

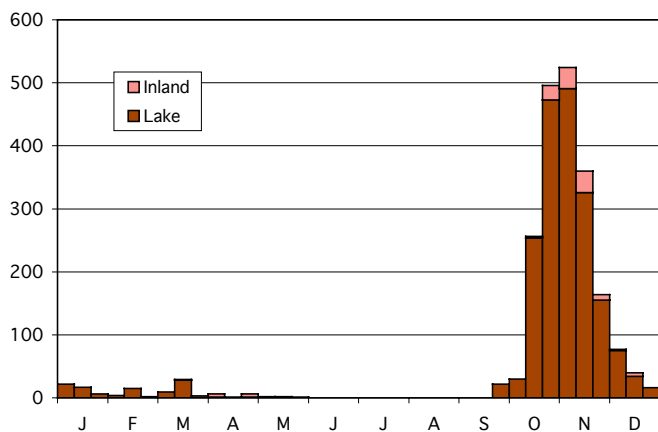
Black Scoter

Melanitta nigra

Historical Information

First Published Record: Surprisingly, Indiana's first Black Scoter report did not come from Lake Michigan. Instead it involved a male seen by I.W. Burr in Tippecanoe County 18 April 1948 (Burr 1979).

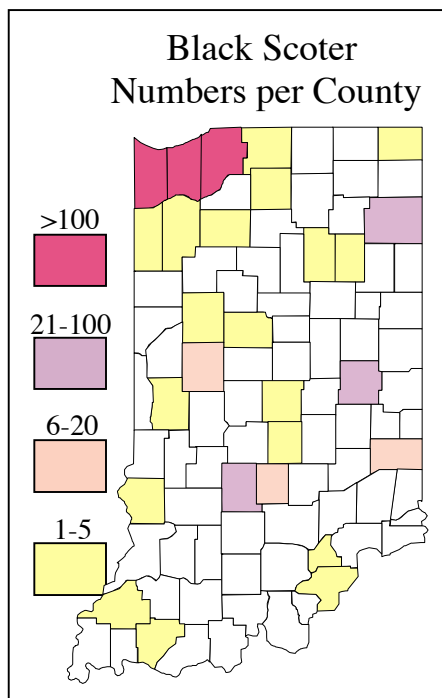
Based on its occurrence in nearby states, Butler (1898) listed this scoter as hypothetical. Keller et al. (1979) considered it a rare fall migrant and winter visitor in the north, and casual in fall elsewhere in the state. Mumford and Keller (1984) characterized the Black Scoter as probably a rare but regular fall migrant in northern Indiana, and casual further south.



Status

Physical Evidence: Four Black Scoter skins from Indiana are in the National Museum of Natural History collection (S.F. Jackson, unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				4
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	6	7	n	5
Central Tier	n	10	n	7
Southern Tier	9	9	n	7
Entire State	6	7	n	5



Current Status

The Black Scoter is Fairly Common (5) during autumn migration on Lake Michigan, where a mean of 80 birds per fall has been recorded over the past two decades. Away from the lake it is the rarest of the scoters, with an average fall tally of about seven birds per season.

Occurrence

Including the three Lake District counties, Black Scoters have been reported in 26 counties. Both Jasper and Pulaski Counties are mapped as containing records; however, this record consists of a single bird from Jasper-Pulaski FWA. Inland birds occur almost exclusively on the large reservoirs and lakes. The maximum count away from Lake Michigan was 16 observed at Summit Lake S.P. by J.A. Haw et al. 16 November 2002 (IN-BIRD). There are no summer records.

As is the case with other scoters, adult males are rarely encountered. About 25 have been reported on Lake Michigan and five have been identified at inland sites.



Female Black Scoter Michigan City yacht basin October 1981.
Photo K.J. Brock.

Winter Records

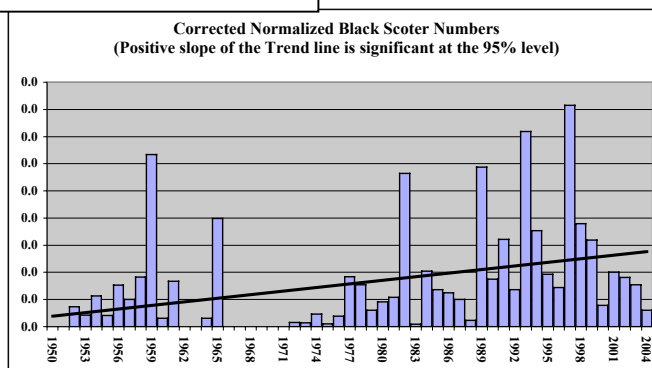
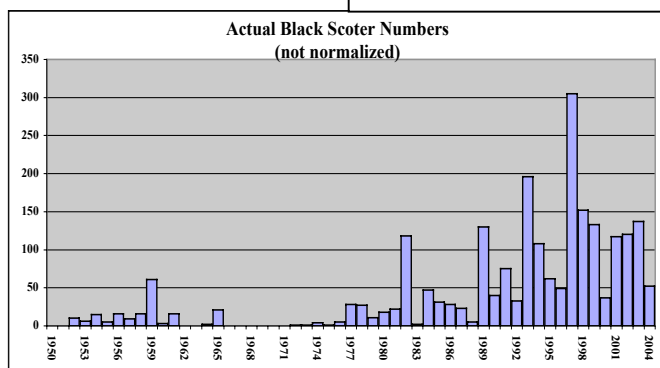
On Lake Michigan winter period birds have been recorded in 16 of the last twenty years; the mean winter count during this interval was about 9 birds per annum. At inland sites winter Black Scoters have occurred four times over the past two decades.

Population Trend

Positive slope of the trend line is statistically significant at the 95 percent level, suggesting increasing Black Scoter numbers.

Black Scoter Population Trend

Positive slope of the trend line is significant at the 95% level



Black Scoter Data

Largest Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
11	12-Mar-1999	Beverly Shores	J.J. McCoy	JMc
10	20-Mar-1999	Dunes S.P.	W.J. Marcisz	KJB
9	07-Mar-1999	Beverly Shores	J.J. McCoy	JMc
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
110	7-Nov-1997	Multiple Sites	J.J. McCoy	KJB
100	13-Nov-1982	Beverly Shores	A.W. Bruner	NAB
51	22-Oct-1997	Miller Beach	J.J. McCoy	KJB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Win-Res.	---	20-Mar	---	21-May-1977	18
Central	18-Apr-1948	---	---	---	20-May-2000	3
South	3-Apr-1994	---	---	---	23-May-2005	6
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	29-Sep-1984	17-Oct	2-Nov	22-Nov	Win-Res.	304
Central	21-Oct-1987	---	16-Nov	---	25-Nov-72	12
South	16-Oct-2002	---	7-Nov	---	25-Nov-81	19

References Cited

Burr, I. W. (1979) The Birds of Tippecanoe County, Indiana, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 57:1-43.

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