

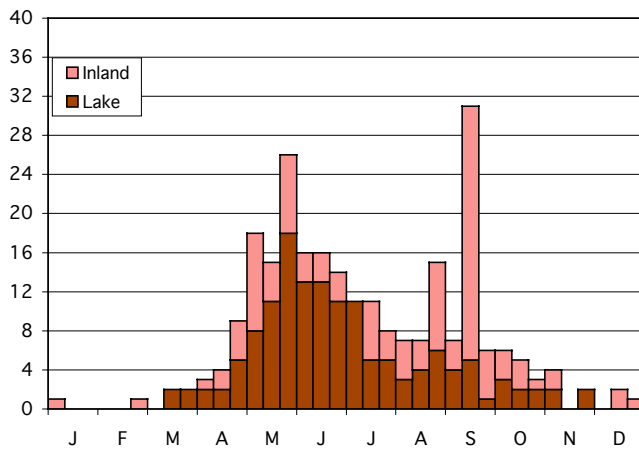
# Laughing Gull

## *Larus atricilla*

### Historical Information

**First Published Record:** The state's earliest published Laughing Gull record involved a bird seen by Raymond Grow at Michigan City Harbor 6 September 1957 (Mumford and Keller 1984).

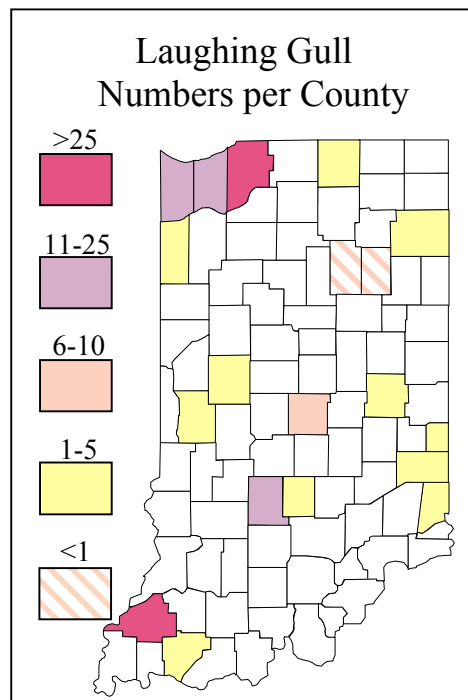
Butler (1898) included this coastal gull on his hypothetical list. Mumford and Keller (1975) expressed a lack of confidence that this species had been correctly identified in Indiana. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it casual in the north and accidental elsewhere. Mumford and Keller (1984) considered the Laughing Gull rare to very rare near Lake Michigan and casual elsewhere.



### Status

**Physical Evidence:** There are no known specimens, but a number of photographs exist; a photo taken by J.J. McCoy 25 March 2004 is shown below.

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
No known specimen				0
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	7	7	7
Central Tier	n	8	10	10
Southern Tier	9	7	7	7
Entire State	9	7	7	7



### Current Status

Today the Laughing Gull is Rare (7) in spring through fall and Occasional (9) in the southern tier in winter.

### Occurrence

The advent of improved identification information, especially regarding separation from Franklin's Gull, has greatly clarified the Laughing Gull's status in the state. Convincing reports have now been made in 19 counties. It is reported most often on Lake Michigan, but more than five-dozen inland records exist. The striped pattern in Huntington and Wabash Counties reflects a bird seen by Barbara McDowell and Sandy Schacht on Salamonie Reservoir 19 July 1989 (Jackson 1990). As the reservoir is astride these two counties the exact location is uncertain.

### Plumages

Adult birds constitute the most frequently encountered plumage (see plumage table); many of these birds are in full alternate plumage.

Percent of Aged Plumages			
Adult	2nd-year	1st-year or juv.	Imm
58%	10%	28%	4%

### Winter Records

Four winter period birds have appeared in the southern tier of counties. December records include a singleton identified by Denny Jones and Gary Bowman at Lake Gibson 19 December 1987 (Brock 1988) and another was seen by Don Andrews in Warrick County 26 December 1997 (Jackson 1999). J.H. Campbell and Gary Bowman found an adult at Lake Gibson 1 January 1991 (Brown 1991) and the state's only February record occurred 23 February 2001 at Lake Monroe where D.R. Whitehead observed an alternate-plumed adult (IN-BIRD).



Adult Laughing Gull near the Hammond Marina  
25 March 2004. Photo by J.J. McCoy.

### Extreme Record

Approximately ten days after hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf coast, an unprecedented number of Laughing Gulls appeared in Indiana (see fall maximum count table). Among these, the state's maximum count of eight was logged at Eagle Creek Park on 11 September 2005. Larry Peavler noted four at the park that morning and alerted Don Gorney who visited the site later and observed two molting adults and six juveniles/first-year birds.

### **Laughing Gull Data**

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring/Summer				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
4	13-May-1996	Mich. City Harbor	J.J. McCoy	KJB
4	22-May-1996	Mich. City Harbor	J.J. McCoy	KJB
3	19-Jun-1982	Mich. City Harbor	P.B. Grube	KJB
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
8	11-Sep-2005	Eagle Creek Park	Don Gorney	INB
5	12-Sep-2005	Lake Monroe	Mike Clark	INB
5	18-Sep-2005	Gibson Co	Gary&Lisa Bowman	INB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	14-Mar-2001	20-Apr	22-May	7-Jun	Sum. Res.	52
Central	6-Apr-1989	---	---	---	Sum. Vis.	9
South	18-Apr-1993	---	9-May	---	Sum. Res.	16

Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
<b>North</b>	Sum. Res.	21-Jul	1-Sep	23-Oct	28-Nov-1995	42
<b>Central</b>	Sum. Vis.	---	---	---	5-Oct-2003	3
<b>South</b>	Sum. Res.	28-Jul	12-Sep	1-Oct	5-Nov-1989	39

## References Cited

Brock, K.J. (1988) Field Notes; Winter 1987-88, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 66:157-164.

Brown, M.R. (1991) Field Notes Winter 1990-91, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 69:242-250.

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

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>

Jackson, S.F. (1990) Field Notes Summer 1989, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 68:91-103.

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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 (1975) An Annotated Check List of Indiana Birds, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 53:28-59.

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