

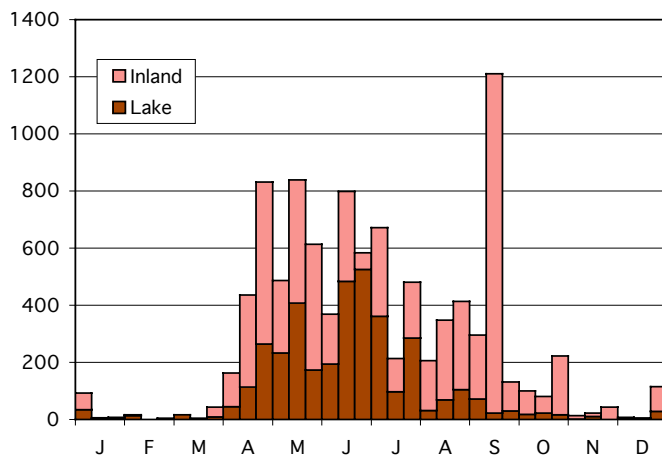
## Black-crowned Night-Heron

## *Nycticorax nycticorax*

### Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's earliest formally reported "QUAWK," as it was locally called, occurred in Carroll County when B.W. Evermann collected one 30 April 1878 (Butler 1898).

Butler (1890) referred to this Night-Heron as an uncommon regular migrant. By the mid-twentieth century Keller (1966) upgraded the status to a locally abundant summer resident; however, 13 years later Keller et al. (1979) considered it a rare migrant and casual in winter. Mumford and Keller (1984) summarized previous status assessments, noting that there was only one known breeding site in the state. A 1998-99 DNR survey yielded two confirmed nesting areas: Lake and Warrick Counties (Castrale 2000).



### Status

Physical Evidence: At least five specimens are housed in the nation's museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				1
University of Michigan Museum				2
Illinois State Museum				1
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	7	4	4	6
Central Tier	n	7	7	7
Southern Tier	9	6	6	5
Entire State	7	4	4	5

### Current Status

Today the Black-crowned Night-Heron is a Common (4) to Fairly Common (5) migrant and local summer resident. Surprisingly, it is a Rare (7) winter visitor in the northern tier.

### Occurrence

Though extremely local as a breeder, the Black-crowned Night-Heron is widespread across Indiana with reports from at least 69 counties. The migration histogram shows a feeble autumn migration peak with fall numbers diminishing slowly from July through October.

### Winter

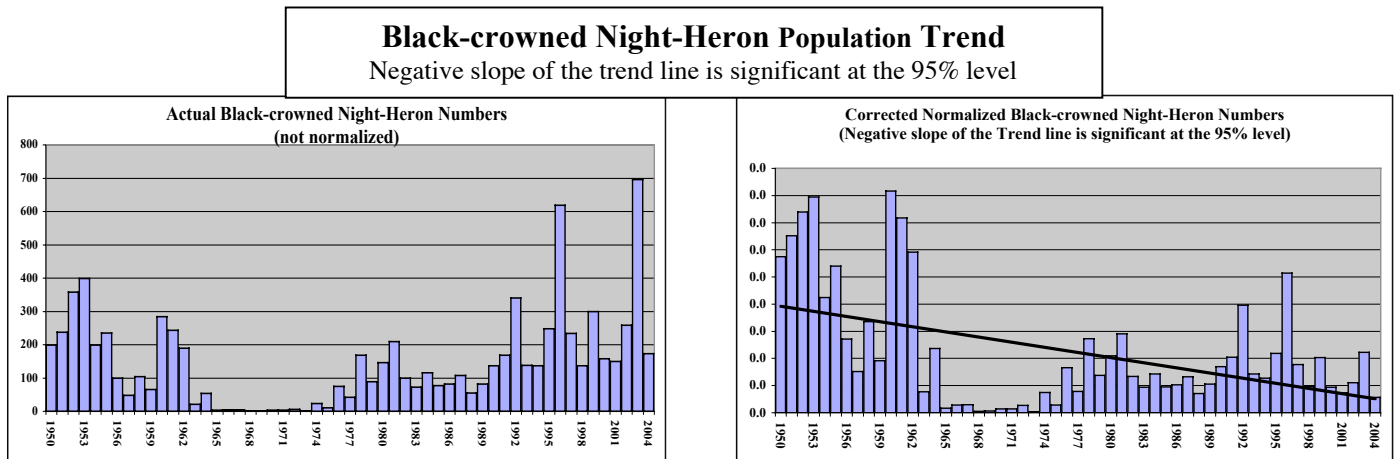
This Night-Heron has been reported in 14 of the past 20 winters. On some years it winters on the Grand Calumet River near the Hammond filtration plant, which explains the higher numbers reported in the northern tier. J.K. Cassady recorded the state's maximum winter count of 25 (five adults and 20 young birds), at the Hammond site 4 January 2003 (Brock 2003).

### Extreme Record

The DNR files included a count of 821 at the Falls of the Ohio on 18 September 1949; however, as most of this site is located in Kentucky, this record cannot be considered an Indiana report.

### Population Trend

Observational data suggest that this species has declined in Indiana. Negative slope of the trend line is statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



### **Breeding**

The breeding history of the Black-crowned Night-Heron is disheveled and complex. In the nineteenth century Butler (1890) reported breeding at English Lake in Starke County. Keller (1966) tabulated nesting data from 18 counties indicating widespread breeding across the state. Mumford and Keller (1984) noted that nesting activity in the state had declined drastically over the past two decades and that by 1980 there was only one active colony (Lake County).

Castrale et al. (1998) relegated this species to the “Supplemental Accounts” category of the Indiana Atlas, indicating that no nesting records were reported during the atlas period. However, a colony containing 101 nests was reported at LTV Steel in Lake County in 1993 (Castrale 2000) and Bruner (2003) mentioned 1998-1999 colonies in Lake and Warrick Counties and a 2001 colony at Inland Steel, Lake County.

## Black-crowned Night-Heron Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring/Summer				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
153	22-Jun-1996	Lakefront	J.K. Cassady	KJB
150	30-Apr-1960	Marion Co	???	REM
145 <sup>+</sup>	2-Jun-2005	East Chicago	J.S. Castrale	INB
<sup>+</sup> Active nests				
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
175*	26-Oct-1952	Wayne Co	???	DNR
150	29-Aug-1953	Floyd Co	J. Burnell	REM
63	15-Sep-1990	Dearborn Co	David Dister	IAQ
*Inactive (?) nests				

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
<b>North</b>	Win. Res.	12-Apr	8-May	5-Jun	Sum. Res.	320
<b>Central</b>	15-Mar-1955	8-Apr	2-May	28-May	Sum. Res.	125
<b>South</b>	22-Mar-1972	6-Apr	25-Apr	1-Jun	Sum. Res.	59
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
<b>North</b>	Sum. Res.	22-Jul	21-Aug	9-Oct	20-Nov-1998	224
<b>Central</b>	Sum. Res.	29-Jul	4-Sep	29-Oct	29-Nov-1953	98
<b>South</b>	Sum. Res.	31-Jul	3-Sep	17-Oct	29 Nov 1884	114

### References Cited

Brock, K.J. (2003) Illinois and Indiana Region, Winter Season 2002-03, *N. Am. Birds* 57:200-202.

Bruner, A. W. (2003) From the Archives – Part 4, CICONIIFORMES – FAMILY ARDEIDAE (Bitterns, Herons, and Egrets), *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 81:70-116.

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. (2000) Survey of Colonial-nesting Waterbirds in Indiana, 1989-1999, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 78:16-28.

Castrale, J.S., E.M. Hopkins, and C.E. Keller (1998) *Atlas of breeding Birds of Indiana*, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 388 pp.

DNR files, A collection of data compiled on computer disks for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources by C.E. Keller.

Keller, C.E. (1966) Status of the Ciconiiformes in Indiana. *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 44:56-86.

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.