

BOOK REVIEW #2

Havera, Stephen P. *Waterfowl of Illinois: Status and Management*. 1999. Illinois Natural History Survey Special Publication 21, xliii + 628 pages; figures; tables; photographs; literature cited; glossary; index. Illinois Natural History Survey, Champaign, Illinois. Cloth. Price: US\$59.95. Available from Illinois Natural History Survey, Distribution Office, 607 East Peabody, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

This comprehensive source of the status, management, and biology of Illinois waterfowl is the fruition of a 20-year investigation. Few other states have the history and depth of waterfowl information that Illinois does, which the author has used effectively in bringing together an elegant volume with a virtual mother lode of declarative knowledge useful to resource professionals, conservationists, birdwatchers, outdoor enthusiasts, and hunters. Chapter one traces Illinois' rich history of waterfowl tradition, lore, and bounty, along with sketches of ten professionals who were instrumental in generating the wealth of information drawn on in subsequent chapters. Chapter two details over a century of waterfowl hunting history in Illinois from the era of market hunters through the development of hunting regulations, accessories, and private clubs.

Chapter three describes waterfowl habitats and the nature and history of wetlands, especially those in Illinois. Over 90 percent of the state's wetlands are gone, but many of those remaining are affected by sedimentation and human activities. Chapter four provides past and current nesting site records in Illinois for eighteen species of waterfowl, including the American Coot and Common Moorhen. Special attention is given to the Wood Duck, Giant Canada Goose, and Mallard, because they are the primary species of waterfowl nesting in Illinois. In chapter five, the author reviews previous studies of the food habits of waterfowl, and together with his own extensive studies reveals a diverse and varied pattern of food habits throughout Illinois and the rest of the Mississippi flyway. One learns that agricultural foods are becoming staples for some duck species, as well as the Canada Goose. Other species are opportunists, eating what is available. The author argues, convincingly, that the management goal should be to provide a diversity of high-quality wetland and deep water habitats that provide the foods waterfowl prefer, as opposed to areas where they must feed only on what can be found. Chapter six is for the waterfowl enthusiasts where they will find the most commonly asked questions concerning waterfowl kinds, numbers, and arrival and departure times and locations. Chapter seven features the comeback story of the Canada Goose, particularly the Mississippi Valley population with its Giant race. Although a major success story in wildlife management, the success of the Giant race is implicated in the changed distribution and migration chronology of other Canada Geese, complications in monitoring Canada Goose populations, and nuisance problems.

Chapter eight surveys the waterfowl harvests in the United States and Canada. In recent years, hunters in the Mississippi flyway have taken 50% of the Mallards, nearly 50% of all other ducks, and nearly 43% of the Canada Geese harvested in the United States. Chapter nine covers the banding of migratory waterfowl, and explains why banding is one of the most important and powerful tools of waterfowl management and research. Chapter ten describes the management of waterfowl and will be especially valued by nonprofessionals for its extensive practical information. Topics include hunting season

regulation, habitat management, waterfowl refuges, tips on providing adequate food for waterfowl, and a story worth remembering about lead poisoning in Illinois waterfowl. The final chapter explores what may lie ahead for Illinois waterfowl in the face of a growing human population and diminishing wetlands. The author sketches a variety of programs having potential to rescue wetlands, but cautions that concerned citizens and ardent conservationists must support the programs for wetlands by instilling in all citizens an appreciation and respect for nature and the environment. That is as stewards of the land rather than conquerors of it.

Obviously, this work is not a sit down and read cover-to-cover book. Although the eleven chapters are well organized and integrated, with cross references as needed, I found that chapters two through ten could be perused or consulted in any order. Furthermore, the text provides exhaustive documentation through 126 text figures, 211 tables, and 213 photographs. Twelve appendices display names, places, and data in support of the text. The author has written for the public as well as for professionals, and thus understandably avoided the use of taxonomic names in the text. However, interested readers will appreciate Appendix One, which lists common names with their taxonomic classifications. A glossary and an index complete this beautifully designed and produced volume, which is complemented by the excellent artwork of Beverly C. Sanderson. The author has produced a landmark volume that should be in every institutional, agency, and personal library, and in college and secondary school classrooms as well, where there is any interest in Illinois waterfowl or wetland ecology.

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