

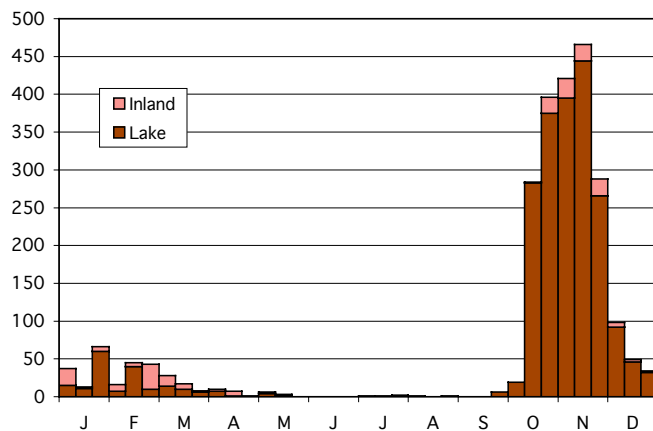
## White-winged Scoter

## *Melanitta fusca*

### Historical Information

**First Published Record:** Butler (1898) mentioned that one was taken at English Lake, Starke County in late October-early November 1889. Two more were killed there in November 1890, following a “heavy blow off Lake Michigan.” The first completely dated report did not occur until 3 December 1938, when Val Nolan discovered a male on Indian Lake, Marion County (Mumford files).

Butler (1898) referred to the “Velvet Scoter,” as it was sometimes known, as a rare winter visitor, which was more numerous on Lake Michigan. Keller et al. (1979) characterized it as an uncommon fall and very rare spring migrant and winter visitant in the north, but casual elsewhere in the state. Mumford and Keller (1984) deemed it an uncommon migrant in the north and rare or casual elsewhere.



### Current Status

White-winged Scoters are Fairly Common (5) on Lake Michigan in fall.

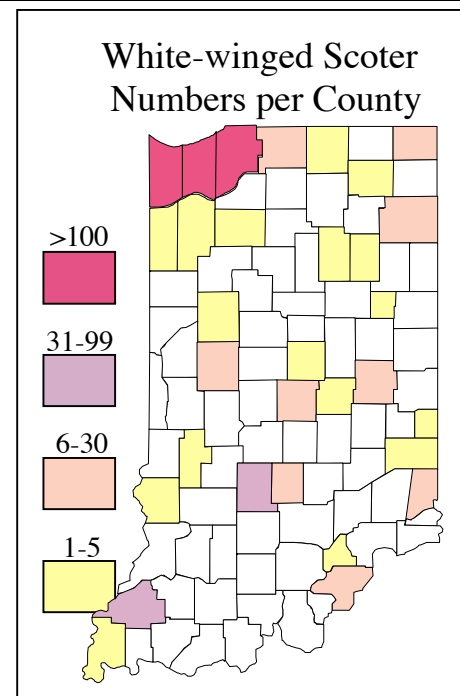
### Occurrence

As is the case with all sea ducks, this large scoter is seen most frequently on Lake Michigan. It is, however, the least common fall scoter on Lake Michigan, constituting about 25.9 percent of the autumn scoters reported over the past twenty years. Numbers shown on the migration histogram are dominated by the fall flight on Lake Michigan. This impressive movement yields an average of 81 birds per autumn along the lakefront. In contrast, the spring migration generates only paltry numbers on Lake Michigan. Interestingly, inland sites have roughly equal numbers in both spring and fall. However, owing to the heavy fall movement on Lake Michigan the statewide lake to inland ratio is approximately ten to one.

### Status

**Physical Evidence:** A skin from Indiana is housed in the National Museum of Natural History collection (S.F. Jackson, unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	6	7	9	5
Central Tier	9	8	10	7
Southern Tier	7	8	n	7
Entire State	6	7	9	5



### Winter Records

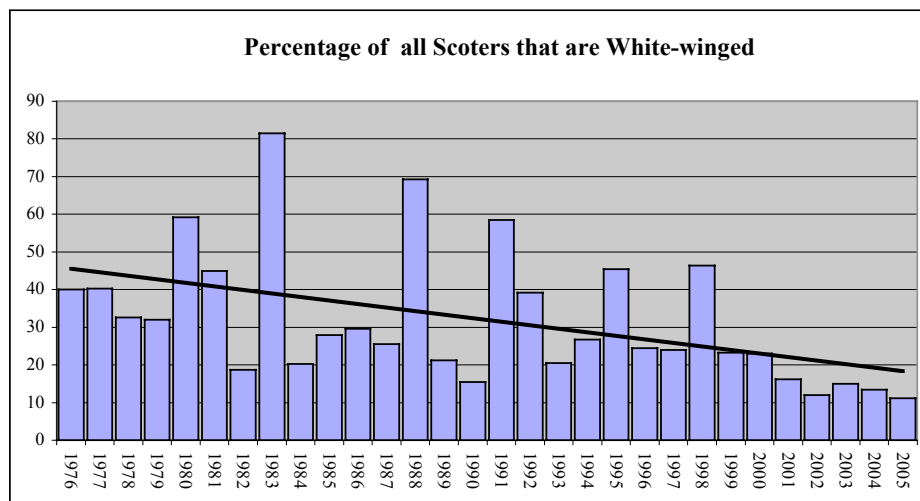
Winter White-winged Scoters have been reported in 19 of the last twenty years, yielding a mean of 16.3 birds per season. The largest winter count of 30 birds was recorded by Denny Jones at Lake Gibson 26 February 1989 (Brown 1989).

### Summer Records

Two summer records exist; both involved females. J.J. McCoy discovered one in the U.S. Steel impoundment (adjacent to Lake Michigan) on 10 July 1998; this individual lingered until 22 August 1998 and was seen by numerous observers (Jackson 2000). Craig Seward observed an actively diving female along the shoreline at Summit Lake State Park 27 July 1998 (Jackson 2000).

### Population Trend

Numbers of this large scoter appear to have declined in recent years. Below is a plot of the percentage of White-winged among all scoters reported. Note that the trend line is steeply negative.



### **White-winged Scoter Data**

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
30	26-Feb-1989	Lake Gibson	Denny Jones	IAQ
5	07-Mar-1965	Marion Co	C.E. Keller	REM
4	19-Mar-2003	Lake Monroe	D.R. Whitehead	INB
Fall/Winter				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
147	18-Nov-1995	Lakefront	J.K. Cassady	KJB
143	21-Nov-1998	Lakefront	J.K. Cassady	KJB
72	30-Oct-1954	Lakefront	Raymond Grow	Grow

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
<b>North</b>	Win. Res.	5-Mar	27-Mar	5-May	17-May-1956	38
<b>Central</b>	Win. Res.	---	23-Mar	---	16-May-1998	11
<b>South</b>	Win. Res.	---	---	---	23-Mar-1993	6
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
<b>North</b>	17-Jul-1998	17-Oct	4-Nov	22-Nov	Win. Res.	310
<b>Central</b>	27-Jul-1998	---	3-Nov	---	Win. Res.	14
<b>South</b>	22-Oct-1978	---	15-Nov	---	Win. Res.	26

### References Cited

Brown, M.R. (1989) Field Notes Winter 1988-89, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 67:189-197.

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

Jackson, S.F. (2000) Field Notes Summer 1998, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 78:83-96.

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.