

river, a designated Illinois Resource Rich Area.

Hoover is approaching the conclusion of his research. Most of the data have not been fully analyzed, but it appears that birds that successfully raised a brood are more likely to return to the same area the next year.

Breeding success of Prothonotary Warblers has been found to correspond to the water level below their nest. Water levels above a certain height restrict raccoons from predating the nests. This factor has significant implications for restoration of the Cache River floodplain. By restoring the natural hydrology and thus yearly floods, Prothonotary Warblers should experience more

reproductive success and be more likely to return and raise young.

If successful breeding is crucial for a bird to return, then restoration and conservation efforts should recognize site fidelity as part of the activities.

The importance of knowing why birds come back to an area is key in restoring a functioning system. This knowledge from Hoover's study is also pertinent for birds in other locations such as grasslands, forests, and wetlands. By knowing why birds nest in certain locations and why they do or do not return, scientists can better understand the biology of the system. In turn, they can provide critical information for restoration

and conservation activities.

Other restoration and conservation efforts may well be rewarded in learning a species' site fidelity habits, and those factors affecting its fidelity.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Jeff Hoover for providing me with details of his study. His research is supported by grants from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Decatur Audubon Society.

—Mike Ward

Illinois Natural History Survey ♦
607 E. Peabody Drive
Champaign, IL 61820

Monitoring Waterfowl at the Chicago Botanic Garden



Elizabeth delaBaume monitors waterfowl at Chicago Botanic Garden in Cook County, and finds Red-breasted Mergansers are fairly common there during fall migration. Photo of Red-breasted Merganser taken in November 1997 at Northwestern University lagoon in Evanston, Cook Co. by Eric Walters. The university lagoon is approximately five miles south of the Garden.

by Elizabeth dela Baume

The Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, Illinois (Cook County) launched a two-year aquatic initiative in the summer of 1997 to explore ways to improve the water quality in the lagoons, stem bank erosion, curb shoreline damage, and create a better habitat, with a long range goal of creating a world class aquatic garden.

This aquatic initiative will continue officially through June 1999 when recommendations will be due. The next phase will be to implement the recommendations.

As part of this initiative, I am monitoring the waterfowl and shorebirds here. Twice weekly I travel around the lagoons to twelve specific observation sites. At each site I record