

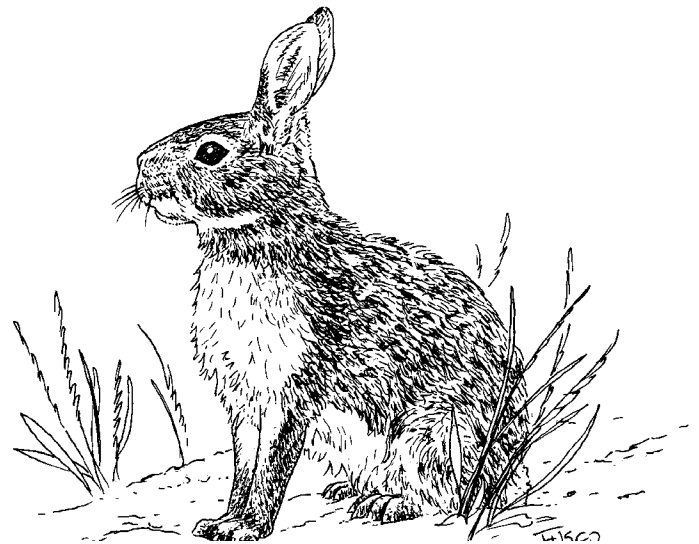
# Just for Kids

## Connecticut's Cottontails

**Both New England and eastern cottontail rabbits are found in Connecticut. The New England cottontail is a native rabbit that lived here before the settlers arrived in the 1600s. The eastern cottontail was brought into the northeastern states in the early 1900s.**

### Habitat Hunt

Biologists have been studying New England cottontails to find where they live in Connecticut. Since the study began, it has been discovered that New England cottontails like to live in the thickets of young forests while eastern cottontails can live just about anywhere (mostly fields, farms, and forest edges). In Connecticut, it appears that there are more eastern cottontails than New England cottontails; however, New England cottontails have been found to be abundant in several locations.



### Looking for Signs

- A rabbit's track pattern shows two back feet and two smaller front feet. where, the back feet will be ahead of the front tracks!
- Rabbits have two sets of front incisor teeth. The incisors neatly snip off twigs at an angle, with a clean cut. (Twigs that have been browsed by deer have a jagged edge.) Look for signs of rabbit feeding about 12 inches from the ground.
- Rabbit droppings are found all around their territory. They look like small, round (sometimes a little flattened and wrinkled) pellets.
- Rabbits make shallow "nests" called forms in the ground and line them with fur and grass before having their young.

### Identical Identities?

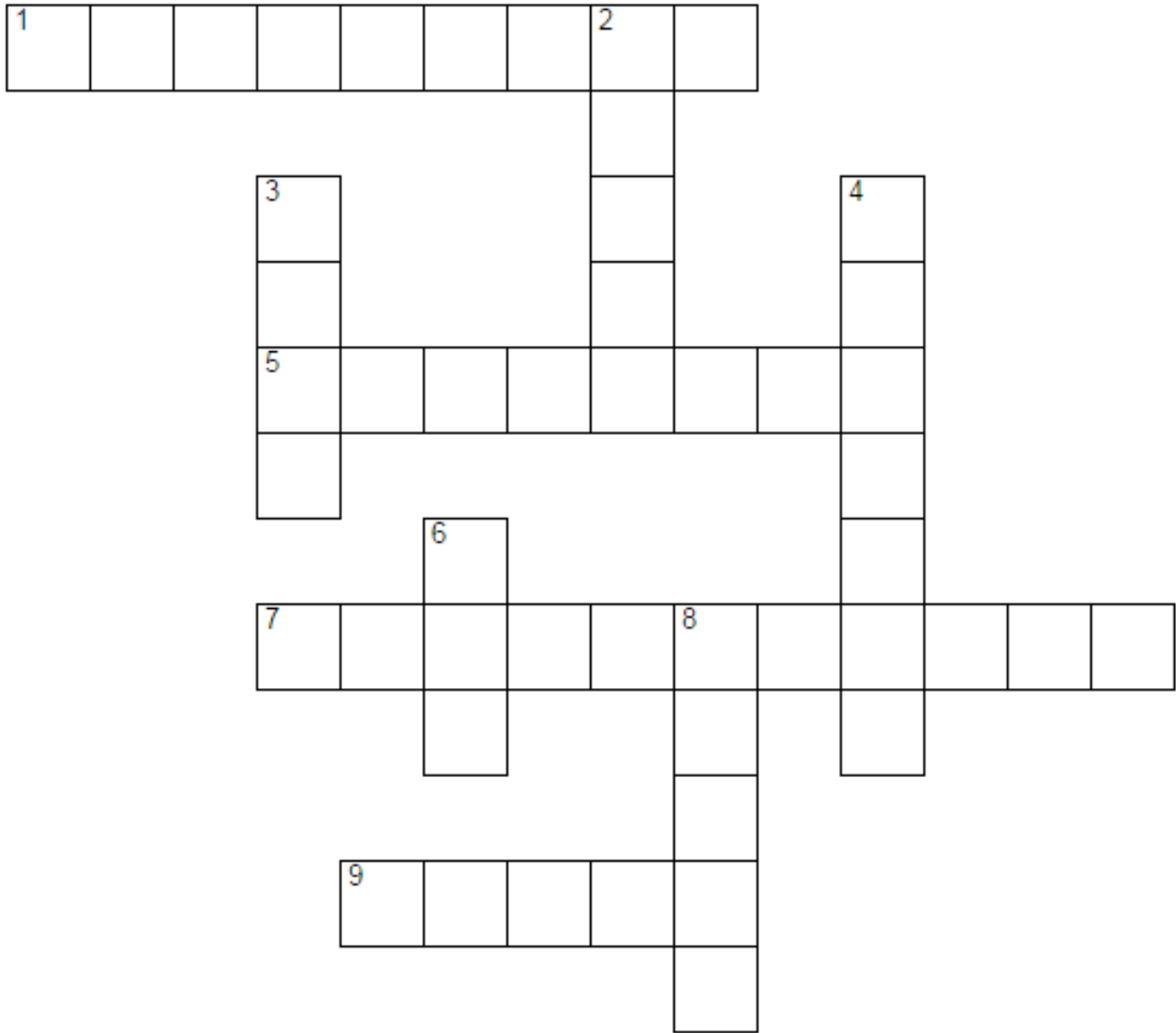
The two Connecticut cottontails are hard to tell apart . . . unless, you look at their skulls or DNA! The DNA removed from a rabbit's droppings (aka "poop") can be examined to identify which rabbit it is!

### Run Rabbit Run!

Rabbits are food for many different animals, like coyotes and bobcats. They also can be hunted in Connecticut. There are laws to say how many can be harvested and during which season. Some people find rabbit meat delicious and rabbit fur can be used to decorate coats and jackets.

# Connecticut's Cottontails

Use the information on the front of this sheet to fill in the crossword below, and learn more about cottontails!



## Across:

1. DNA from a rabbit's \_\_\_\_\_ can be used to identify which type of cottontail is living in the area
5. The set of front teeth that rabbits use to sharply snip off twigs
7. New England cottontails like to live in thickets of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The part of the skeleton used to tell the Eastern and New England cottontails apart

## Down

2. A type of material cottontails line their nests with
3. These two rabbits earned their name because their \_\_\_\_\_ looks like a \ cotton ball!
4. The non-native cottontail species that was brought to the Northeast in the early 1900s
6. A body part that the cottontails are sometimes hunted for
8. Where Eastern Cottontails like to live