

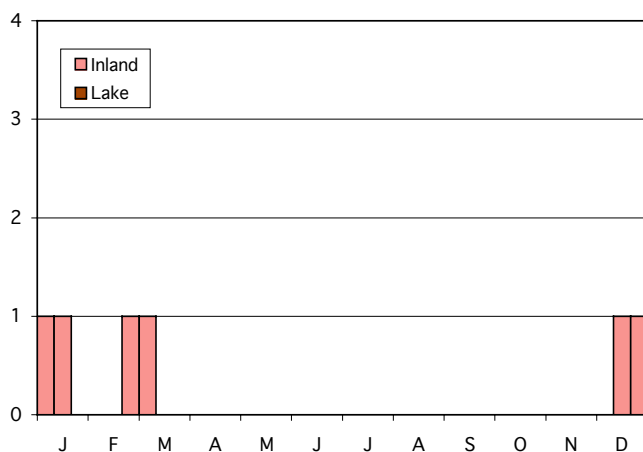
Prairie Falcon

Falco mexicanus

Historical Information

First Published record: A State Teacher's College student captured a Prairie Falcon about 30 miles south of Terre Haute on 9 January 1932. It was taken to Professor W.P. Allyn at the college, but ultimately died and was preserved as a specimen (Butler 1936). This appears to constitute the state's earliest published record (but see the Dubious Record section below).

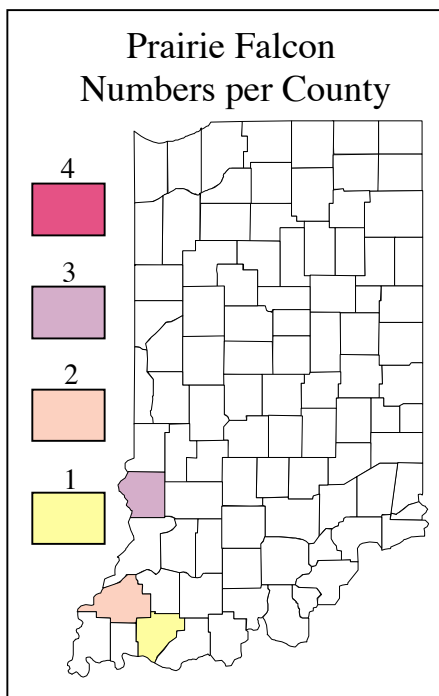
Noting that this species was accidental in Illinois, Butler (1890) included it on his hypothetical list. Keller et al. (1979) cited three records, and considered this western falcon accidental. Mumford and Keller (1984) provide no statement about the status of this species.



Status

Physical Evidence: Although the 9 January 1932 specimen was prepared (Butler 1936), its current location is unknown. There are no known specimens from Indiana. A bird captured in 1980 was photographed (Mumford and Keller 1984).

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



Current Status

With four Indiana records over the past twenty years, this falcon is now awarded Occasional (9) status in southwestern Indiana during winter and early spring.

Occurrence

All six records, some of which have yet to be evaluated by the Indiana Bird Records Committee, occurred in southwestern Indiana (see distribution map). A number of recent Prairie Falcon records in southeast Illinois (across the Wabash River from Indiana) indicate that this western falcon is a rare but regular wintering species in areas adjacent to the lower Wabash River.

Dubious Record

According to Mumford and Keller (1984) Professor W.P. Allyn reportedly found a Prairie Falcon west of Terre Haute in late December 1931. Oddly however, in Butler's (1936) publication of the 1932 bird (admittedly at Allyn's request), the 1931 report is not mentioned. Indeed, Butler (1936) explicitly stated that he knew of no Indiana Prairie Falcon records other than the 1932 specimen. Accordingly, the 1931 record was excluded from this treatment.

Prairie Falcon Records				
All Accepted Records				
No.	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
1	9-Jan-1932	Sullivan Co	W.P. Allyn	M&K
1	13-Jan-1980	Warrick Co	J.H. Campbell	M&K
1	25-Feb-1989	Lake Gibson	Denny Jones	KJB
1	2-Mar-1991	Dugger FWA	D.R. Whitehead	NAB
1	20-Dec-2003	Gibson Co	David Ayer	INB
1	21-Dec-2005	Hawthorn Mine	D.R. Whitehead	INB

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. (1936) The Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) in Indiana, *Auk*, 53:77.

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.