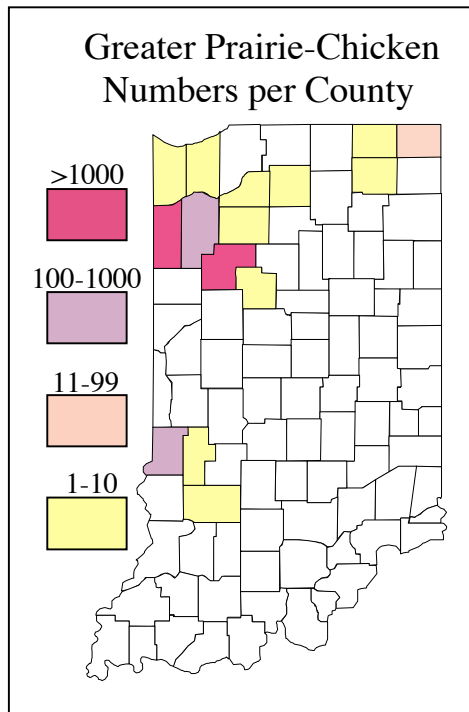


Greater Prairie-Chicken *Tympanuchus cupido*

Historical Information

First Published Record: The earliest record located occurred in Carroll County 17 April 1887 (DNR files), but Prairie-Chickens were clearly present long before this date.

Butler (1890) called the “Prairie Hen” a resident over the northern and western part of the state, adding, “ Formerly very abundant, but now becoming scarce in most localities.” Keller et al. (1979) note that it was extirpated from the state. Mumford and Keller (1984) poignantly summarize the decline and extirpation of this species in Indiana.



Status

Physical Evidence: Five specimens and one egg are housed in museums as listed in the Status Table (S.F. Jackson, unpublished list and Richards 1987).

STATUS TABLE	
Specimens	
Museum	No.
National Museum of Natural History	4*
Indiana State Museum	2
*includes one egg	

Current Status

Extirpated. According to Mumford and Keller (1984) the Indiana Department of Natural Resources conducted annual censuses of known booming grounds from 1942 through 1973. No displaying birds were recorded on the latter year, suggesting that Prairie-Chickens were present in the state through at least 1972.

Occurrence

Based on entirely fully-dated records in the literature, the map shows occurrences in 15 counties. This is a small fraction of the counties in which the Greater Prairie-Chicken actually occurred. Whitaker et al. (1988) reported that it originally occupied 46 counties, but by 1950 the range had been reduced to only six counties. Reports also exist from Allen, Benton, Boone, Clinton, Daviess, DeKalb, Elkhart, Fountain, Fulton, Gibson, Hamilton, Huntington, Jay, Knox, Kosciusko, Lake, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Parke, Pike, Posey, St Joseph, Steuben, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Vermillion, Wabash, Warren, and Washington Counties (DNR files).

The most recent triple-digit count was made by S.R. Esten at Jasper-Pulaski FWA where he estimated that a breeding population of 150 was present on 24 March 1933. He also optimistically predicted that with a good breeding season the local population should increase to 500 by fall (Esten 1933).

Values listed in the Maximum Count Table fail to capture the magnitude of the Prairie-Chicken numbers in former years. Numerous anecdotal accounts attest to the abundance of this species in earlier years. A report by George W. Miles (1912) lists more than 100,000 birds in the state, including 500 in Kosciusko County and 12-15,000 in White County (Mumford files). Ford (1956) also noted that 6000 were included in a single 1850 shipment from Michigan City.

Breeding

The last brood (ten birds) was seen on the Jasper-Newton County line 25 May 1970 (Mumford and Keller 1984).

Greater Prairie-Chicken Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
All				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
12000	22-Oct-1912	White Co	???	DNR
150	24-Mar-1933	Jasper-Pulaski FWA	S.R. Esten	AUK
58	26-Jan-1955	Newton Co.	R.E. Mumford	REM
55	31-Dec-1955	Newton Co.	???	DNR
55	06-Apr-1956	Newton Co.	Dorthy Buck	DNR
45	01-Apr-1951	Newton Co.	L.C. Binford	DNR

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Ford, E. F. (1956) *Birds of the Chicago Region*, Special Publ. No. 12 Chicago Acad. Sci, 117 pp.

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

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