

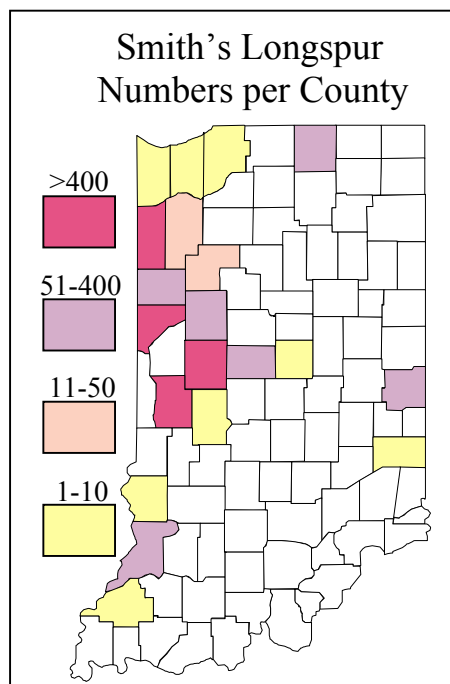
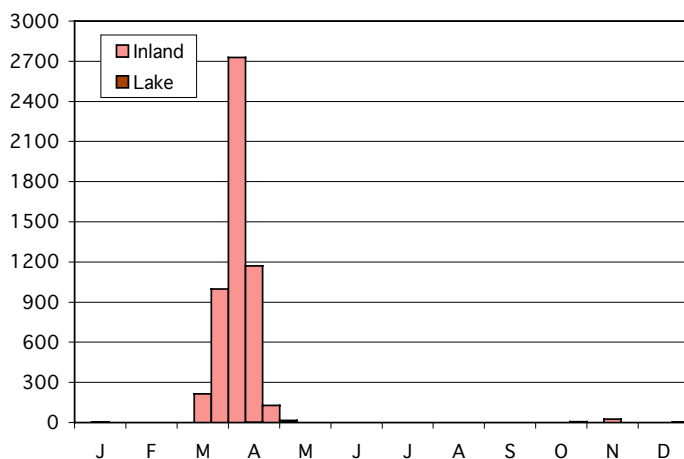
## Smith's Longspur

## *Calcarius pictus*

### Historical Information

**First Published Record:** An 1879 publication cited in Butler reported a flock of 75 Smith's Longspurs in Lake County. However, the earliest fully dated report consisted of two birds collected in Putnam County on 29 March 1894 (Butler 1898).

Butler (1898) described this longspur as a rare migrant, "sometimes common in the vicinity of Lake Michigan." Keller et al. (1979) characterized it as an uncommon spring migrant in Newton County, but casual or lacking records elsewhere. Mumford and Keller (1984) summarized the discovery (about 1950) that spring migrants occur regularly in Newton County, but did not assess the bird's status.



### Status

**Physical Evidence:** At least four specimens are preserved in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and Richards 1987). Additionally, the Mumford files specifically noted that several Indiana specimens were sent to the National Museum; the whereabouts of these are unknown.

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				?*
Univ. of Michigan Museum				3
Indiana State Museum				1
*See comment above				
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	5	n	10
Central Tier	10	5	n	10
Southern Tier	n	7	n	10
Entire State	10	5	n	9

### Current Status

Smith's Longspur is now a Fairly Common (5) spring migrant along the western edge of the state; it is Accidental (10) in winter and Occasional (9) in fall.

### Occurrence

The Historical section reveals how knowledge of this species' habits has significantly increased Indiana records. It has been recorded in 19 of the past 20 years, and has been reported annually since 1991. The distribution map reveals that Smith's Longspurs occur primarily in western Indiana. It is also far more frequently observed in spring than in fall; indeed only eight fall records exist.

Recent habitat preference discoveries have greatly facilitated locating Smith's Longspurs in the field. McCoy (2002), for example, indicated that this species is drawn to clumps of foxtail grass, which often remain in grain fields after the harvest. Small stands of foxtail in corn stubble are especially productive. This information has proven of tremendous benefit to field observers.

#### Extreme Record

The phenomenal count of 1200 birds (see maximum count table) was part of a massive longspur flight through Parke County on 6 and 7 April 1982 (see Lapland Longspur discussion for details).

#### Extralimital Records

There are two noteworthy exceptions to the accepted pattern of occurrence along the western margin of the state. The first involved a 1938 report of up to 300 Smith's Longspurs in Elkhart County. Reporting on this occurrence Witmer (1969) wrote, "In fields 1 mi. s.e. of the college (Goshen College), about 100 Smith's Longspurs were seen and in a stubble field 1/2 mil. farther s. about another 200 of these birds were seen." Some of these lingered into mid-April.



Male Smith's Longspur, Benton County 13 April 2002. Photo by J.J. McCoy.

The second exception occurred in Wayne County, where this species has been observed at the Richmond Municipal Airport. More than a half-dozen records have come from this site; the largest of which, by far, was 150 birds observed by J.B. Cope 12 March 1989 (Buskirk 2003).

#### **Smith's Longspur Data**

<b>Maximum Single Party Counts</b>				
<b>Spring</b>				
<b>Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Observer</b>	<b>Ref.</b>
1200	07-Apr-1982	Parke Co	A.W. Bruner	IAQ
400	10-Apr-2004	Warren Co	E.M. Hopkins	INB
300	27-Mar-1938	Elkhart Co	S.W. Witmer	SWW

Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
15	20-Nov-1983	Knox Co	Denny Jones	IAQ
8	13-Nov-1983	Knox Co	Denny Jones	IAQ
4	26-Oct-1957	N. Porter Co.	H.C. West	HCW

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	20-Mar-1977	2-Apr	12-Apr	29-Apr	13-May-2005	85
Central	12-Mar-1989	27-Mar	12-Apr	26-Apr	9-May-2005	63
South	22-Mar-1980	---	---	---	24-Apr-2005	10
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
State	15-Oct-1983	---	---	---	20-Nov-1983	8

## References Cited

Buskirk, W.H. (2003) Birds of the Whitewater Valley, unpublished manuscript.

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

Keller, C.E., S.A. Keller, and T.C. Keller (1979) *Indiana Birds and Their Haunts*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 214 pp.

McCoy, J.J. (2002) Smith's Longspur: Occurrence in Indiana and Hints on Finding them, *The Ohio Cardinal*, 25:147-148.

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

Mumford, R.E. and C.E. Keller (1984) *The Birds of Indiana*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 376 pp.

Richards, R.L. (1987) The Vertebrate Collection of the Indiana State Museum: "Old" Specimens and Records, *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 97:547-570.

Witmer, S.W. (1969) *Observation Notes on Birds* (of the Goshen College area), unpublished manuscript, 93pp.

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