

SNOWSHOE HARE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Raised by Working Group June 26, 2002

Population

- Does harvesting snowshoe hare during the breeding season in March have any population impacts.
- Are any other states researching snowshoe hare that Maine has similar issues with and could draw from?
- Can snowshoe hare be used as a barometer for predator populations?

Habitat

- In southern Maine, landowners are not managing their woodlots to enhance hare habitat.
- Need to work with landowners (industrial and non-industrial) to encourage silvicultural practices (clearcuts around 4 acres, patch cuts, and shelterwood harvests) that enhance hare habitat.
- Sprawl – habitat loss.
- How are forest cutting practices going to affect carrying capacity.

Hunting

- Concerns that snowshoe hare hunting may negatively affect the New England cottontail population in southern Maine.
- How would listing the New England cottontail as endangered or threatened impact snowshoe hare hunting?
- Posted land – fewer areas to hunt and fewer areas with high hare densities.
- Restrictions on public lands open to hunting are precluding hunters from using these areas.
- Need to cultivate a relationship with landowners to use roads to hunt from.

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Outreach

- Need outreach concerning predation by cats.
- Hunters need to be able to differentiate snowshoe hare from the New England cottontail.
- Need outreach concerning silviculture practices that promote or enhance hare habitat and the importance of snowshoe hare as a prey species.