

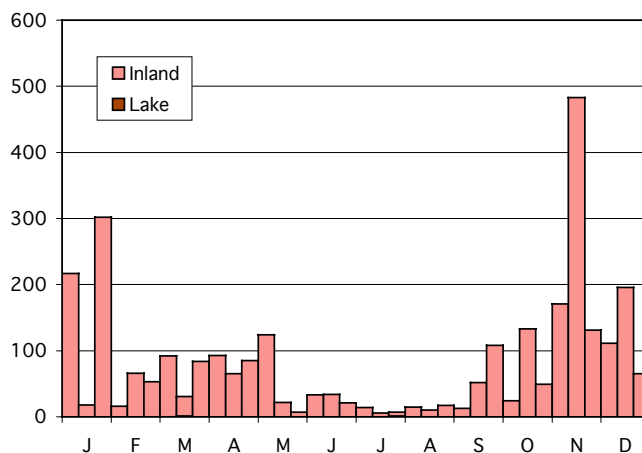
Black Vulture

Coragyps atratus

Historical Information

First Published record: Butler's (1898) volume quoted from Audubon, who in 1834 noted "This bird... continues the whole year in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois..." provided a very early reference to this species in Indiana. However, the first completely dated report occurred 17 May 1879 near Brookville (Butler 1898).

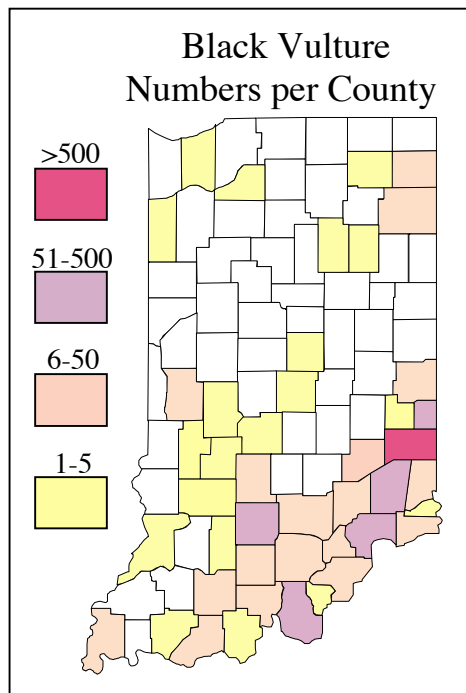
Butler (1890) referred to the Black Vulture as a resident in the southern part of the state, which was not common and occurred most often in winter. Keller et al. (1979) considered it a casual summer visitant except in the south where it was a very rare summer resident and casual in winter. In the northern two-thirds of the state Mumford and Keller (1984) deemed this vulture a casual spring or fall visitor; it was rare to casual in the remainder of the state.



Status

Physical Evidence: Two specimens are preserved as noted in the Status Table (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				1
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	9	n	n
Central Tier	9	7	9	6
Southern Tier	5	6	7	6
Entire State	5	6	6	6



Current Status

In recent years the Black Vulture's range has slowly expanded northward in concert with increasing numbers. It is now regular in Union and Monroe Counties and is Fairly Common (5) to Uncommon (6) across the southern two-thirds of Indiana.

Occurrence

Although this species is primarily a resident of the southern tier of counties, where it both breeds and winters, it has been recorded in at least 44 counties (see distribution map). As shown in the distribution map the largest numbers occur in southeastern Indiana. In spring, when most extralimital birds are reported, it is Rare (7) in the central tier and Occasional (9) in the northern tier. Mumford and Keller

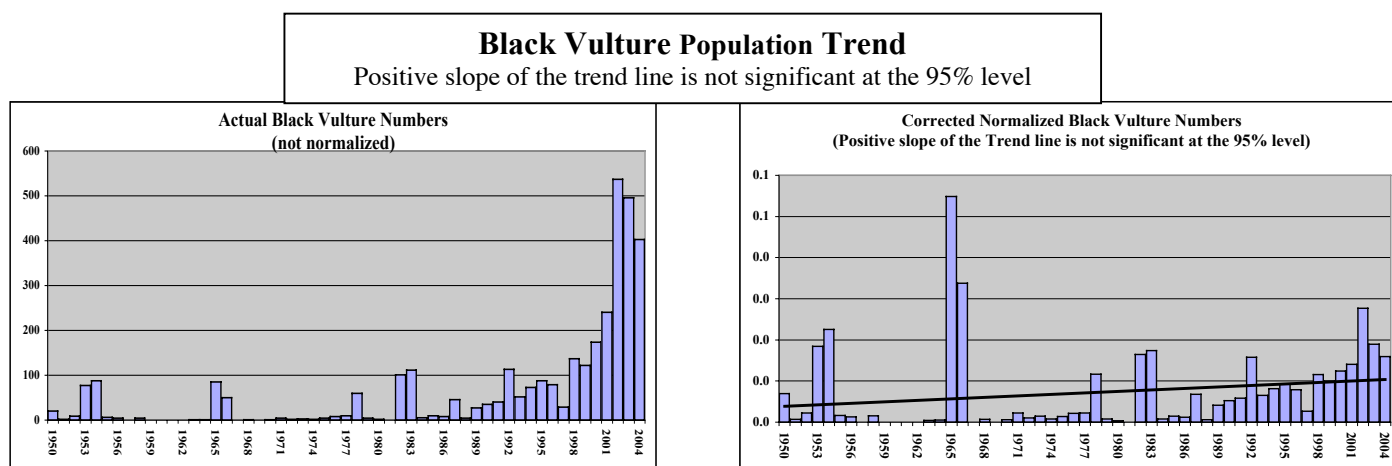
(1984) provide an intriguing glimpse of former Black Vulture populations; they note that in the 1920s up to 500 birds roosted at Clifty Falls State Park.

Migration

The migration histogram suggests only a feeble spring migration, but does indicate a distinct, albeit modest, autumn flight.

Population Trend

Although numbers appear to be increasing in the state there is little hard evidence to support this contention. Positive slope of the trend line is not significant at the 95 percent level.



Breeding

Butler (1898) reported breeding in Franklin, Knox, and Gibson Counties. Mumford and Keller (1984) added Lawrence, Putnam and Crawford Counties to this list. Although Castrale et al. (1998) found confirmed breeding evidence in only two counties: Clark and Lawrence, they noted recent nesting in Ripley, Crawford, Harrison, Jefferson, and Switzerland Counties. Bruner (2004) also listed nesting in Owen and Monroe Counties. Eggs have been reported between 2 April and 11 May and young observed in the nest between 6 May and 12 July.

Black Vulture Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
all				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
270*	29-Jan-2002	Franklin Co	W.H. Buskirk	INB
150	12-Nov-1934	Jefferson Co	A.W. Butler	DNR
130	5-Jan-2002	Franklin Co	W.H. Buskirk	INB
100	17-Nov-1982	Jefferson Co	Boyd Gill	REM
100	6-Nov-1983	Jefferson Co	???	AB5
*Mumford and Keller (1984) noted that up to 500 Black Vultures used the roost at Clifty Falls State Park during the 1920s.				

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	17-Mar-2003	---	---	---	24-Jun-1972	6
Central	Win. Res.	---	15-Apr	---	Sum. Res.	22
South	Win. Res.	15-Jan	3-Apr	11-Jun	Sum. Res.	196
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	25-Jul-1953	---	---	---	25-Jul-1953	1
Central	Sum. Res.	---	12-Oct	---	Win. Res.	13
South	Sum. Res.	24-Aug	6-Nov	20-Dec	Win. Res.	145

References Cited

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

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

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