

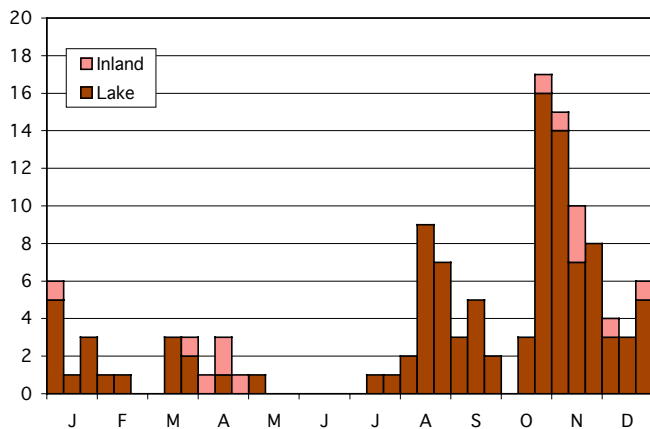
Little Gull

Larus minutus

Historical Information

First Published Record: A.G. Baldwin reported Indiana's first Little Gull at Michigan City Harbor during fall 1950; this bird lingered and was seen by others on 5 November 1950 (Mumford and Keller 1984).

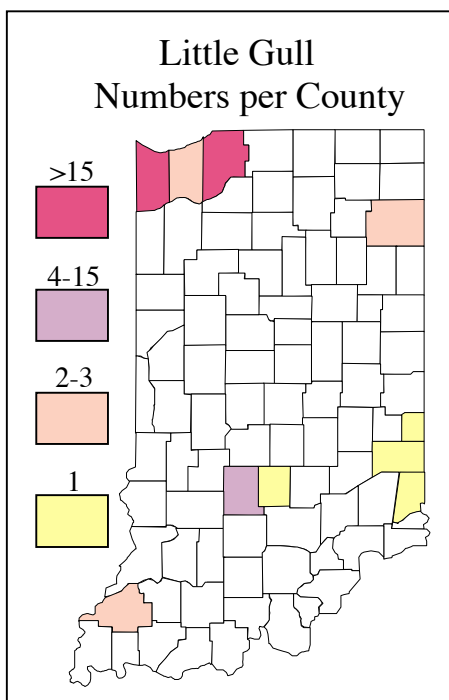
This Old World gull was not mentioned by Butler (1898). Keller et al. (1979) considered it casual and noted that all existing records came from the Michigan City area. Mumford and Keller (1984) deemed it a very rare fall migrant, a very rare winter resident, and a casual spring visitor on Lake Michigan. They also noted one inland record.



Status

Physical Evidence: A skin and a skeleton from Indiana are in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (S.F. Jackson unpublished list). The skin consisted of an adult collected at Michigan City Harbor on 22 December 1955 (Mumford 1956).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Univ. of Michigan Museum				2
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	10	10	10	7
Central Tier	n	n	n	n
Southern Tier	10	9	n	9
Entire State	10	9	10	7



Current Status

Today the Little Gull is a Rare (7) fall migrant on Lake Michigan and is Occasional (9) or Accidental (10) elsewhere.

Occurrence

Although the vast majority of records come from the three Lake Michigan counties (especially Lake and LaPorte), the Little Gull has also been reported in seven inland counties. It is most frequently encountered in late fall when it often associates with migrating Bonaparte's Gulls.

Fall Migration

The migration histogram shows a bimodal distribution for the fall flight. A small movement, primarily in August and September, is followed by the major flight in late October

and November. An explanation for this pattern is not readily apparent, but it may well be related to the appearance of individuals from different populations.

Plumages

Of 84 birds aged adults were dominant by a factor of almost two to one.

Percent of Aged Plumages			
Adult	2nd-year	1st-year or juv.	Imm
51%	4%	29%	16%

Inland Records

A dozen Little Gulls have been reported away from Lake Michigan, where they appear on reservoirs and impoundments. The first inland report came from the Great Miami Oxbow, Dearborn County, where one was observed by W. Randle and D. Russell 29-30 March 1978 (Mumford files). Subsequent reports have come from Gibson County, Lake Monroe, Lake Lemon, Hursttown Reservoir in Allen County, and Brookville Reservoir.



Little Gull in fresh juvenile plumage, Miller Beach 26 August 2003. Photo by J.J. McCoy

Winter Records

Except for the final third of February, this tiny gull has been recorded, albeit in low numbers, during every ten-day interval of the winter period.

Little Gull Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
1	14-Mar1954	Mich. City Harbor	Raymond Grow	Grow
1	28-Mar1955	Mich. City Harbor	Raymond Grow	REM
1	27-Mar1966	Mich. City Harbor	L.C. Binford	REM
Fall/Winter				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
3	14-Sep-2003	Mich. City Harbor	J.J. McCoy	INB
2	27-Nov-1954	Mich. City Harbor	Raymond Grow	REM
2	26-Dec-1954	Mich. City Harbor	J.E. Landing	IAQ

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
State	Win. Res.	---	29-Mar	---	5-May-1981	12
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
State	18-Jul-1992	23-Aug	1-Nov	5 Dec	Win. Res.	84

References Cited

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 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. (1956) Little Gull taken in Indiana, *Wilson Bulletin*, 68:321.

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