

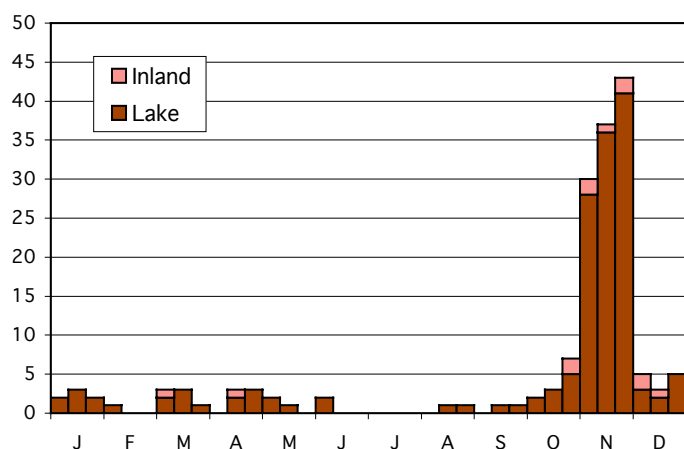
Black-legged Kittiwake

Rissa tridactyla

Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's earliest Black-legged Kittiwake was recorded 11 March 1950, when R.E. Mumford and members of the South Bend Audubon Society observed one at Michigan City Harbor (Mumford files).

Butler (1898) relegated this pelagic gull to his hypothetical list. Both Keller et al. (1979) and Mumford and Keller (1984) considered it a casual fall migrant.

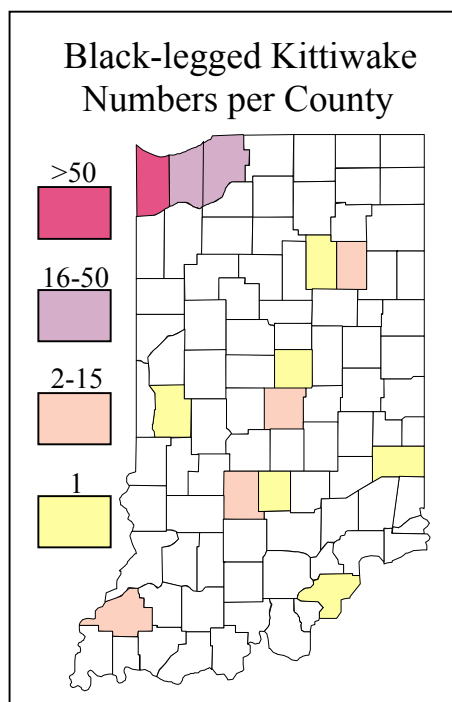


Status

Physical Evidence: At least two specimens from Indiana are preserved (S.F. Jackson unpublished list). Additionally, a T.C. Keller photograph of a juvenile at Eagle Creek Park 25 October 1988 appeared on the cover of the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly* 1991, Vol. 69, No. 1.

Current Status

The Black-legged Kittiwake is Uncommon (6) in fall and Very Rare (8) in winter on Lake Michigan. Otherwise it is Occasional (9) or Accidental (10).



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

Occurrence

Most kittiwakes are seen on Lake Michigan in November (see migration histogram), where they often accompany the strong north winds following cold fronts. In the 1980s it was discovered that Black-legged Kittiwakes occur regularly in conjunction with these November gales; as a result subsequent numbers have increased dramatically. On Lake Michigan kittiwakes have been recorded in 17 of the last 20 years with an average of 5.6 birds per year.

Plumage

As shown by the adjacent plumages table more than half of the kittiwakes observed are in juvenile plumage.

Percent of plumages		
Adult	1st-year or juv.	Imm
15%	69%	16%



Juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake, Port of Indiana 18 December 2004. Photo by J.J. McCoy.

Inland Records

As shown on the distribution map, kittiwakes have been reported in ten inland counties, where most occur on large reservoirs. Inland kittiwakes have been reported in five of the last 20 years. The most recent of these involved a first-year bird reported by W.H. Buskirk at Brookville Reservoir, Franklin County on 5 November 2005 (IN-BIRD).

Out of Season Records

Although the Black-legged Kittiwake is primarily a late fall migrant that occasionally lingers into winter, at least 16 spring and one summer records exist. Most remarkable among the spring records was the report of two immatures at Michigan City Harbor by C.T. Clark on 6 March 1954 (Mumford files). The summer kittiwake was an immature first seen by John O'Brien and Brad Etter at Miller Beach 1 June 1996 and (presumably the same individual) by R.S. Plank at Michigan City Harbor 6 and 9 June 1996 (Brock 1996).

Black-legged Kittiwake Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
11	21-Nov-1995	Miller Beach	R.D. Hughes	KJB
10	28-Nov-1995	Miller Beach	K.J. Brock	KJB
5	22-Nov-2002	Miller Beach	J.J. McCoy	INB
4	11-Nov-1991	Miller Beach	K.J. Brock	KJB
4	10-Nov-1997	Miller Beach	B.J. Grube	KJB
4	17-Nov-1998	Miller Beach	J.J. McCoy	KJB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	6-Mar-1954	---	20-Apr	---	9-Jun-1996	16
Central	5-Mar-1990	---	---	---	5-Mar-1990	1
South	19-Apr-1994	---	---	---	19-Apr-1994	1

Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	15-Aug-1953	22-Oct	15-Nov	5-Dec	29-Dec-1953	88
Central	25-Oct-1988	---	---	---	25-Nov-1954	3
South	30-Oct-1991	---	---	---	17-Dec-1989	5

References Cited

Brock, K.J. (1996) Middlewestern Prairie Region, Breeding Season 1996, *Nat. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 50:954-957.

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

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.