

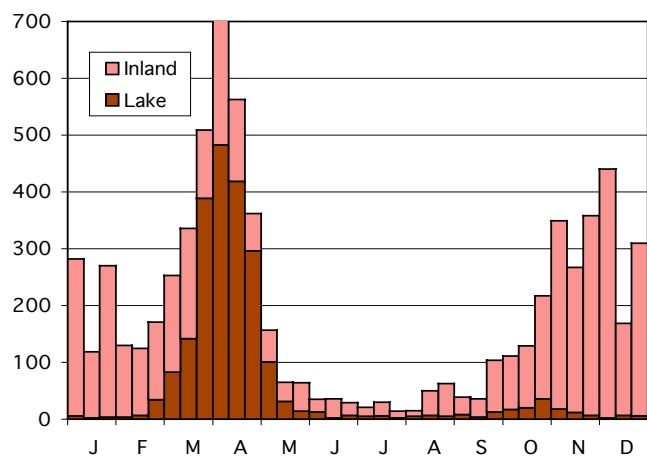
Northern Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Historical Information

First Published record: The earliest report of this lanky raptor involved a specimen, containing two meadow mice, collected near Brookville 11 November 1885 (Merriam and Fisher 1893).

Butler (1890) described the “Marsh Hawk” as a resident in the north and a winter resident in the south. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it an uncommon migrant and very rare to casual summer resident. In noting that the Harrier was considerably more common “twenty years ago,” Mumford and Keller (1984) relegated it to the uncommon migrant and rare permanent resident category.



Status

Physical Evidence: Some 17 skins and two eggs are preserved in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and J.B Dunning unpublished computer list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Academy of Sciences				8*
Chicago Field Museum				4
National Museum of Natural History				1
Univ. of Michigan Museum				2*
Illinois State Museum				1
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				3
*Includes an egg				
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	6	4	7	6
Central Tier	6	7	7	6
Southern Tier	5	6	7	5
Entire State	4	4	6	4

Current Status

The establishment of reclaimed strip mines has provided a boon for this species. Records in the maximum count table are dominated by reports from these mines. Today the Harrier is Common (4) at all seasons except summer; it is Uncommon (6) at that time.

Occurrence

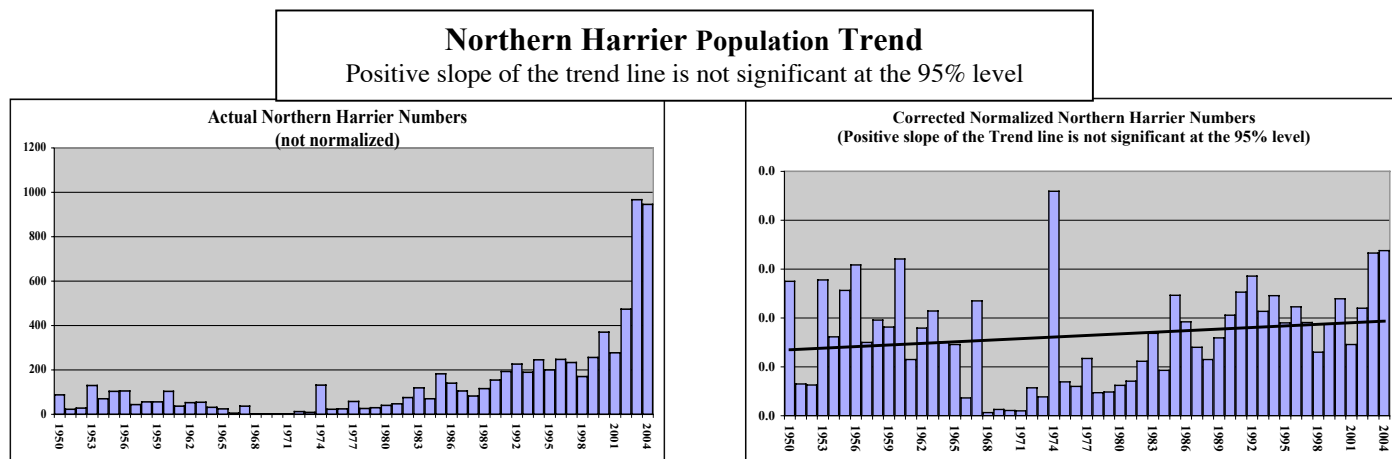
This widespread raptor has been reported in 82 counties and has almost certainly occurred in every county in the state. Some 791 of the birds observed were aged or sexed. Of these 26% were males; only one, seen by L. Sterrenburg 27 December 2002 at the Hawthorn Mine, was reported as an immature male. Females constituted 29% of the birds and juveniles (or immature) comprised 45%.

Migration

As is clearly shown in the migration histogram, a striking spring migration is recorded at the lakefront hawk watches. A slightly more modest, but still impressive, fall movement occurs inland.

Population Trend

Although numbers appear to have increased, positive slope of the trend line is not statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



Northern Harrier Data

Maximum Single Party Counts						
Spring						
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.		
51	02-Mar-2002	S.W. Indiana	Dan Leach	INB		
50	29-Mar-1960	Baileytown	V. Reuter-skiold	VRS		
50	24-Feb-2002	Greene/Sulv Cos	D.R. Whitehead	INB		
Fall/Winter						
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.		
88	07-Dec-2000	Universal Mine	P.E. Scott	INB		
60	24-Jan-1974	Ripley Co	R.E. Mumford	REM		
58*	04-Dec-2004	Multiple sites*	L.W. Sterrenburg	INB		
*52 at the Chinook Mine plus 6 at Beehunter Marsh, Greene Co						
Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Win. Res	14-Mar	7-Apr	8-May	Sum. Res	810
Central	Win. Res	6-Mar	31-Mar	14-May	Sum. Res	78
South	Win. Res	3-Mar	31-Mar	9-May	Sum. Res	151
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Res	22-Aug	20-Oct	20-Nov	Win. Res	382
Central	Sum. Res	26-Aug	30-Oct	28-Nov	Win. Res	123
South	Sum. Res	29-Aug	1-Nov	26-Nov	Win. Res	192

Breeding

Butler (1898) mentioned breeding in the state and specifically noted a nest and six eggs at English Lake, Starke County on May 19, 1889. Today, the Harrier is on the Indiana State Endangered list. Mumford and Keller (1984) found only five post 1965 nesting records. The Indiana Atlas found confirmed breeding in only four counties, all in the southern tier (Castrale et

al. 1998). However, possible or probable nesting was recorded in almost two-dozen counties scattered across the state.

References Cited

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

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.

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Merriam, D.H. and A.K. Fisher (1893) *The Hawks and Owls of the United States in their Relation to Agriculture*, Gov. Printing Office, Washington D.C. 210 pp.

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