

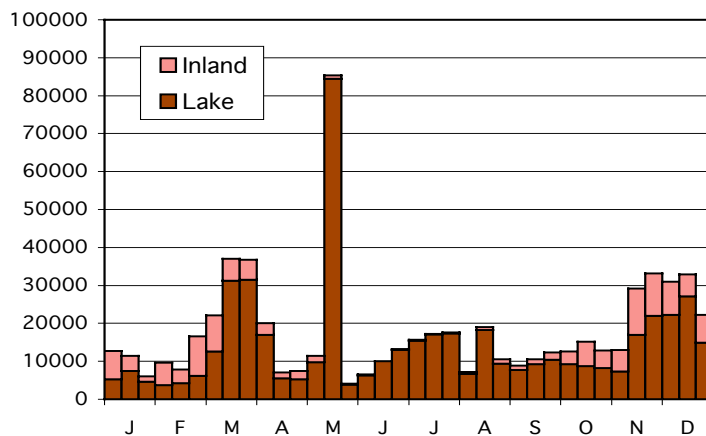
Ring-billed Gull

Larus delawarensis

Historical Information

First Published Record: Evermann and Clark (1920) reported “several” Ring-billed Gulls at Lake Maxinkuckee on 7 April 1885. This provided the state’s first published record.

Butler (1898) deemed this small gull a regular migrant and local winter resident. Both Keller et al. (1979) and Mumford and Keller (1984) considered this permanent resident common to abundant.



Status

Physical Evidence: A dozen specimens are archived in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Academy of Sciences				1
Chicago Field Museum				6
National Museum of Natural History				4
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	1	1	2	1
Central Tier	3	3	6	3
Southern Tier	2	3	6	2
Entire State	1	1	2	1

Current Status

The Ring-billed Gull is currently Very Abundant (1) in all seasons except summer, when it is Abundant (2).

Occurrence

The Ring-billed Gull has become Indiana’s most widespread and frequently encountered gull. It has adapted well to the suburban environment and now inhabits the parking lots of malls and supermarkets, and in Chicago it has even nested atop buildings. Perhaps it would be more appropriately called the “Urban Gull.”

The conspicuous mid-May spike on the migration histogram reflects census data from nesting colonies on the East Chicago, Lake County lakefront (see Breeding section).

Breeding

The first confirmed breeding in Indiana occurred on the Inland Steel landfill, Lake County where 72 young, ranging from downy chicks to individuals appearing ready to fledge, were observed 10 June 1991 (Brock 1991). Within the next seven years the colony expanded astronomically; an 11 May 1998 census directed by J.S. Castrale yielded 17,723 nests at Inland Steel and 16,438 nests at adjacent LTV steel (Brock 1998). Castrale conducted another census at these same sites 12 May 2003, and counted a combined 43,265 nests that contained either eggs or chicks (Brock 2003). Additional unsuccessful nesting efforts on Lake Michigan have occurred at the Port of

Indiana (Brock notes). Fledging usually begins in late June, as fresh-plumed juveniles appear along the lakefront beaches. In the Indiana Atlas Castrale et al. (1998) reported no confirmed breeding in priority blocks, but noted the initial breeding report at Inland Steel.

Inland Nesting

On 10 May 2003 Dan Stoltzfus discovered seven nests containing eggs at the Wakarusa Wastewater Treatment Facility in Elkhart County. By 15 May a total of 66 nests, nine of which contained eggs, were counted; none proved successful (Gorney 2003 and IN-BIRD).

Ring-billed Gull Data				
Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
43265*	12-May-2003	E. Chicago	J.S. Castrale	INB
34161*	18-May-1998	E. Chicago	J.S. Castrale	NAB
9100	23-Mar-2002	Lakefront	K.J. Brock	KJB
*Counts of nests containing eggs/chicks made during surveys.				
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
3000	18-Aug-1990	LaPorte Co	L.S. Hinchman	LHi
3000	25-Nov-2000	LaPorte Dump	K.J. Brock	KJB
2500	11-Nov-1995	Lakefront	K.J. Brock	KJB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Win. Res.	9-Mar	10-Apr	25-May	Sum. Res.	543
Central	Win. Res.	8-Mar	30-Mar	11-May	Sum. Res.	67
South	Win. Res.	4-Mar	30-Mar	28-Apr	Sum. Res.	159
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Res.	29-Jul	10-Oct	23-Nov	Win. Res.	638
Central	Sum. Res.	5-Aug	30-Oct	29-Nov	Win. Res.	51
South	Sum. Res.	1-Sep	21-Oct	23-Nov	Win. Res.	248

References Cited

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

Brock, K.J. (1991) Confirmed Ring-billed Gull nesting in Indiana, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 69:258.

Brock, K.J. (1998) Middlewestern Prairie Region, Spring Season 1998, *Nat. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 52:335-339.

Brock, K.J. (2003) Illinois and Indiana Region, Spring Migration 2003, *N. Am. Birds* 57:346-349.

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

Castrale, J.S., E.M. Hopkins, and C.E. Keller (1998) *Atlas of breeding Birds of Indiana*, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 388 pp.

Evermann, B.W. and H.W. Clark (1920) *Lake Maxinkuckee. A physical and biological survey*, Vol. I. Indiana Department of Conservation, 660pp.

Gorney, D. (2003) Field Notes Spring 2003, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 81:233-257.

IN-BIRD, a Listserv 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>

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.