

The Des Plaines River Wetlands Demonstration Project

Improving Habitat Quality for Migrating Waterfowl

by Dr. Scott Hickman

The extensive loss of wetlands, a growing national concern, has made less habitat available to waterfowl during migration. The possibility of supporting these birds through wetland restoration is of keen interest to conservationists and researchers. The purpose of this paper is to report on the effectiveness of a wetland

restoration project in improving habitat quality for migrating waterfowl.

The Des Plaines River Wetlands Demonstration Project (DPRWDP), located in north-eastern Illinois, is a joint effort among conservationists, the Lake County Forest Preserve District, the state of Illinois, and the federal government.

These organizations are working to restore to a 2.8-mile stretch of the Des Plaines River the water-purifying, flood-controlling, and wildlife-sustaining functions provided by the wetlands that once bordered much of our pre-settlement river systems.

In order to accomplish this, a portion of the water from the



Dr. Scott Hickman surveys the Des Plaines River Wetlands Demonstration Project in Wadsworth, where he censused migrating waterfowl. (Paul Dawson photo)