

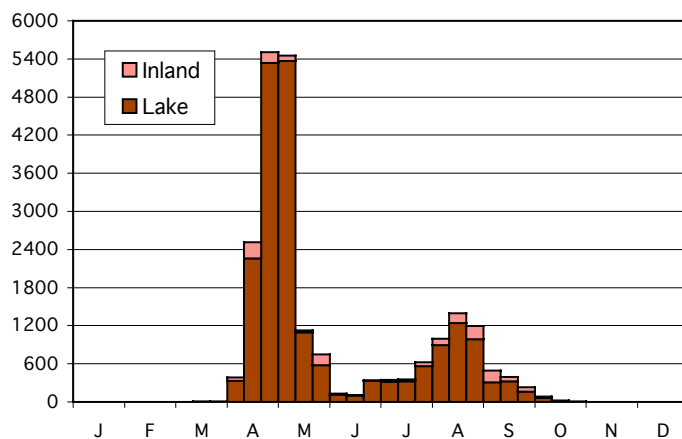
Caspian Tern

Sterna caspia

Historical Information

First Published Record: Mumford and Keller (1984) mentioned a specimen collected in 1895 that might have been in Illinois. The first certain Indiana Caspian Tern was taken at Miller (Miller Beach) by F.M. Woodruff 27 September 1898 (Mumford and Keller 1984).

Surprisingly, based on the current abundance of this species, Butler (1898) included the Caspian Tern among Indiana's hypothetical species. Keller et al. (1979) described it as an uncommon migrant near Lake Michigan and very rare to casual elsewhere. Mumford and Keller (1984) generally agreed with the latter assessment.



Status

Physical Evidence: Some six Indiana specimens are archived in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Academy of Sciences				1
Chicago Field Museum				2
National Museum of Natural History				3
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	3	4	3
Central Tier	n	7	7	7
Southern Tier	n	6	7	5
Entire State	n	3	4	3

Current Status

Caspian Tern numbers have increased significantly in recent years. On Lake Michigan it is now Very Common (3) in both spring and fall and Common (4) in summer.

Occurrence

This large tern is most plentiful on Lake Michigan where the largest numbers have been recorded in LaPorte County (more than 11,000). It has been reported in 50 inland counties; some 500 have been logged in Gibson County, which constitutes the largest number for any inland county.

Large Counts

Records from the lakefront dominate the maximum count table. The largest inland tally consisted of 40 recorded by Gary & Lisa Bowman at Lake Gibson 25 August 2002 (IN-BIRD).

Breeding

In 1997 a breeding colony of Caspian Terns was discovered within the enormous Ring-billed Gull nesting area at LTV Steel, Lake County; on 24 June 1997 K.J. Brock surveyed the site and counted at least 64 eggs (Brock and Castrale 1997). This site, which has no public access, has apparently remained active on subsequent years as J.S. Castrale found 146 nests, all with eggs or chicks, 24 May 2003 (IN-BIRD) and 248 nests on 6 June 2005 (IN-BIRD).

Caspian Tern Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
852	21-Apr-2001	Multiple Sites*	R.F. Buskirk	INB
647	01-May-2002	Port of Indiana	B.J. Grube	KJB
495	02-May-1995	Multiple Sites	J.J. McCoy	KJB
*387 at Michigan City Harbor and 465 at the Port of Indiana				
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
162	25-Aug-1989	Lakefront	L.S. Hinchman	LHi
135	12-Aug-2003	Miller Beach	M. Topp	INB
110	17-Sep-1997	Miller Beach	K.J. Brock	KJB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	25-Mar-2000	13-Apr	29-Apr	22-May	Sum. Res.	497
Central	3-Apr-2002	11-Apr	28-Apr	3-Jun	Sum. Res.	45
South	19-Mar-1970	10-Apr	21-Apr	16-May	Sum. Vis.	115
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Res.	25-Jul	19-Aug	22-Sep	5-Nov-03	749
Central	Sum. Res.	29-Jul	2-Sep	28-Sep	28-Oct-87	43
South	Sum. Vis.	6-Aug	27-Aug	25-Sep	9-Oct-03	130

References Cited

Brock, K.J. & J.S. Castrale (1997) Indiana's First Caspian Tern Nesting Record, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 75:188-190.

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

IN-BIRD, a Listserv 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.