LOWER KEYS MARSH RABBIT
*Sylvislagus palustris hefneri*

**Order:** Rodentia  
**Family:** Leporidae  
**FNAI Ranks:** G5T1/S1  
**U.S. Status:** Endangered  
**FL Status:** Endangered

**Description:** A small rabbit (14 - 16 in. = 350 - 400 mm) with dark brown dorsal fur and grayish underside. Ears are relatively small for a rabbit (1.75 - 1.92 in. = 44 - 49 mm). Tail is inconspicuous, dark brown above, gray underneath.

**Similar Species:** No other rabbit overlaps the range of Lower Keys marsh rabbit. Eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) has gray dorsal fur and white underside.
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**Habitat:** Higher elevations within salt marsh or freshwater marsh; occasionally uses mangrove communities and shrubby edges to wetlands, but depends on herbaceous plants for food and cover.

**Seasonal Occurrence:** Active year-round.

**Florida Distribution:** Lower Keys from Big Pine Key to Boca Chica.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Same as Florida distribution. Other subspecies occur from coastal Alabama to southeastern Virginia.

**Conservation Status:** Limited to small populations on just a few Keys; thought to be declining. Two-thirds of known habitat is on public land.

**Protection and Management:** Protect upland edges along estuarine and freshwater marshes. Reduce traffic in areas known to support marsh rabbits. Control exotic plants and animals, including domestic cats. Eliminate poaching.