

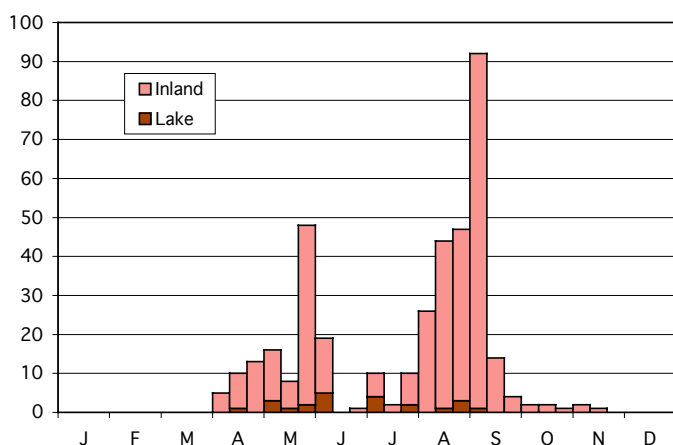
Snowy Egret

Egretta thula

Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's first published report of this striking egret occurred in Wayne County 27 April 1897 (DNR files); however, it was present long before this date, as Butler (1890) referred to the Snowy Egret as a, "Summer visitor over most of the State."

Butler (1898) termed the Snowy Egret an uncommon migrant and summer resident in southern Indiana. By the mid-1900s it was characterized as an occasional, very rare to rare summer visitant, which is accidental in spring (Keller 1966). Keller et al. (1979) considered it a casual migrant or summer visitant. Mumford and Keller (1984) provided no status assessment.



Status

Physical Evidence: A specimen from Indiana is housed in the National Museum of Natural History collection (S.F. Jackson, unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	7	8	9
Central Tier	n	9	10	7
Southern Tier	n	7	7	6
Entire State	n	7	7	6

Current Status

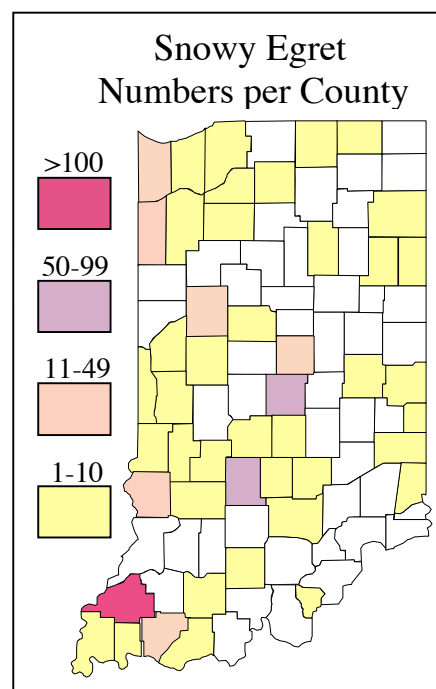
Over the past twenty years this showy bird has been Uncommon (6) to Rare (7) in Indiana.

Occurrence

Although Snowy Egrets are encountered most frequently in the southern half of Indiana, they have been recorded in 46 counties throughout the state (see distribution map). The majority occur during the late summer post-nesting dispersal. Over the past two decades it has been reported in 16 years.

Out of State Record

The fifty birds reported at the Falls of the Ohio (Keller 1966) were almost certainly in Kentucky and not Indiana (B. Palmer-Ball pers. comm.).





Snowy Egret at the Chase Street wetland, Gary 12 June 2004. Photo by J.K. Cassady.

Migration

The state's earliest spring record (see migration envelopes) was recorded in Posey County by W.B. Barnes (Mumford files). There are three November records; the latest of these (see migration envelopes) was reported in Jackson County by Cathy Meyer (IN-BIRD).

Breeding

Although there are pre-1900 breeding reports in the state Mumford and Keller did not treat the Snowy Egret as a breeding species. The only confirmed

breeding effort occurred in conjunction with the famous "egret invasion of 1996," when a host of Ciconiiformes attempted nesting at the Lake Gibson facility (Bowman and Bowman 1997). This effort resulted in the construction of at least one stick nest, which was observed by M.R. Brown and Tom Perrokek 1 June 1996 (Jackson 1997).

Snowy Egret Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
20	22-May-1996	Lake Gibson	G. & L. Bowman	IAQ
12	26-May-1996	Lake Gibson	G. & L. Bowman	IAQ
9	1-Jun-1996	Lake Gibson	M.R. Brown	IAQ
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
55	2-Sep-2002	Gibson Co	J.J. McCoy	INB
14	21-Aug-2002	Lake Monroe	E.M. Hopkins	INB
13	3-Sep-2002	Lake Monroe	D.R. Whitehead	INB

Migration Envelopes						
Entire State						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
Spring	2-Apr-1948	15-Apr	10-May	2-Jun	Sum. Res.	64
Fall	Sum. Res.	4-Aug	25-Aug	19-Sep	11-Nov-2001	103

References Cited

Bowman, G. and L. Bowman (1997) Southern Invasion at Gibson PSI, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 75:17-18.

Butler, A. W. (1890) The Birds of Indiana, Appendix to *Transactions of the Indiana Horticultural Society for 1890* (available on the web).

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

DNR files, A collection of data compiled on computer disks for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources by C.E. Keller.

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. (1997) Field Notes Summer 1996, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 75:191-210.

Keller, C.E. (1966) Status of the Ciconiiformes in Indiana. *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 44:56-86.

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.

Mumford files: An extensive accumulation of Indiana bird data on 5x7 file cards compiled by Professor R.E. Mumford of Purdue University, West Lafayette.