

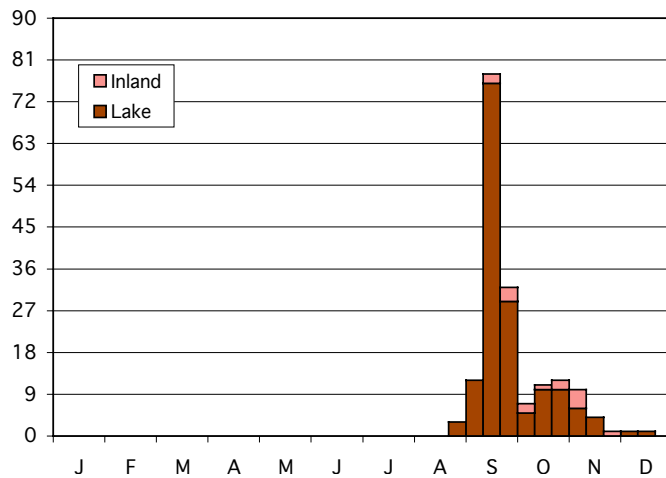
Sabine's Gull

Xema sabini

Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's first report of this elegant gull occurred at Gary Harbor where John Louis observed one 25 October 1954 (from the personal log of John Louis). Three additional sightings occurred that year.

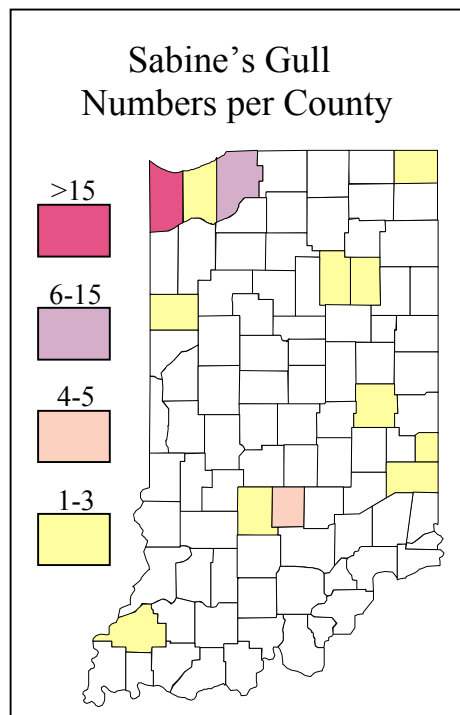
Butler (1898) considered this species hypothetical. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it casual in fall; Mumford and Keller (1984) agreed with this latter judgment.



Status

Physical Evidence: There are no known Indiana specimens, but a previously unpublished photograph is included with this summary.

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
No known specimens				0
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	n	n	6
Central Tier	n	n	n	10
Southern Tier	n	n	n	8
Entire State	n	n	n	6



Current Status

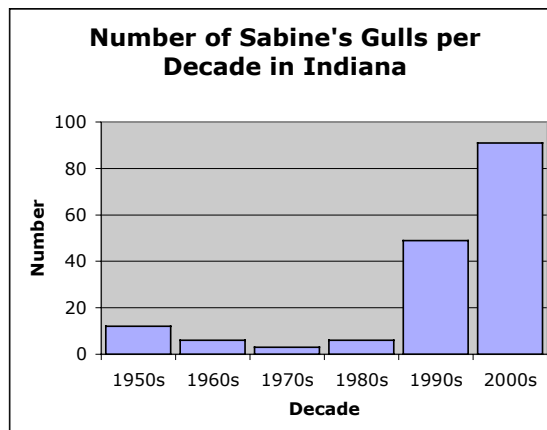
The Sabine's Gull is Uncommon (6) on Lake Michigan in fall, but otherwise Very Rare (8) to Accidental (10).

Occurrence

This pelagic gull is exclusively a fall and early winter transient through Indiana. It is most frequently observed in conjunction with strong autumn storms. Following the observation of four birds at Miller Beach 23 September 1990 (Brown 1991), it has become apparent that migrant Sabine's Gulls appear regularly at Miller Beach. Armed with this knowledge lakewatchers have substantially increased the number of Indiana records. Sabine's Gull numbers per decade are plotted in the chart below, which clearly illustrates recent increases in observed numbers. Statewide this species has now been reported in 19 of the last 20 years. Interestingly, the migration histogram shows two migratory peaks: one in September and the other in late October.

Extreme Records

The three largest tallies in the maximum count table consisted of flocks seen at Miller Beach. During a rainy 16 September 2005 with northeast winds, Don Gorney counted 28 birds in a single flock flying past the Marquette Park picnic shelter at Miller Beach. On 11 September 2001 B.J. Grube observed a flock of nine juveniles land offshore on the lake. At the time of observation this was Indiana's largest Sabine's Gull count; most incredibly, however, on 18 September 2001 B.J. Grube saw a second flock that contained eleven Sabine's Gulls at the same site (Brock notes).



Inland Records

As illustrated in the distribution map, some 14 Sabine's Gull records are distributed across ten inland counties where they usually appear on reservoirs and impoundments. Five Sabine's Gulls have been recorded on Lake Lemon, which constitutes the largest number recorded at any inland site. The maximum daily tallies, away from the lake, involved two immatures, observed by D.R. Whitehead at Lake Lemon 6 November 1992 (Brown 1993) and two juveniles seen by J.A. Haw at Salamonie Reservoir 23 September 1993 (Brown 1994). All other inland reports involved singletons.



Molting adult Sabine's Gull, Beverly Shores beach 14 October 1979. Photo by K.J. Brock.

Plumages

As shown in the adjacent plumages table, the vast majority of aged birds are in juvenile or first-year

plumage. Indeed, only seven birds have been identified as adults.

Percent of Aged Plumages		
Adult	1st-year or juv.	Imm
7%	75%	18%

Sabine's Gull Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
All Year				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
28	16-Sep-2005	Miller Beach	Don Gorney	INB
11	18-Sep-2001	Miller Beach	B.J. Grube	KJB
9	11-Sep-2001	Miller Beach	B.J. Grube	KJB
8	10-Sep-1997	Miller Beach	R.D. Hughes	NAB
7	19-Sep-2003	Miller Beach	J.J. McCoy	NAB
6	20-Sep-1997	Miller Beach	J.J. McCoy	KJB

Migration Envelopes						
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	26-Aug-2001	10-Sep	24-Sep	3-Nov	12-Dec-1954	63
Central	11-Sep-1991	---	---	---	11-Sep-1991	1
South	12-Sep-1993	---	21-Oct	---	22-Nov-1995	10

References Cited

Brock notes: personal field notes and seasonal summaries beginning in 1972.

Brown, M.R. (1991) Field Notes Fall 1990, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 69:177-187.

Brown, M.R. (1993) Field Notes Fall 1992, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 71:89-102.

Brown, M.R. (1994) Field Notes Fall 1993, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 72:6-26.

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

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