

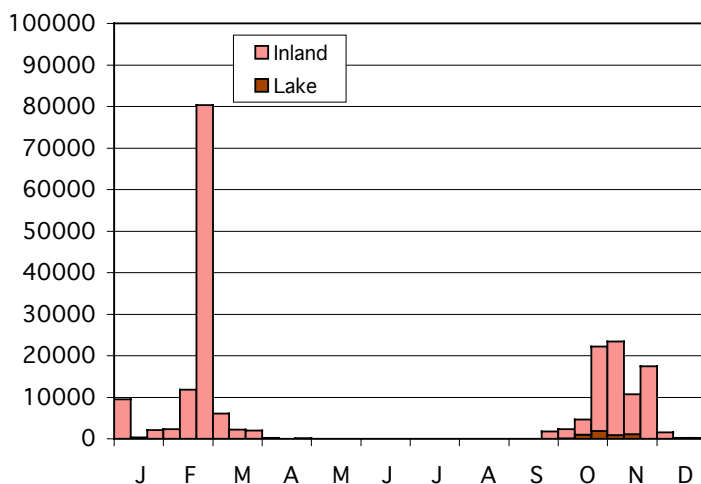
Snow Goose

Chen caerulescens

Historical Information

First Published Record: Remarkably, Indiana's first report of this handsome goose was made by J.J. Audubon, who reported one at Diamond Island, Posey County 3 November 1820 (Mumford files).

Butler (1898) deemed both the blue and white forms rare migrants. Keller et al. (1979) characterized both forms (now combined into a single species) as very rare spring and uncommon to rare fall migrants, noting that it was a casual winter visitor in the southern two-thirds of the state. Mumford and Keller (1984) considered the Snow Goose a regular and uncommon migrant throughout the state.



Current Status

Along with other sections of the Midwest, Indiana Snow Goose numbers, have expanded significantly in recent years. Four of the eight largest counts, including a remarkable 75,000 at Lake Gibson 26 February 2006, were recorded after 2001. Today the Snow Goose is Abundant (2) to Fairly Common (5) in winter, and a Common (4) to Uncommon (6) spring and fall migrant.

Occurrence

Most Snow Geese are observed away from Lake Michigan. This species has been reported in at least sixty-five counties. Among the reports with color morph designated, about 70 percent were of the blue form. A few non-breeding individuals have been recorded in summer. Snow Geese are considerably more common in fall migration than in spring; however, the largest counts have occurred during the spring flight.

Summer Records

At least eight summer records are known: four each in June and July. Most of these consisted of singletons, but Tom Westfall reported two birds in Vanderburgh County 4 June 1997 (Jackson 1998).

Status

Physical Evidence: At least four specimens are archived in the nation's museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished notes, J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list, and Richards 1987).

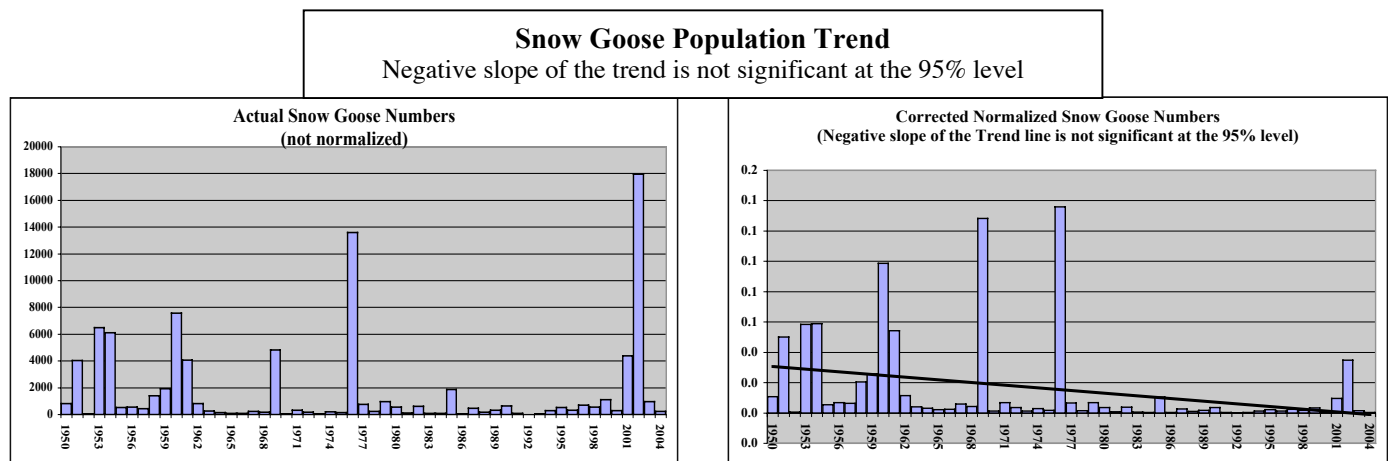
STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Field Museum				3
Indiana State Museum				1
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				5
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	5	6	10	4
Central Tier	5	6	n	5
Southern Tier	2	3	9	4
Entire State	2	3	8	4

Extreme Records

On 25 February 2006 Indiana Audubon Society field trippers recorded the state's largest tally (75,000) adjacent to Lake Gibson. Dan Leach described estimating the number as follows: "...myself and Gary and Lisa Bowman took a stab at counting the flock, and the number isn't fanciful. We'd count by rough groups of 100 a couple of times in order to get a sense of what a thousand looked like, then applied the rough-thousand sizing to the entire flock. Even then, it was generally felt that the total count was still somewhat conservative" (IN-BIRD and Dan Leach pers. comm.). In addition to the tallies included in the maximum count table, Bruner (2004) mentioned the presence of 20,000 to 30,000 in northern Posey County in mid-January 2002.

Population Trend

Despite recent increases, the overall Indiana Snow Goose population appears to have declined. The negative slope of the trend line is not statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



Snow Goose Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring/Winter				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
75000	25-Feb-2006	Lake Gibson	Dan Leach	INB
10000	17-Feb-2002	Lake Gibson	G. & L. Bowman	INB
8000	07-Jan-2006	Lake Gibson	G. & L. Bowman	INB
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
7000	28-Nov-1960	Willow Slough	DNR- staff	REM
4000	2-Nov-1961	Starke Co.	Frenchy VanHuffle	DNR
3500	21-Nov-1953	Willow Slough	DNR- staff	DNR

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Win. Res.	9-Feb	20-Mar	10-Apr	11-Jun-1989	222
Central	Win. Res.	22-Jan	6-Mar	26-Apr	23-May-1976	80
South	Win. Res.	15-Jan	24-Feb	19-Mar	15-Jun-1997	83
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	4-Jul-1980	13-Oct	31-Oct	25-Nov	Win. Res.	386
Central	8-Sep-1957	18-Oct	3-Nov	27-Nov	Win. Res.	180
South	17-Jul-2001	17-Oct	4-Nov	10-Dec	Win. Res.	97

References Cited

Bruner, A. W. (2004) From the Archives – Part 6, ANSERIFORMES- FAMILY ANATIDAE (Whistling Ducks, Geese, Swans), *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 82:131-180.

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

IN-BIRD, a Listserve dealing with Indiana birds developed and maintained by P.W. Kelly. The records are archived at: <http://listserv.indiana.edu/archives/in-bird-1.html>

Jackson, S.F. (1998) Field Notes Summer 1997, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 76:145-168.

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.

Richards, R.L. (1987) The Vertebrate Collection of the Indiana State Museum: “Old” Specimens and Records, *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 97:547-570.

Last update: 28 Feb 2006