

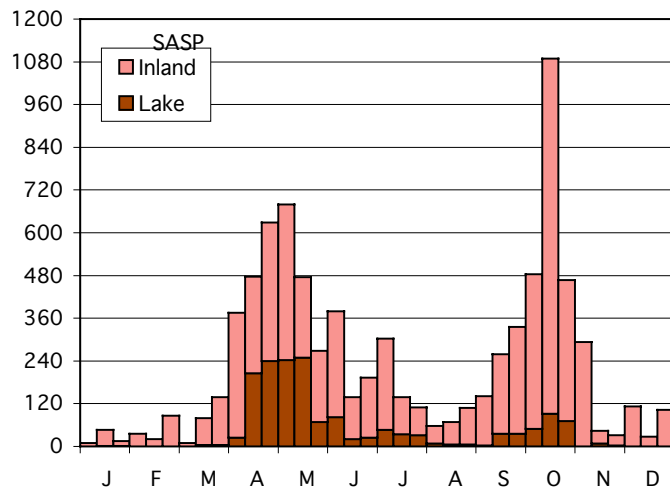
## Savannah Sparrow

## *Passerculus sandwichensis*

### Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's first formal report of this sparrow involved a specimen collected in Franklin County 11 April 1881 (Mumford files).

Butler (1898) considered this inconspicuous sparrow a rare resident of the lower Wabash Valley. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it a fairly common migrant, uncommon summer resident, and casual winter visitor. Mumford and Keller (1984) believed that the Savannah Sparrow was a fairly common migrant.



### Current Status

The Savannah Sparrow is a Common (4) migrant and summer resident. Based on recent discoveries it appears to be a Fairly Common (5) winter resident in southwestern Indiana (see Winter Records section).

### Occurrence

This small sparrow has been reported in at least 86 Indiana counties. Although the greatest numbers are reported during the migrations, excellent counts have also been recorded in both summer and winter. Summer Savannah Sparrows are concentrated in the northern two-thirds of the state. Indeed, the percentages of summer birds reported in each tier are: northern tier 51, central tier 44, and southern tier 5.

### Winter Records

Over the past two decades a remarkable average of 20.5 birds has been logged annually during the winter season. This number was elevated considerably by an amazing count of 90 birds made by D.R. Whitehead in Greene County (50 at Goose Pond plus 40 at Beehunter Marsh) on 8 December 2004 (IN-BIRD).

### Status

Physical Evidence: Some 35 skins, including 27 at the National Museum, are archived in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Carnegie Museum of Natural History				2
Chicago Academy of Sciences				3
Chicago Field Museum				2
National Museum of Natural History				27
Univ. of Michigan Museum				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	7	4	5	4
Central Tier	6	5	4	5
Southern Tier	5	4	6	4
Entire State	5	4	4	4

### Extreme Record

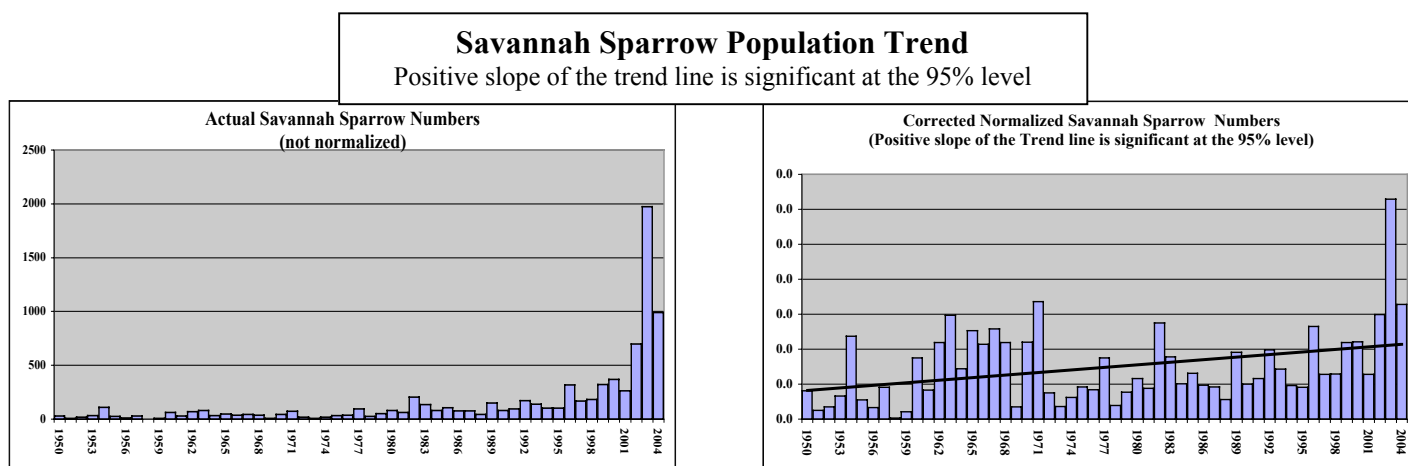
Indiana's maximum count, by a wide margin, was the 450 birds tallied by D.R. Whitehead in Greene and Sullivan Counties on 19 October 2003 (IN-BIRD). This total included 300 (at a minimum DRW) at Beehunter Marsh 100 at Goose Pond, and 50 at the Hawthorn Mine.

### Subspecies

In 1954 Professor Mumford sent 15 Indiana specimens to the National Museum requesting subspecies assessment. A letter from the Museum (Mumford files) characterized these as *P. s. savanna* (3), *P. s. oblitus* (3), and *P. s. mediogriseus* (9).

### Population Trend

Positive slope of the trend line is statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



### **Breeding**

Castrale et al. (1998) reported breeding evidence in 51 percent of the state's 647 priority blocks; these data were primarily concentrated in the northern two-thirds of the state. Nests, eggs, and young in the nest have been reported from 10 May through 21 July. On the latter date in 1962 a fledgling was netted during banding activities at Geist Reservoir, Hamilton County (Buskirk 1962)

### **Savannah Sparrow Data**

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
120	29-Apr-2004	Lake Co traps	J.J. McCoy	INB
82	2-May-2004	Beehunter Marsh	L.W. Sterrenburg	INB
80	13-May-1999	Clay St. Gary	J.J. McCoy	KJB
Fall/Early winter				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
450	19-Oct-2003	Multiple Sites*	D.R. Whitehead	INB
192	01-Nov-2003	Multiple Sites	L.W. Sterrenburg	INB
90	08-Dec-2004	Greene Co	D.R. Whitehead	INB
*Beehunter Marsh (300), Goose Pond (100), and the Hawthorn Mine (50)				

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
<b>North</b>	Win. Vis.	8-Apr	3-May	30-May	Sum. Res.	528
<b>Central</b>	Win. Res.	31-Mar	30-Apr	14-May	Sum. Res.	140
<b>South</b>	Win. Res.	20-Mar	19-Apr	15-May	Sum. Res.	110
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
<b>North</b>	Sum. Res.	31-Jul	4-Oct	25-Oct	Win. Vis.	316
<b>Central</b>	Sum. Res.	6-Sep	5-Oct	31-Oct	Win. Res.	123
<b>South</b>	Sum. Res.	21-Sep	19-Oct	13-Nov	Win. Res.	105

### References Cited

Buskirk, W.H. (1962) Savannah Sparrow Nestling in Hamilton County, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 40:45.

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.

IN-BIRD, a Listserv dealing with Indiana birds developed and maintained by P.W. Kelly. The records are archived at: <http://listserv.indiana.edu/archives/in-bird-l.html>

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

Mumford files: An extensive accumulation of Indiana bird data on 5x7 file cards compiled by Professor R.E. Mumford of Purdue University, West Lafayette.

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