

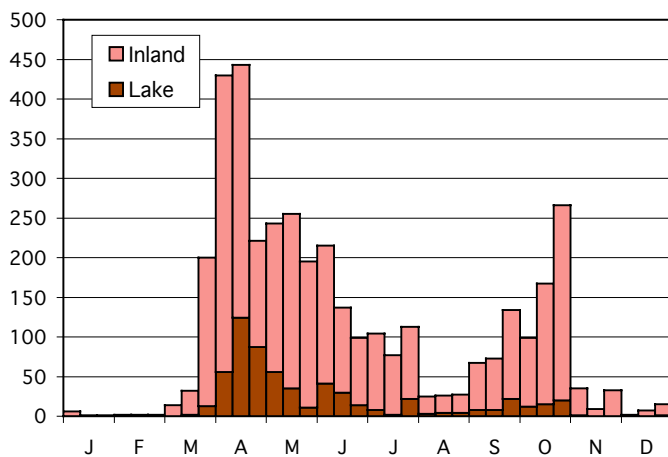
Vesper Sparrow

Pooecetes gramineus

Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's earliest published Vesper Sparrow report involved a bird found by A.W. Butler in Brookville on 15 February 1882 (Butler 1898).

Butler (1898) considered the "Bay-winged Bunting" common throughout Indiana from March to November. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it a fairly common to uncommon (south) summer resident and very rare in winter. Mumford and Keller (1984) described the Vesper Sparrow as a fairly common migrant and summer resident in the northern two-thirds of the state and an uncommon summer resident elsewhere.



Current Status

The Vesper Sparrow is a Fairly Common (5) to Uncommon (6) migrant and an Uncommon (6) summer resident. It is Rare (7) in winter.

Occurrence

Though generally restricted to expansive fields, this open country sparrow has been reported in at least 86 of Indiana's 92 counties.

Extreme Record

Mumford and Keller (1984) reported "a migration of about 300 in St. Joseph County," during spring 1950; however, it is unclear whether this is a daily or seasonal observation.

Winter Records

Winter Vesper Sparrows have been reported in ten of the last 20 years with a mean of 0.6 birds per annum. Seventy-three percent of the winter birds were reported in the central tier where their preferred habitat prevails. The maximum winter tally consists of three, reported by H.C. West at Geist Reservoir on 12 December 1964 (West records).

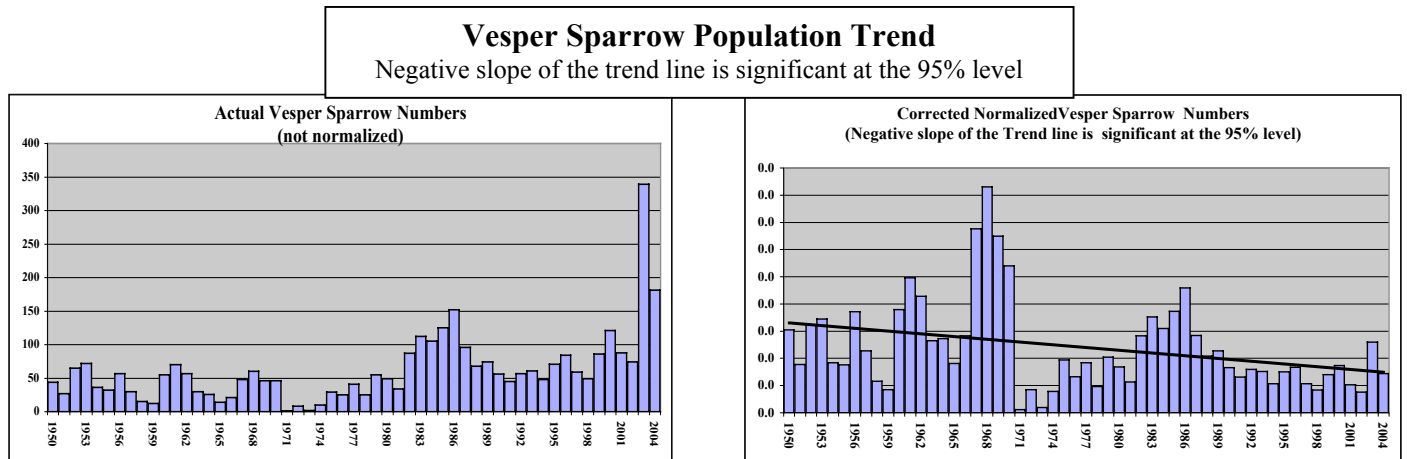
Status

Physical Evidence: Some 26 specimens, plus eggs and nests, are preserved in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum	No.			
Carnegie Museum of Natural History	1			
Chicago Academy of Sciences	2			
Chicago Field Museum	10*			
National Museum of Natural History	10*			
Milwaukee Public Museum	1			
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory	2			
Univ. of Michigan Museum	7*			
*Includes eggs and nests One nest at Nat. Mus.				
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	10	5	6	6
Central Tier	7	5	6	6
Southern Tier	9	6	6	7
Entire State	7	5	6	6

Population Trend

Breeding Bird Survey results show a non-significant annual Vesper Sparrow decline of 2.6 percent over the interval 1966- 2004 (North American Breeding Bird Survey web page). This result is consistent with 50-year population data. Negative slope of the trend line is statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



Breeding

Castrale et al. (1998) reported breeding evidence in 59 percent of the state's 647 priority blocks with a majority of the reports coming from the northern two-thirds of the state. Mumford and Keller (1984) reported nests from 25 April through 9 June and a nest containing two young on 3 July.

Vesper Sparrow Data				
Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring/early Summer				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
56	14-May-1983	Pulaski Co	Geoff Keller	IAQ
44	01-Apr-2000	Willow Slough FWA	J.A. Haw	Haw
37	01-Jun-2003	W. central Ind.	E.M Hopkins	EMH
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
40	13-Oct-1906	Marshall Co	???	REM
35	25-Oct-1986	Parke Co	A.W. Bruner	NIQ
32	25-Oct-1985	W. central Ind.	A.W. Bruner	IAQ

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	4-Mar-2003	3-Apr	23-Apr	1-Jun	Sum. Res.	524
Central	Win. Vis.	29-Mar	23-Apr	25-May	Sum. Res.	239
South	Win. Vis.	21-Mar	19-Apr	2-Jun	Sum. Res.	78

Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Res.	26-Jul	28-Sep	23-Oct	16-Dec-2000	525
Central	Sum. Res.	27-Jul	8-Oct	3-Nov	Win. Vis.	132
South	Sum. Res.	14-Aug	23-Oct	2-Nov	Win. Vis.	55

References Cited

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.

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.

West records. The personal notes of H.C. West, which are currently housed at Earlham College.