

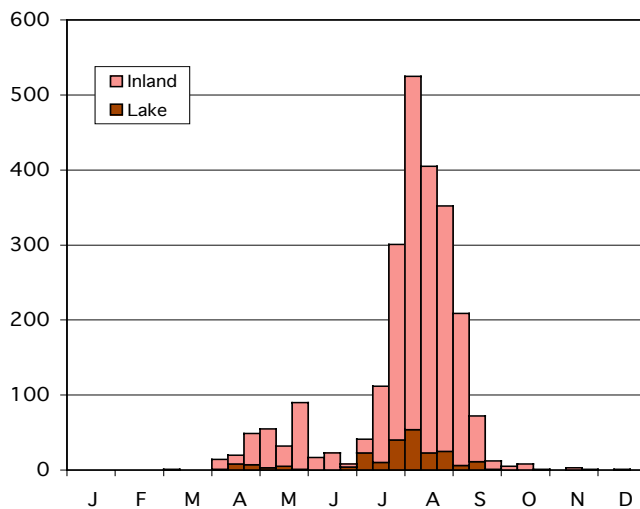
## Little Blue Heron

## *Egretta caerulea*

### Historical Information

First Published Record: Butler (1898) mentioned that Dr. F. Stein first noted this species in “perhaps” 1874. The earliest completely dated record involved a male collected by F.H. Test in Tippecanoe County 17 May 1892 (DNR files).

Butler (1890) deemed the Little Blue Heron a summer resident in southwestern Indiana and suggested that breeding occurred there. Keller (1966) described it as an irregular uncommon to common summer visitant, which occasionally appeared in spring. By 1979, Keller et al. refined the status to: a casual to very rare spring migrant, which is rare to very rare in summer. Mumford and Keller (1984) concurred with the latter assessment.



### Status

Physical Evidence: Two specimens are preserved in museums (S.F. Jackson, unpublished list and Richards 1987).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				1
Indiana State Museum				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	7	7	7
Central Tier	n	8	7	6
Southern Tier	n	6	6	6
Entire State	n	6	6	6

### Current Status

The Little Blue Heron is currently Uncommon (6).

### Occurrence

The greatest abundance occurs during the fall period; peak numbers occur in August. Little Blues are most frequently seen in the southern counties; it has been recorded annually in the state since at least 1973. The state’s mean annual total over the last two decades is about 40 birds.

### Extreme Records

Out of season records include the state’s only March record, an adult documented by Naomi Stern at West Beach 5 March 1983 (Brock 1983). The state’s largest count, by far, was the 200 birds (along with 500 Great Egrets) reported at Willow Slough FWA in early August 1952 by W.E. Madden (Mumford and Keller 1984).

## Breeding

Although Butler (1898) reported breeding in Knox and Gibson Counties Mumford and Keller (1984) did not treat the Little Blue as a breeding species. The first confirmed breeding occurred in Vigo County (Wabash River valley) when an active nest containing two nestlings was discovered 8 June 1985 (Muench and Brown 1986). There have been two subsequent breeding efforts in the state. Nest building by up to 30 Little Blues was observed at the Lake Gibson Power Plant facility 22 May 1996 (Bowman and Bowman 1997); on 1 June M.R. Brown and Tom Perrokek counted at least six nesting pairs at this site (Jackson 1997). Two incubating birds were reported at the Ayrshire Mine rookery, Warrick County, 29 June 1998 (Bruner 2003).

## Little Blue Heron Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
30	22-May-1996	Lake Gibson	G. & L. Bowman	IAQ
20	25-May-1996	Lake Gibson	J.H. Campbell	IAQ
12	21-May-1996	Lake Gibson	G. & L. Bowman	IAQ
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
200	early Aug-1952	Willow Slough	W.E. Madden	M&K
77	20-Aug-1930	Vermillion Co	???	DNR
66	23-Jul-1952	Willow Slough	R.E. Mumford	REM

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	5-Mar-1983	16-Apr	30-Apr	20-May	8-Jun-1976	52
Central	4-Apr-1980	10-Apr	7-May	28-May	9-Jun-1985	28
South	1-Apr-1971	17-Apr	8-May	30-May	8-Jun-1981	71
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	16-Jul-1988	24-Jul	11-Aug	6-Sep	30-Sep-1996	87
Central	18-Jul-1949	26-Jul	18-Aug	12-Sep	27-Nov-1965	109
South	15-Jul-1962	23-Jul	12-Aug	4-Sep	12-Nov-1949	162

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