

## THE COTTON-TAIL RABBIT IN ONTARIO.

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This rabbit was not, so far as can be ascertained, indigenous even in south-western Ontario, where the faunal conditions are strongly Carolinian and favourable to its increase. While no very definite date can be given for its first appearance in the south-western counties, it has been a resident in Essex for at least forty years. At Niagara the first cotton-tails were noticed in 1871; this is the date given by Mr. C. W. Nash and agrees closely with that of others. Mr. Ernest Seton says that rabbits were seen in Peel in 1872; westward they were recorded at Strathroy by Mr. Walter Brett in 1882. At Toronto, there is some confusion, owing to the attempted introduction of English rabbits and the coming of the cotton-tail was overlooked; but Dr. Brodie considers the date was about 1884. Specimens were taken at Lorne Park, by Mr. Seton, in 1887, and Mr. Allan Brooks states that they were not abundant at Milton till 1888.

During the last twenty years the range has steadily increased, but the centre of abundance still remains south of the line drawn from a few miles north of Sarnia, to the west end of Lake Ontario, as shown on the accompanying map. North and east of this line the cotton-tail is subject to climatic conditions that keep it in check, and were it not for a constant migration from the south and west counties very few would remain after an unfavourable season; and in any case, the natural increase is kept down by the hunting the animal is subject to at all times.

The cotton-tail in winter often finds refuge under barns, but it is usually to be found near the woods, showing a decided preference for hardwood ridges. Solitary ones may be found in old skunk holes at all seasons. A common way of hunting them is with ferrets. There have been numerous attempts to introduce this rabbit, but the present range is due to the migration of the animal itself.

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EXCURSIONS.

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The first of the autumn excursions of the Club was held on September 12th, to the Central Experimental Farm. The members of the Ottawa Horticultural Society also visited the Farm the same afternoon, and the two societies joined forces and were conducted around the Farm by Dr. Fletcher, Mr. W. T. Macoun and other members of the staff. About 150 in all