

MAMMALS



snowshoe hare

(*Lepus americanus*)

DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE: Occurs in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula. Populations tend to vary cyclically about every ten years, but harvest trends indicate that populations have been in decline for the past 15 to 20 years.

ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPE FEATURES: lowland shrub; lowland hardwood; mesic hardwood; dry hardwood; lowland conifer; mesic conifer; dry conifer; bog; swamp; swamp; edge; other (dense understory); down woody debris

ASSOCIATED THREATS: incompatible natural resource mgmt; forestry practices; other biological interactions (high densities of coyote and fox; high deer browse)

COMMENTS: Snowshoe hare are a game species in Michigan. There is a need to determine whether declines are due to natural fluctuation and, if not, determine the causes. In forests with logging activity, this species depends upon residual forested areas. Size of clearcuts does not seem to be important, however, the extent and configuration of the remaining forested areas does seem to be important (Potvin et al. 1999). A clustered distribution of clearcut patches may therefore be problematic for this species. This species will benefit from a better understanding of forest configuration needs and integrated wildlife-forest planning efforts.