

Russell of the Geological Survey kindly lent to us by the Dominion Department of Mines. Originally this Plesiosaur was about 18 to 20 feet long, but the head and neck have never been found. The revelation of the existence of an Ojibwa Boulder Mosaic in the forested area of the Whiteshell River Forest Reserve was due to the action of our staff in following up information received. We asked the Provincial Government to issue a protective edict over the whole of the site and to prevent the removal of the snake and tortoise emblems. This protection has been granted. Another useful effort has been the placing of a number of old Red River relics under safe cover which were in danger of being ruined for want of care and protection. These date back to the early Red River settlement of 100 years ago and include household utensils and furniture as well as farm implements. Among them is a dugout canoe.

THE CARNEGIE GRANT

Having fulfilled certain conditions our application to the Canadian Committee of the Carnegie Corporation has resulted in a grant of \$1500.00 for educational equipment, not for salaries. With this welcome aid we have already sent one Museum exhibit to a country point 160 miles from Winnipeg as an experimental feeler in this direction; and our Equipment Committee has started to provide proper equipment for Birds, Insects, and Botany, employing local and Canadian labour by preference. It is a great adventure to lay the foundations of a Museum which shall serve Manitoba as well as Winnipeg and form a central link in the growing chain of the Museums of Canada thus serving the Dominion as a whole. Such is the ambition of our Executive.

SOME NOTES ON THE COTTONTAIL IN ONTARIO

By JAMES L. BAILLIE, JR.



THE COTTONTAIL RABBIT (*Sylvilagus floridanus mearnsii*) is one of the principal elements of the mammalian fauna of the more southern parts of Ontario. The farm-boy finds in it all the necessary attributes for sport and it seems, at all times, to be present in sufficient numbers to be dependable game. There is, in fact, no doubt that it is now more widely distributed in the southern, settled parts of the province than ever before.

Saunders¹ records that the Cottontail is said to have first invaded Ontario from the south about 1860 and nearly all authors (including Seton, Nash, Fleming, Soper and others) consider the animal a comparatively recent addition to the mammalian fauna of the province. That it existed here, however, in times even before the first arrival of Europeans, is shown by Wintenberg², who records the finding of *Sylvilagus* bones in the remains of an Indian village site in South Norwich township, Oxford County. The bones were identified by Drs. Gerrit S. Miller and J. W. Gidley of the United States National Museum and Wintenberg states that the absence of articles of European origin in the material obtained at the village site shows

that, in age, it dates back to the days before the white man.

With such definite archæological evidence of its presence in Oxford County or vicinity three hundred years ago, we might safely assume that the species was present in Ontario continuously from the time when the Indians were the only human inhabitants up to the present day, at least in the south-western counties of the province, bordering on Lake Erie. It might be argued that there is no corroboratory evidence in the literature of the existence of Cottontails until about 1860 but we maintain that the same might be said truthfully of other common mammals of the province of the present day, as it cannot be denied that the literature dealing with Ontario mammals prior to 1860 was, at best, fragmentary and we doubt not that other species, unquestionably here since time immemorial, remained unnoticed in print until that or an even more recent period.

Gapper³ in his account of the mammals of the Toronto region over one hundred years ago, does not mention the Cottontail, but we take this to mean that the animal had not at that period reached so far east, but was confined to the peninsula south and east of Hamilton.

¹ W. E. Saunders, "Notes on the Mammals of Ontario", *Trans. Royal Can. Inst.*, 18:306, 1932.

² W. J. Wintenberg, "Uren Prehistoric Village Site, Oxford County, Ontario", *Bull. 51, Nat. Mus. Can.*, 1928, p. 6.

³ A. Gapper, "Observations on the Quadrupeds found in the District of Upper Canada: extending between York and Lake Simcoe—", *Zool. Journ., London*, 18:206-7, 1830.

In an attempt to determine the present range of the Cottontail in Ontario we have had recourse to the records on file at the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, Toronto. The six places which together mark the northernmost limit of the animal's penetrations (so far as the writer is aware) are, from west to east, 1, Hope Bay; 2, Orillia; 3, Bancroft; 4, Plevna; 5, Russel; and 6, Port Sydney, and some remarks on the records obtained from these localities may be worth permanent record.* Fleming⁴ mapped its then known range in 1907.

At Hope Bay one was collected by the writer on May 21, 1930, and the individual was the only one seen during four months' field-work in the Bruce peninsula in 1930, 1933 and 1934 by the writer. The specimen is now in the Museum's collection. At Orillia the Cottontail first appeared about 1927 according to P. Wainman; at Bancroft the animal appeared for the first time about 1927 according to G. J. Hass, Chief Fire Ranger of the district; and at Plevna, 1927 is also given as the date when the species was first noticed by H. Elkington. At Russel the species must be quite numerous as the Toronto *Star Weekly* of February 3, 1934, contains a despatch to the effect that a resident has offered a private bounty of twenty-five cents for every Cottontail captured in the village or vicinity, due to their depredations.

In addition to the distributional information, the writer wishes to record some observations which have a bearing on numbers.

* One taken from a Groundhog hole on October 30, 1933, by Charles E. Kay—Skull in possession of Alfred Kay of Port Sydney. "It measured eighteen inches in length, and was a young doe that had never bred, the first Cottontail I ever heard of being taken north of the Severn, although they are numerous about Barrie." (*Letter from Alfred Kay, dated March 22, 1934*).

⁴ J. H. Fleming, "The Cotton-tail Rabbit in Ontario", *Ottawa Nat.*, 22:158-9, 1908.

A female Cottontail, collected by the writer at Mac, Simcoe County, on May 17, 1931, was found to contain, on examination, nine embryos and, our search of the literature having failed to reveal a litter of Cottontails containing so many individuals, we thought perhaps that others might be interested in the fact. The skin of the female, and the embryos, are now in the Museum's collection.

Bailey⁵ states that the number of mammae is eight in a related species, *Sylvilagus auduboni*, and although we have been unable to find in the literature examined whether or not this is true of *floridanus*, the specimen collected was found to have precisely the same number and arrangement of teats, namely three pairs of abdominal and one pair of pectoral.

Seton⁶ says that Mearn's Cottontail has from four to six young at a time, sometimes as many as seven and *very rarely eight*. Nash⁷ states that they have from four to six young in a litter, Anthony⁸ records three to seven (average four), Nelson⁹ credits them with having from two to six and Snyder¹⁰ mentions the finding of five helpless young in a litter at Long Point, Ontario, on May 9, 1928. Long Point is on the north shore of Lake Erie.

In addition to these, the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology collection contains a nest and seven small young Cottontails which had been procured at Arden, Ontario, by Robert V. Lindsay on July 31, 1932.

⁵ V. Bailey, "The Mammals of New Mexico", *N. A. Fauna*, No. 53, Dec. 1931, p. 58.

⁶ E. T. Seton, "Lives of Game Animals", 1928, p. 808.

⁷ C. W. Nash, "Vertebrates of Ontario", 1908.

⁸ H. E. Anthony, "Field Book of North American Mammals", 1928, p. 507.

⁹ E. W. Nelson, "Smaller North American Animals", *Nat. Geog. Mag.* 33:391, 1918.

¹⁰ L. L. Snyder, "The Mammals of Long Point and Vicinity", *Trans. Royal Can. Inst.* 18:136, 1931.

LIST OF THE VASCULAR PLANTS OF THE HORSETHIEF CREEK— PURCELL RANGE, B.C.

By TITUS ULKE, Ph.D.

(Concluded from page 55)

ROSACEAE

Spiraea lucida Dougl.

Common; at low and middle elevations.

Potentilla anserina L.

Common; along R. R. tracks near mouth of Horsethief Creek.

Potentilla glaucophylla Lehm.

Occasional; in alpine meadow at 2000 m. elev.

Potentilla nivea L.

Occasional; on rocky slopes above timberline.

Potentilla pennsylvanica L.

Not infrequent; on open slopes at 800-1000 m. alt.



Baillie, James Little. 1935. "Some Notes on the Cottontail in Ontario." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 49(4), 70–71. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.339803>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/89293>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.339803>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/339803>

Holding Institution

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Sponsored by

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.