

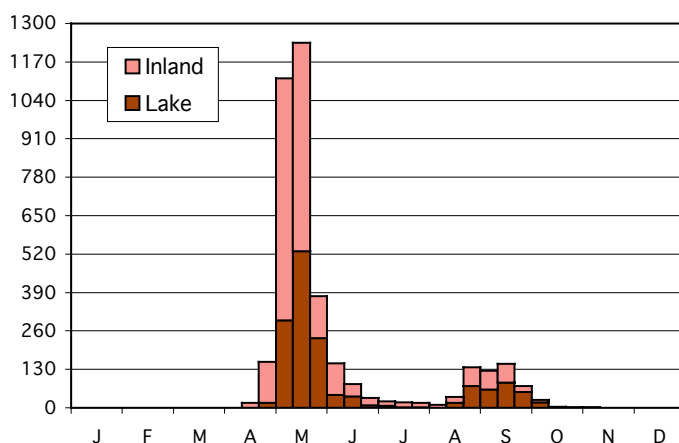
Least Flycatcher

Empidonax minimus

Historical Information

First Published Record: Butler (1898) included a “Che Bec” report from Lake County on 16 May 1877, which appears to constitute the state’s earliest published record.

Butler (1898) described this diminutive flycatcher as a “rather common” migrant southward and a summer resident northward. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it a common migrant and uncommon summer resident in the north. Mumford and Keller (1984) reported a post-1900 increase, noting that it was a common to fairly common migrant and summer resident in the northern quarter of the state.



Status

Physical Evidence: Some eight specimens are known to be stored in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				4
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				4
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	5	6	6
Central Tier	n	6	7	7
Southern Tier	n	6	8	7
Entire State	n	5	6	6

Current Status

The Least Flycatcher is a Fairly Common (5) spring migrant and an Uncommon (6) summer resident and fall migrant.

Occurrence

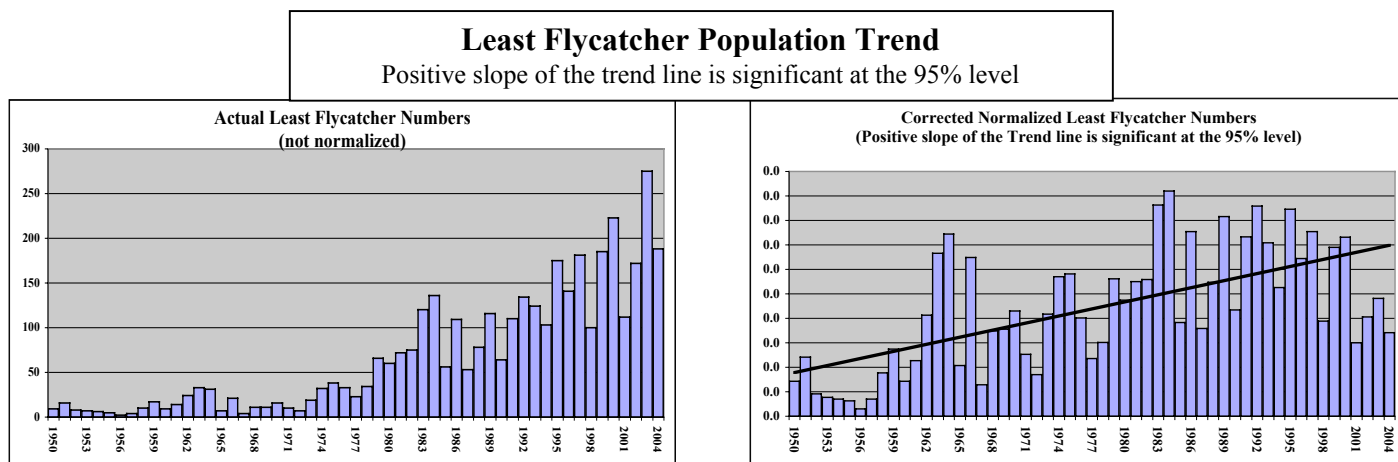
Within the genus *Empidonax*, the Least Flycatcher is Indiana’s most frequently seen representative. Over the past 20 years an average of 142 individuals (109 of these in spring) has been recorded annually. During the breeding season it is more commonly encountered in the northern tier. As illustrated in the migration histogram this small Empid is reported far more often in spring, when it more frequently vocalizes, than in fall.

Extreme Records

P.E. Scott documented the state’s sole November record when he found a singing Least Flycatcher in Vigo County 10 November 2001 (Brock 2002). The state’s largest count of 39 was logged 20 May 2003 when J.J. McCoy, J.K. Cassady, and K.J. Brock recorded three at Forsythe Park, 12 at the Hammond Lakefront Sanctuary, eight at State Line Woods, seven at Whiting Park, and nine in the George Lake woodlot (Brock notes). The largest tally at a single site consisted of 25 recorded by J.A. Haw at Fox Island Park, Allen County 9 May 1991 (Brown 1992) and by the same observer at Franke Park, Allen County on 9 May 2002 (IN-BIRD).

Population Trend

The 50-year population trend suggests the Indiana's Least Flycatcher population is flourishing. Positive slope of the trend line is statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



Breeding

Nests have been reported in Allen, DeKalb, Elkhart, LaGrange, Lake, Johnson, Montgomery, St. Joseph, Steuben, and Washington Counties. Additional nesting records came from Geist Reservoir, Jasper-Pulaski FWA, and Pigeon River FWA. During the Indiana Atlas project breeding evidence was obtained in six percent of the state's 647 priority blocks (Castrale et al. 1998). A majority of these records, and both confirmations, came from the northern tier. Nest dates range from 20 May through 3 September with most falling in June.

Least Flycatcher Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
39	20-May-2003	Lakefront Traps	J.J. McCoy	KJB
26	09-May-1996	Multiple Sites*	J.A. Haw	Haw
25	09-May-1991	Fox Island Park	J.A. Haw	IAQ
25	09-May-2002	Franke Park	J.A. Haw	INB
*Included (24) at Fox Island Park and (2) at the Mengerson preserve, Allen Co				
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
9	16-Sep-2000	Lakefront traps	J.K. Cassidy	KJB
7	21-Aug-1993	Lakefront	S.R. Bagby	KJB
6*	28-Aug-1946	Marion Co	C.E. Keller	REM
*Six were recorded on two additional occasions.				

Migration Envelopes

Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	20-Apr-1992	2-May	11-May	27-May	Sum. Res.	389
Central	20-Apr-1966	29-Apr	13-May	30-May	Sum. Res.	179
South	10-Apr-2005	29-Apr	10-May	25-May	Sum. Res.	130

Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Res.	17-Aug	3-Sep	21-Sep	18-Oct-1970	91
Central	Sum. Res.	13-Aug	5-Sep	21-Sep	10-Nov-2001	72
South	Sum. Res.	25-Aug	11-Sep	2-Oct	25-Oct-1975	57

References Cited

Brock, K.J. (2002) Middlewestern Prairie Region, Fall Migration 2001, *N. Am. Birds* 56:55-59.

Brock notes: personal field notes and seasonal summaries beginning in 1972.

Brown, M.R. (1992) Field Notes Spring 1991, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 70:62-73.

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.

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>

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 (1984) *The Birds of Indiana*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 376 pp.

Last update: 11 April 2005