

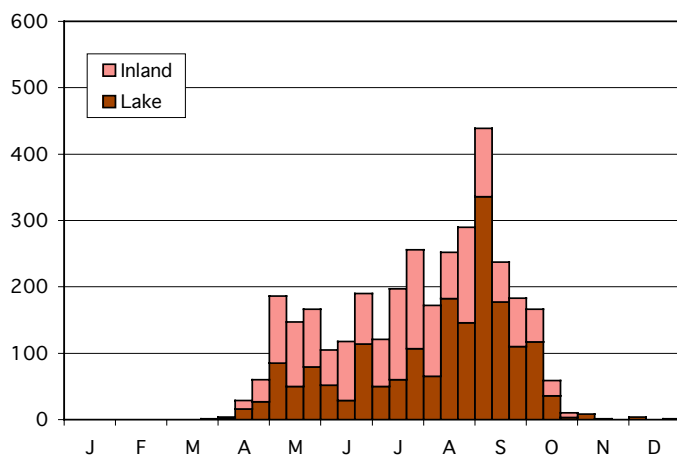
Common Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Historical Information

First Published record: Indiana's first "Florida Gallinule" occurred in Franklin County 28 April 1883 (Butler 1898).

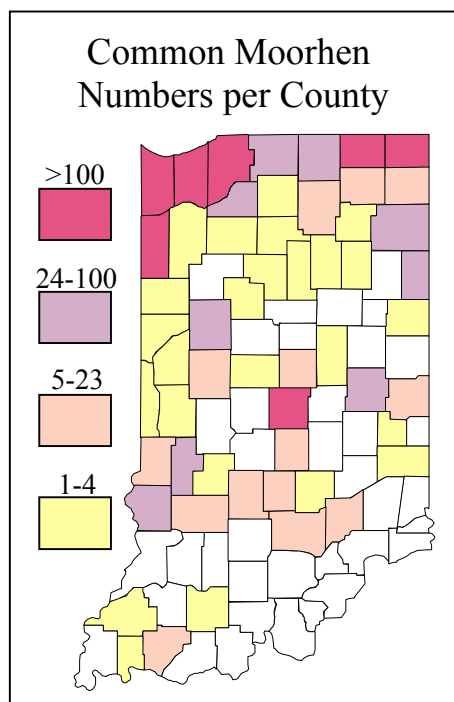
Butler (1890) deemed it an uncommon, but regular migrant, which was a locally common summer resident in the north. Keller et al. (1979) listed it as a very rare migrant and a locally uncommon summer resident in the north. Mumford and Keller (1984) considered the Moorhen a regular migrant that nested over the northern half of the state.



Status

Physical Evidence: A dozen specimens are housed in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list, J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list, and Richards 1987).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Field Museum				4
National Museum of Natural History				4
Indiana State Museum				3
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	10	6	5	5
Central Tier	n	7	7	7
Southern Tier	n	7	7	7
Entire State	10	6	5	5



Current Status

In the northern tier the Moorhen is Uncommon (6) in spring and Fairly Common (5) in summer and fall. It is Rare (7) elsewhere.

Occurrence

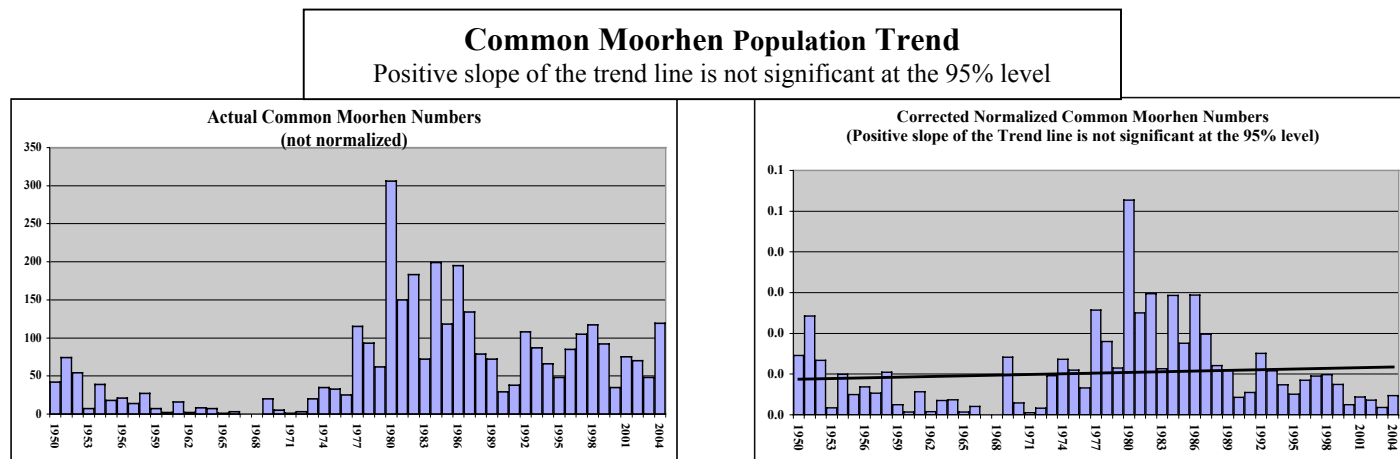
Moorhens have been reported in at least 55 counties. Numbers have declined in recent years (see Population Trend), perhaps due in part to the disappearance of habitat at Roxana Pond, as this site provided extraordinary counts in the 1980s. A falling water table converted this former shallow pond into a field choked with cattails and phragmites. In the site's heyday, unprecedented Moorhen counts were logged there (see large count table). Indeed, the state's largest tally away from Roxana Pond consists of thirty-two adults and young recorded by Larry Carter at Summit Lake 4 August 1985 (Brock 1986).

Winter Records

Two December records exist; oddly, both occurred in extreme northwestern Indiana. The first consisted of two lingering birds seen at Roxana Pond by John White on 1 December 1981 (Mumford and Keller 1984). The second record involved a single bird at the Hammond filtration plant (a half-mile west of Roxana Pond) on 27 December 1986 (Peterjohn 1987).

Population Trend

Although the 50-year trend line shows a non-statistically significant positive slope, note how counts have declined since the late 1980s.



Breeding

Mumford and Keller (1984) noted that the Moorhen nested across the northern half of Indiana, with nesting reported as far south as Sullivan County. The Indiana Atlas Project (Castrale et al. 1998) reported breeding evidence in only one percent of the 647 priority blocks; however, Moorhens were reported in eighteen counties including six in the southern tier and one in the central tier. Eggs have been reported during the interval 15 May – 7 July and young have been observed as late as 26 August.

Common Moorhen Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring/Summer				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
50	28-Jun-1984	Roxana Pond	T.T. Cable	KJB
34	31-May-1986	Roxana Pond	B. Atzhorn (Squires)	KJB
30	30-Jul-1987	Roxana Pond	K.J. Brock	KJB
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
90	04-Sep-1980	Roxana Pond	K.J. Brock	M&K
45	08-Sep-1982	Roxana Pond	K.J. Brock	KJB
40	15-Aug-1977	Roxana Pond	K.J. Brock	KJB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	28-Mar-2002	26-Apr	17-May	4-Jun	Sum. Res.	223
Central	6-Apr-1954	22-Apr	8-May	29-May	Sum. Vis.	65
South	4-Apr-1985	21-Apr	8-May	5-Jun	Sum. Vis.	35
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Res.	24-Jul	28-Aug	4-Oct	27-Dec-1986	381
Central	Sum. Vis.	28-Jul	28-Aug	28-Sep	28-Oct-1986	42
South	Sum. Vis.	---	16-Sep	---	31-Oct-1998	22

References Cited

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