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Local Birding

Tom Sporre Wildlife Area

TOM SPORRE WILDLIFE AREA (Also known as Sporre Marsh) is located in Northwest Indiana, 1 ½ miles east of Interstate 65, along busy Route 231. The seventy-eight acre parcel is located in a rural area of Lake County between Crown Point and Hebron, Indiana. The Tom Sporre Wildlife Area is the first joint project of the Indiana Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project, Inc.

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The former wetland had been farmed for over fifty years. The farm field was planted in soybeans in 1994 and purchased in 1995 by the Indiana Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project. After construction activity and seeding in 1996, the area once again began attracting breeding waterfowl, and migrating shorebirds and warblers in 1997.



This restored wetland is named in memory of Tom Sporre who grew up in Hobart, Indiana. Tom was a respected state waterfowl biologist; he was well liked by duck hunters and considered quite a character. The Indiana Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project dedicated their first acquisition to Tom Sporre because he had similar ideas about restoration and preservation of natural areas. Tom surely would have been a part of the project if he had not died following a car accident.

MANAGEMENT GOALS - Waterfowl, shore birds, or both? The Indiana Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration

Project is part of the North American Waterfowl Plan. Their goal is to help increase the waterfowl production in the Great Lakes Flyway by providing waterfowl breeding habitat. In addition, there is a responsibility to preserve wetland-associated species. Which is where the dilemma lies. Due to varying water levels at Tom Sporre Marsh, either ducks will find the area desirable for breeding or not. Depending on water levels, what is good for breeding ducks, may not offer rest and foraging opportunity for migrating shorebirds.



WATERFOWL POPULATION DIMINISHED BY 1985

The waterfowl populations were recorded at an all time low in 1985. Wetland habitat in the United States and Canada was disappearing at an alarming rate. International cooperation between the United States and Canada in 1986 became the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Mexico signed the agreement in 1994 making it truly an international agreement for the shared waterfowl heritage that the three countries share.



Although the agreement is international in nature, improvement in waterfowl production is managed at a local regional level. Joint venture groups strive to enhance wetland habitat for waterfowl conservation and help to preserve wetland-associated species.

For more information about the Tom Sporre Wildlife area please click on the following link <http://www.nwindiana.waterfowlusa.org>, which will take you to the Northwest Indiana chapter of Waterfowl USA's website.

Information and photos provided by Donna A. Gonzalez 1997 TSWA - Lake County, IN

Information: Copy condensed from a Poster Exhibit for the 25th Annual Natural Areas Association Conference and from the "1998 Survey of Bird Species Diversity and Habitat Use at the Tom Sporre Wildlife Area Wetland Restoration Project", prepared for an Indiana University Biology Study and Conference Project by Donna A. Gonzalez