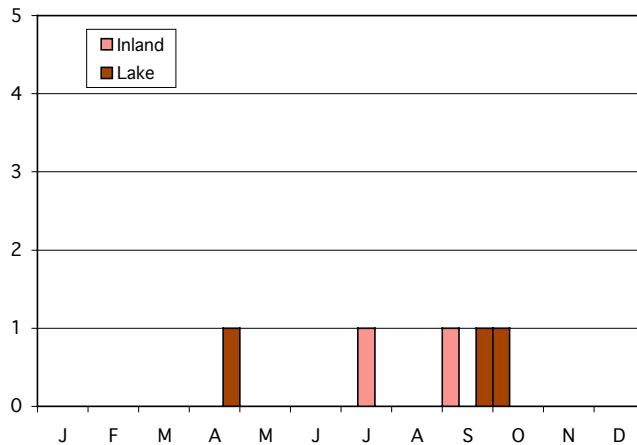


Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*

Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's first report of this seabird involved an immature male that A.W. Butler observed in a Lebanon taxidermy shop. The bird was reportedly killed near Shelbyville (Shelby County) on 14 July 1896. Both Keller et al. (1979) and Mumford and Keller (1984) designated this species an accidental wanderer.



Current Status

Accidental (10).

Occurrence

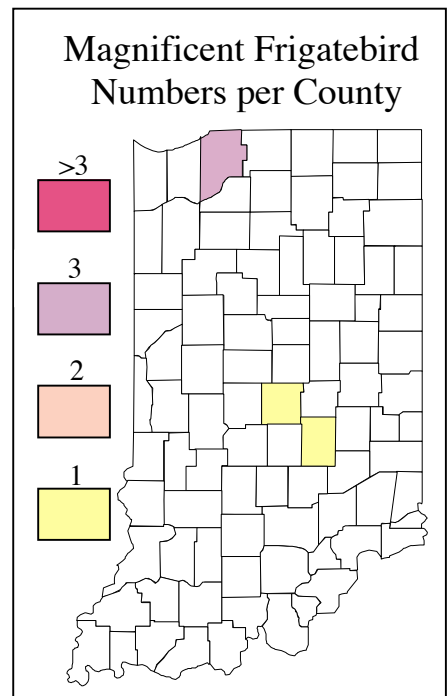
Indiana has four records, plus an adult male designated as frigatebird species by the Indiana Bird Records Committee. It should be noted that most of these frigatebirds were implicitly assumed to be Magnificent. Indeed, it is likely that even Butler, when he examined the 1896 specimen, never considered other frigatebird species (Butler 1897).



Magnificent Frigatebird over the Michigan City Harbor parking lot 30 September 1988. Photo by K.J. Brock.

Status

Physical Evidence: As the 1896 specimen is now missing, the only physical evidence of this species' presence in the state is a published photograph of the 30 September 1988 bird (Brock and Hinchman, 1989).



The 1896 Specimen

Butler (1897) described examining this specimen, a young male, in a Lebanon taxidermist's office. W.S. Patterson killed this bird near Shelbyville on 14 July 1896.

The 1957 Record

Dorothy Buck, Nora Grow, Raymond Grow, J.E. Landing, Jean Segal, and Simon Segal observed an immature flying past Michigan City Harbor 27-28 April 1957. Raymond Grow described the sighting as follows, "upon arriving at the harbor

parking lot on 27 April, both myself and Jim Landing (in another automobile) spotted a huge bird being mobbed by a large number of gulls. As we jumped from the cars the bird rose above the mobbing flock and I immediately identified it as a frigatebird.” Based on observations taken the following day, Grow noted, “It was a young bird with the white head, breast, etc. (and it) stayed for about one hour” (Brock, 1997).

The 1988 Incursion

In 1988 Hurricane Gilbert, which tracked from central Texas to Lake Michigan, scattered frigatebirds across the Midwest; remnants of the storm crossed Lake Michigan on 20 September 1988. Associated with this incursion were two birds that appeared at Michigan City Harbor. On 30 September L.S. Hinchman discovered an immature that was subsequently seen by several others and was photographed. Additionally, K.J. Brock observed an adult male, being harassed by a Peregrine as it soared above the yacht basin, on 4 October 1988 (Brock and Hinchman, 1989). The latter was accepted as “frigatebird species” by the Indiana Bird Records Committee (Bruner 1997).

The Eagle Creek Park bird

On the evening of 1 September 2005 Lou Anne Barriger observed an immature frigatebird circle over the parking lot of Rick’s Café (adjacent to the Eagle Creek impoundment). Soon afterward the bird passed over R.F. Buskirk’s head as he fished at the 56th Street Causeway (IN-BIRD). This individual was not subsequently relocated.

Magnificent Frigatebird Records				
All Records				
No.	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
1	14-Jul-1896	Shelby Co	???	BU2
1	27 & 28-Apr 1957	Michigan City Harbor	Raymond Grow	M&K
1	30-Sep-1988	Michigan City Harbor	L.S. Hinchman	IAQ
1*	4-Oct-1988	Michigan City Harbor	K.J. Brock	KJB
1	1-Sep-2005	Eagle Creek Park	L.A. Barriger	INB
* Accepted only as frigatebird species by the Indiana Bird Record Committee.				

References Cited

Brock, K.J. and L.S. Hinchman (1989) Frigatebirds Return to Indiana, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 67:117-119.

Brock, K.J. (1997) *Birds of the Indiana Dunes*, revised edition, Shirley Heinze Environmental Fund, 251 pp.

Bruner, A. W. (1997) Report of the Indiana Bird Records Committee—1996, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 75:136-148.

Butler, A. W. (1897) The Unusual Occurrence of Brünnich's Murre (*Uria lomvia*) Far Inland, with Notes on Other Rare Birds, *Auk*, 14: 197-200.

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.