

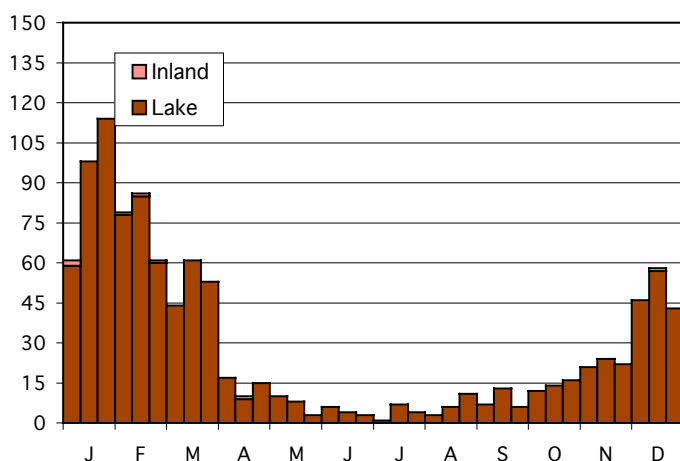
# Great Black-backed Gull

*Larus marinus*

## Historical Information

**First Published Record:** Mumford and Keller (1984) mentioned a report of three birds at Miller Beach on 26 September 1925 (Ford 1956, lists the year as 1895). This record is questionable, as the next report of multiple birds did not occur until 1994. Therefore, Indiana's first acceptable record involved an immature observed by J.E. Landing at Michigan City Harbor 1 October 1956 (pers. comm.).

Butler (1898) listed this large gull as hypothetical in Indiana. Keller et al. (1979) and Mumford and Keller (1984) considered it a casual to very rare migrant near Lake Michigan.



## Status

**Physical Evidence:** There are no known specimens from Indiana, but a number of photographs have been published, including a first-year bird in an identification quiz (Jackson 1996) and a third-year bird on the front cover of the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No.4.

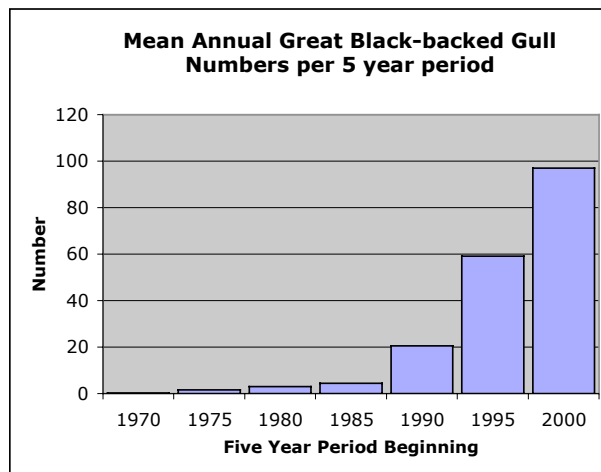
STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
No known specimens				0
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	5	6	7	6
Central Tier	10	n	n	n
Southern Tier	9	n	n	n
Entire State	5	6	7	6

## Current Status

On Lake Michigan the Great Black-backed Gull is currently Fairly Common (5) in winter, Uncommon (6) in spring and fall, and Rare (7) in summer. It is Occasional (9) or Accidental (10) away from the lake.

## Occurrence

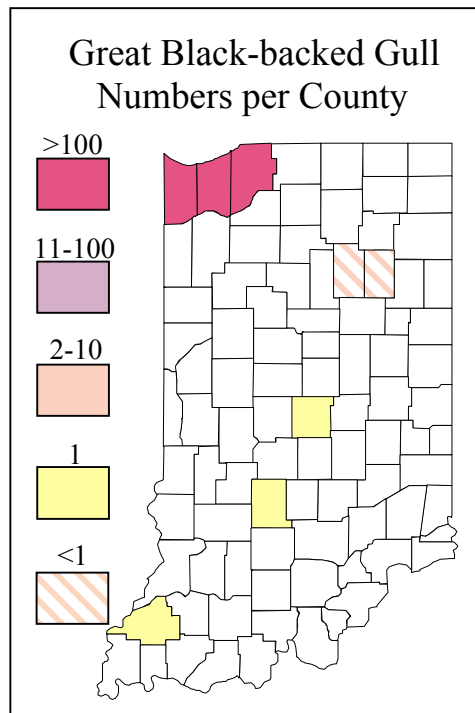
The status of this large gull has changed dramatically over the past two decades. Numbers began to increase about 1990 and accelerated in the mid-90s. The mean number recorded in the state over the past 20 years is 50.6 per year, but is nearer 75 per year over the past decade (see adjacent graph). Records are distributed throughout the lakefront, but the highest number has occurred in Lake County where 600 have been recorded. As this species is a permanent resident, migration envelopes were omitted.



### Plumages

As listed in the adjacent table the adult plumage is most frequently encountered, closely followed by first-year/juvenile.

Percent of Aged Plumages				
Adult	Win.	2nd-year	1st-year or juv.	Imm
45%	6%	10%	35%	4%



### High Counts

As the population is increasing quite rapidly, numbers in the maximum count table are expected to have short half-lives. Indeed, note that all six of the counts listed were recorded in 2004 or later.

### Inland Records

As shown in the distribution map, only four Great Black-backed Gull records exist away from Lake Michigan. The first was an adult discovered by Sandy Schacht at Salamonie Reservoir 15 April 1984 (Brock 1985). As this Reservoir occupies portions of both Huntington and Wabash Counties, this record is indicated by a striped pattern on the map. More than a decade later Craig Seward discovered an immature at Eagle Creek Park, Marion County on 12 December 1997 (Jackson 1999). D.R. Whitehead documented an adult at Lake Monroe 20 February 2003 (IN-BIRD), and a first-year bird was observed by Gary and Lisa Bowman at Lake Gibson 1 and 21 February 2004 (IN-BIRD).

### Great Black-backed Gull Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
All Year				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
25	23-Jan-2005	Lake Co lakefront	J.J. McCoy	INB
20	24-Jan-2004	Lakefront	J.J. McCoy	INB
19	01-Feb-2004	Lake Co lakefront	B.J. Grube	INB
13	17-Jan-2004	Lake Co lakefront	K.J. Brock	KJB
13	07-Feb-2004	Lakefront	J.K. Cassady	INB
12	09-Jan-2004	Lake Co lakefront	J.J. McCoy	INB

### References Cited

Brock, K.J. (1985) Field Notes; Spring Migration, 1984, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 63:30-51.

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

Ford, E. R. (1956) *Birds of the Chicago Region*, Special Publ. No. 12, The Chicago Academy of Sciences, 117 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>

Jackson, S.F. (1996) Quarterly Identification Quiz #29, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 74:54-55.

Jackson, S.F. (1999) Field Notes Winter 1997-98, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 77:101-125.

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.

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