

Swallow-tailed Kite

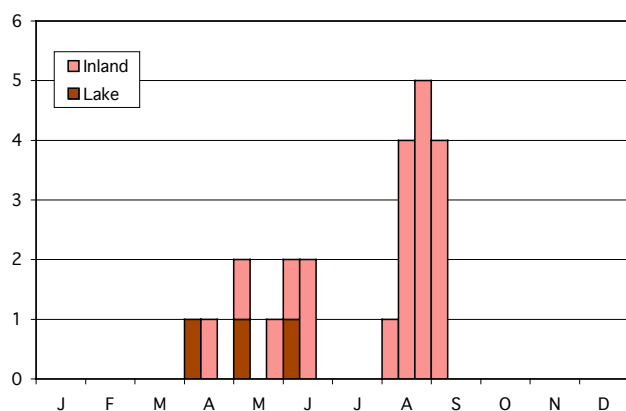
Elanoides forficatus

Historical Information

First Published record: Regarding this species Butler (1898) quoted a tantalizing statement made in 1812 by Wilson: “(the kite) is very abundant in South Carolina and Georgia, and still more so in west Florida, and the extensive prairies of Ohio and Indiana.” The first specific Indiana date involved two that were shot in Monroe County 19 June 1882 (Butler 1898).

Butler (1890) considered this elegant raptor a rare summer resident in the south, and of irregular occurrence northward. A decade later his assessment (Butler 1898) was more revealing, noting that for a seventy year period following Wilson’s above account there was only one Indiana record north of the lower Wabash River. Butler further lists nine records (mostly partially dated) in the late 1800s. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it accidental, listing only two records. Without

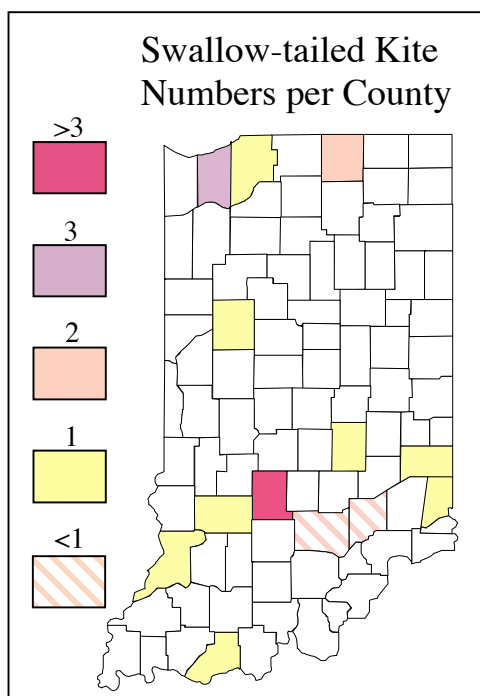
specifics, Mumford and Keller (1984) list pre-1900 occurrences in six counties and mentioned a half-dozen post-1900 reports.



Status

Physical Evidence: There are no known specimens, but several photographs have been published in the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*.

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
No known specimens				0
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	n	n	9
Central Tier	n	n	n	10
Southern Tier	n	n	n	9
Entire State	n	n	n	9



Current Status

Based on five occurrences in the past two decades, the status of this kite in Indiana is now Occasional (9). There are six dated records prior to 1910 and seven since 1980.

Occurrence

All post 1980 records, except two, were in the two southern tiers and six of these occurred between 15 August and 4 September. Records prior to 1997 have not been evaluated by the Indiana Bird Records Committee. The striped pattern in the distribution map refers to a bird photographed at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, which extends across parts of Jackson and Jennings Counties.

Undated Records

Numerous undated and partially dated records exist, primarily from the late 1800s. These were excluded.

Breeding

According to Mumford and Keller (1984) J.J. Audubon found a nest at the Falls of the Ohio in 1820. This site may well have been in Kentucky; at any rate there is no evidence of modern nesting.

Swallow-tailed Kite Data

All Completely Dated Records

No.	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
2	19-Jun-1882	Monroe Co	???	BU2
1	04-Aug-1885	Monroe Co	McAtee	REM
2	18-Aug-1885	Monroe Co	McAtee	REM
1	11-Apr-1894	Knox Co	E.J. Chansler	REM
1	05-May-1903	Greene Co	???	REM
1	03-Sep-1906	Franklin Co	???	BU5
1	05-May-1918	Furnessville	George Brennan	---
1	05-Apr-1921	Furnessville	???	ERF
1	06-Jun-1948	Furnessville	???	ERF
1	31-May & 1 Jun-1982	Tippecanoe Co	T.T. Cable	M&K
1	28-Aug-1983	Muscatatuck NWR	Robert Berger	IAQ
1	16 to 23-Aug-1997	Deaborn Co	Craig Harmer	NAB
1	25-Aug-1997	Lincoln SP	Dave Dugas	NAB
1	26-Aug to 4-Sep-2001	Shelby Co	Ron Rayl	NAB
1	15 to 28-Aug-2004	LaPorte Co	Tim Martin	NAB
2	1-Sep-2005	Elkhart Co	Dan Stoltzfus	INB

Migration Envelope

Entire State

	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
Spring	5-Apr-1921	---	---	---	6-Jun-1948	7
Fall	4-Aug-1885	---	25 Aug	---	4-Sep-1906	12

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.

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.

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