

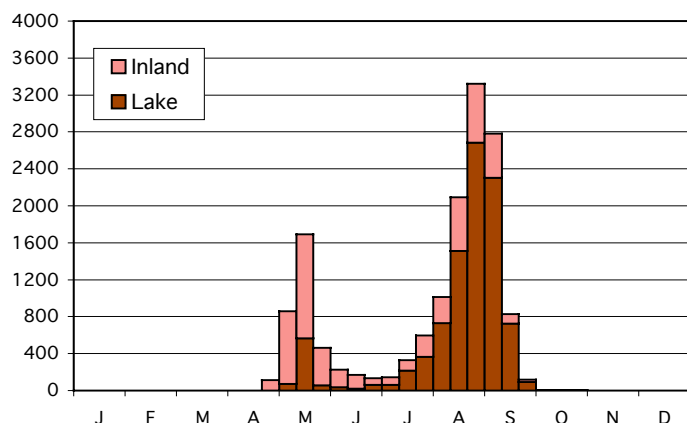
Black Tern

Chlidonias niger

Historical Information

First Published Record: The earliest published Indiana record involved two young Black Terns taken in White County on 17 May 1886 (Butler 1898).

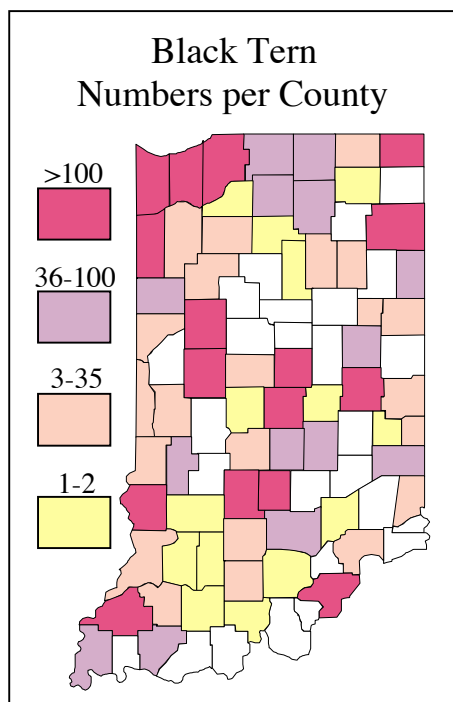
Butler (1890) referred to this handsome tern as a regular migrant and a summer resident from the Kankakee River northward. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it abundant in the north and uncommon elsewhere. Mumford and Keller (1984) considered the Black Tern an uncommon migrant, which can be quite common on Lake Michigan.



Status

Physical Evidence: Some 20 Indiana specimens are preserved in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Academy of Sciences				7
Chicago Field Museum				6
National Museum of Natural History				1
Milwaukee Public Museum				1
Univ. of Michigan Museum				5
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	5	6	4
Central Tier	n	6	7	6
Southern Tier	n	6	7	5
Entire State	n	5	6	4



Current Status

The Black Tern is Common (4) on Lake Michigan in fall and Fairly Common (5) to Rare (7) at other locations and times of the year.

Occurrence

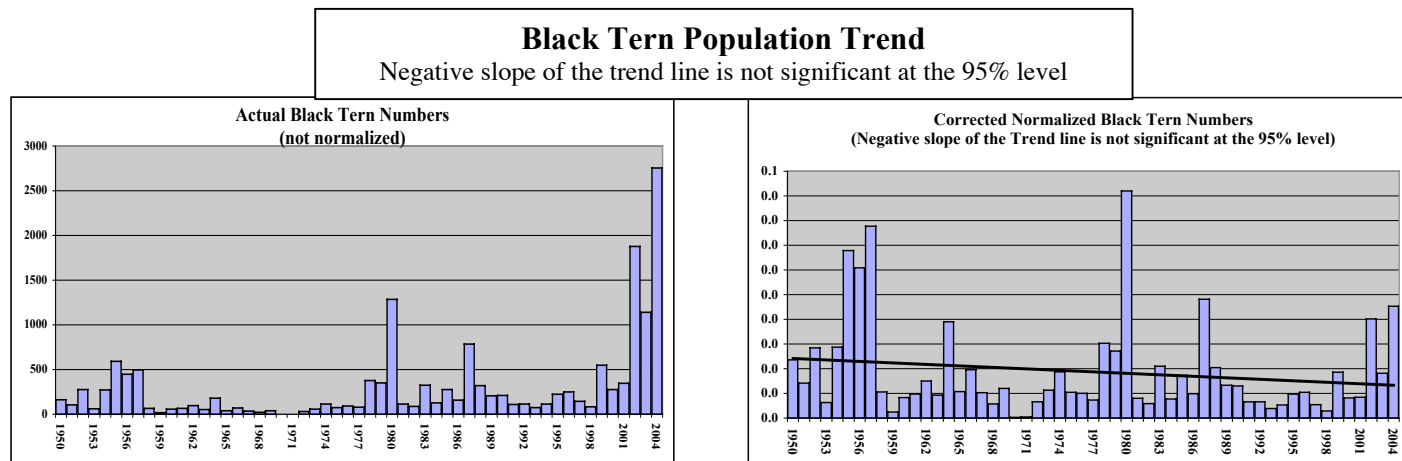
Although the Black Tern has been recorded in 66 counties, its numbers have declined in recent decades. The largest numbers occur on Lake Michigan during fall migration (August through early September) when transients accompany flocks of migrating Common Terns.

Spring Migration

In spring Black Terns are more often encountered at inland sites where they frequent small lakes and ponds. Over the past two decades spring birds have become quite rare on Lake Michigan.

Population Trend

Although Black Terns have decreased in Indiana, migrants continue to pass through the state. Large numbers of fall migrants apparently account for the fact that negative slope of the trend line is not statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



Breeding

Whitaker et al. (1988) listed historical records of Black Terns nesting in ten counties. The Indiana Atlas confirmed nesting in only Lake, LaPorte, and Steuben Counties (Castrale et al. 1998). In 1997 Indiana's last known nesting occurred at Horseshoe Lake in northern LaPorte County where two eggs were seen on 6 June (Jackson 1998). The Black Tern has now disappeared as a breeding species in the state and is now listed as endangered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Black Tern Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
300	18-May-1957	Mich. City Harbor	J.E. Landing	JEL
100	20-May-1957	Gary Harbor	J. Louis	JLo
100	09-May-1988	Lake Gibson	D. Jones	IAQ
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
700	25-Aug-04	Mich. City Harbor	B.J. Grube	KJB
650	05-Sep-1980	Mich. City Harbor	K.J. Brock	KJB
563	03-Sep-2002	Miller Beach	J.J. McCoy	KJB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	26-Apr-1949	6-May	16-May	2-Jun	Sum. Vis.	269
Central	19-Apr-1947	5-May	14-May	28-May	Sum. Vis.	118
South	25-Apr-1981	1-May	13-May	1-Jun	Sum. Vis.	55

Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Vis.	26-Jul	24-Aug	15-Sep	27-Oct-54	317
Central	Sum. Vis.	1-Aug	25-Aug	11-Sep	27-Oct-29	88
South	Sum. Vis.	29-Jul	23-Aug	10-Sep	3-Oct-64	117

References Cited

Butler, A. W. (1890) The Birds of Indiana, Appendix to *Transactions of the Indiana Horticultural Society for 1890* (available on the web).

Butler, A. W. (1898) The Birds of Indiana, Indiana Department of Geology and Natural Resources Annual Report, 22:575-1187.

Castrale, J.S., E.M. Hopkins, and C.E. Keller (1998) Atlas of breeding Birds of Indiana, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 388 pp.

Jackson, S.F. (1998) Field Notes Summer 1997, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 76:145-168.

Keller, C.E., S.A. Keller, and T.C. Keller (1979) *Indiana Birds and Their Haunts*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 214 pp.

Mumford, R.E. and C.E. Keller (1984) *The Birds of Indiana*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 376 pp.

Whitaker, J.O., Jr., V.M. Lentz, and R.E. Mumford (1988) *Endangered and threatened vertebrate animals of Indiana; their distribution and abundance*. Indiana Acad. Sci. Monogr. No. 5.