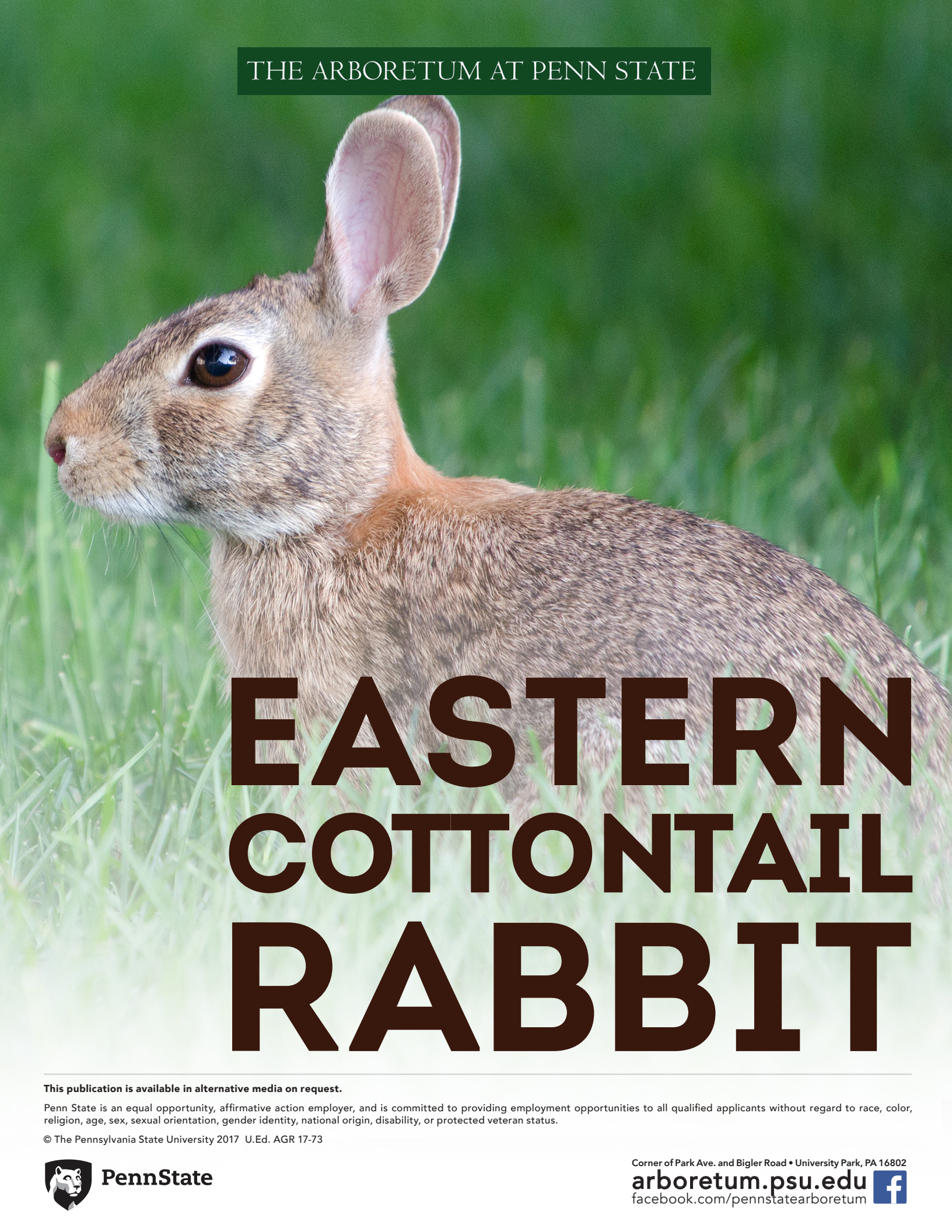


THE ARBORETUM AT PENN STATE



# EASTERN COTTONTAIL RABBIT

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**NAME:** *Sylvilagus floridanus*

### CONSERVATION STATUS:



**SIZE:** 1.3–1.5 feet

**WEIGHT:** 1.75–3.5 pounds

**GROUP TERM:** colony; nest

**NUMBER OF YOUNG:** 3–8

**HABITAT:** open fields, meadows

**LIFESPAN:** 2–5 years

### DISTRIBUTION:



# COTTONTAIL RABBIT

## DESCRIPTION

Named for its characteristic “cotton-ball” tail, the Eastern cottontail is the most widespread species of rabbit in North America. Although most active on rainy or foggy nights, this animal’s brown fur provides excellent camouflage during the day. Because Eastern cottontails do not hibernate, they can be found in Pennsylvania year-round in open, grassy areas with shrubby cover. The long ears of rabbits can move independently, enabling them to hear in two directions at once, as well as providing a cooling mechanism through an extensive network of blood vessels.

## DIET

A common visitor to gardens, the Eastern cottontail rabbit enjoys eating grasses, herbs, flowers, fruit, and vegetables. In the winter, this animal dines on twigs, bark, and plant buds.

## THREATS

Eastern cottontail rabbits are preyed upon by coyotes, foxes, bobcats, hawks, and even snakes. They may also be hunted by humans for their meat and fur.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- To flee from danger, the Eastern cottontail rabbit runs in a zig-zag pattern...up to 18 miles per hour!
- One female rabbit may raise up to eight litters of young each year.
- Wild rabbits are generally silent, communicating to others by thumping their back feet against the ground. When distressed, they may squeal or hiss.

“Eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*).” Arkive, n.d. Web. 22 June 2017.

“Eastern Cottontail Rabbit .” National Geographic, n.d. Web. 22 June 2017.

Cover Image: Alissa Pendorf | Thumbnail Image: Roselyn Ludwig