

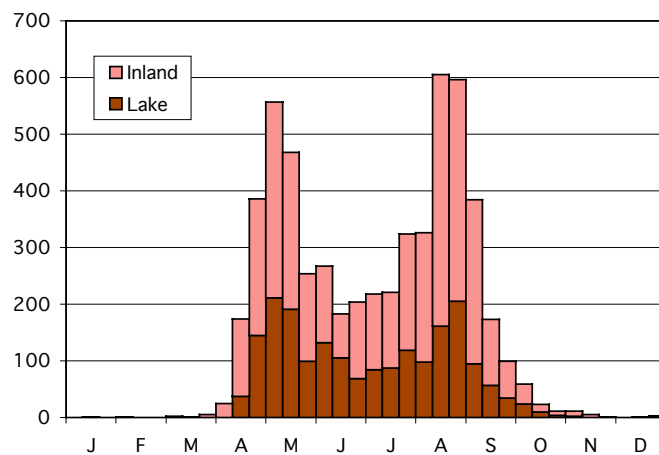
Green Heron

Butorides virescens

Historical Information

First Published Record: Indiana's earliest formal report of the "Schytepoke," as it was locally known, occurred 18 May 1878 Carroll County (Mumford files).

Butler (1890) considered the Green Heron a widespread summer resident throughout the state. Keller (1966) described it as a fairly common summer resident. More than a decade later Keller et al. (1979) modified the status to a fairly common migrant, but rare to very rare in summer. Mumford and Keller (1984) deemed the "Green-backed Heron," as it was briefly known, a fairly common migrant and a casual winter resident.



Current Status

Today the Green Heron remains a Common (4) migrant and Fairly Common (5) summer resident.

Occurrence

This small heron is widespread across the state, having occurred in virtually every county. As shown in the migration histogram records are approximately equally distributed between the lakefront counties and the balance of the state.

Winter Records

Surprisingly, a few Green Herons have occurred in mid-winter. At least three December records have been reported, primarily from southern Indiana Christmas Bird Counts. Most remarkably, however, were two winter reports that occurred in January and February 1983. J.A. Haw discovered one in Allen County on 15 January 1983 (Brock 1983) and another was reported by F. Neal in Marion County 6 February 1983. The latter individual was reportedly present all winter (DNR files).

Extreme Record

The state's earliest spring report was logged by R. Lipka in St. Joseph County 4 March 1972 (DNR files).

Status

Physical Evidence: Some twelve skins and eleven Green Heron eggs are preserved in the nation's museums (S.F. Jackson, unpublished list, J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list, and Bruner 2003).

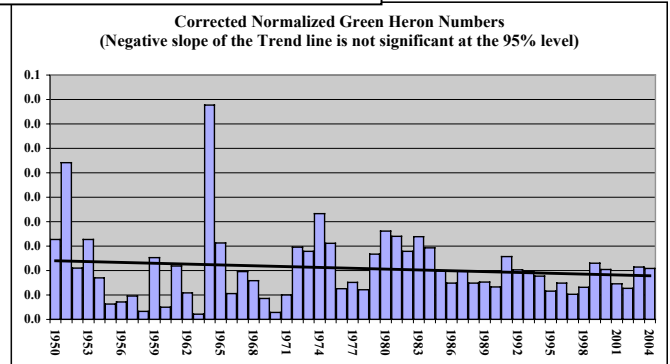
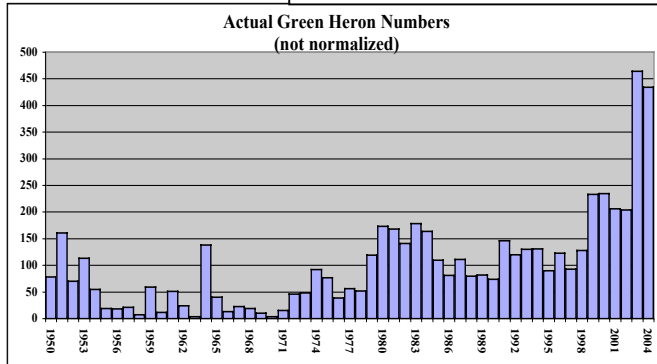
STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Academy of Sciences				1
Chicago Field Museum				3
National Museum of Natural History				9*
Univ. of Michigan Museum				8*
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				2
*includes eggs				
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	10	5	5	5
Central Tier	n	6	7	6
Southern Tier	n	6	7	6
Entire State	10	4	5	4

Population Trend

Although anecdotal reports have suggested a decline in Indiana's Green Heron population, there is little firm evidence that the status has changed significantly since the 1984 Mumford and Keller assessment. Negative slope of the trend line is not statistically significant at the 95 percent level.

Green Heron Population Trend

Negative slope of the trend line is not significant at the 95% level



Breeding

Castrale et al. (1998) detected breeding evidence in 51 percent of the 647 priority blocks and breeding was confirmed in 18 counties. Quite clearly this small heron is a widespread and common nesting species in Indiana. Eggs have been observed from 11 May through 1 July.

Green Heron Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
23	13-May-2000	Indiana Dunes	Clyde Fields	KJB
21*	20-May-1898	LaPorte Co	D.H. Boyd	DNR
19	14-May-1975	Cowles Bog	Noel Cutright	NCu
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
36	12-Aug-1983	Warrick Co	J.H. Campbell	IQM
35	22-Aug-1953	Clark Co	R.E. Mumford	REM
30	31-Aug-1974	Cowles Bog	K.J. Brock	KJB
*Nest count				

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	4-Mar-1972	22-Apr	9-May	3-Jun	Sum. Res.	694
Central	23-Mar-2003	18-Apr	8-May	29-May	Sum. Res.	253
South	29-Mar-1987	18-Apr	3-May	3-Jun	Sum. Res.	173
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	Sum. Res.	25-Jul	24-Aug	27-Sep	23-Nov-2002	590
Central	Sum. Res.	28-Jul	24-Aug	27-Sep	14-Nov-1961	200
South	Sum. Res.	31-Jul	20-Aug	19-Sep	6-Nov-1993	200

References Cited

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- Keller, C.E. (1966) Status of the Ciconiiformes in Indiana. *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 44:56-86.
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- Mumford files: An extensive accumulation of Indiana bird data on 5x7 file cards compiled by Professor R.E. Mumford of Purdue University, West Lafayette.
- Mumford, R.E. and C.E. Keller (1984) *The Birds of Indiana*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 376 pp.