareness about the species, help land managers identify possible NEC habitat, and train individuals to help identify existing NEC populations on the Cape. Collecting pellets which go through DNA analysis is one of the best methods for identifying these populations. The workshop will close with a field trip to examine potential NEC habitat and demonstrate pellet collection methods. The field session will primarily target participants who are interested in this component. A desired outcome of the workshop is to identify and train a small group of professionals and volunteers who are interested in learning the pellet collection techniques and possibly becoming longer-term volunteers for the NEC monitoring program. Attendees who are not interested in the field component can still participate in the morning session.

Workshop information please contact:
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or james.rassman@state.ma.us
508-457-0495

Registration information please contact: Laurie Tompkins
at 508-457-0495 or laurie.tompkins@state.ma.us

WORKSHOP AGENDA

MORNING SESSION (10:00 am - noon)

- **Overview of the Biology and Status of the New England Cottontail** - Anthony Tur, *Endangered Species Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New England Field Office*
- **Update on the Status of NEC Monitoring Efforts in MA & Protocol for Fecal Pellet Collection** - David Paulson, *Consulting Biologist, Mass Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program*, and Dave Scarpitti, *Upland Biologist, Mass Division of Fisheries and Wildlife*
- **Priority Locations in Mashpee for NEC Monitoring** - Andrew MacLachlan, *Senior GIS Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southern New England - New York Bight Coastal Program*

LUNCH (12:00 -12:30 pm) – Will be provided for those participating in the afternoon field session.

AFTERNOON SESSION (12:30 pm - 2:30 pm)

- Field trip to Mashpee site to examine potential NEC habitat and demonstrate pellet collection methods. (Appropriate field attire needed)

Pre-registration is required.

www.waquoitbayreserve.org

ONLINE REGISTRATION

1. Go to the Reserve's home page
2. Click on **NEC Training** under Upcoming Events
3. **FIRST TIME ONLINE REGISTRANTS:** please choose "Add me as a user" and fill in the appropriate information. Remember to hit **SAVE** when finished.
4. You must "REGISTER" after you have added yourself as a user
5. If you have previously registered for a workshop, just type in your email address and hit LOGON to review your information and register.
Your email address is your User ID

