

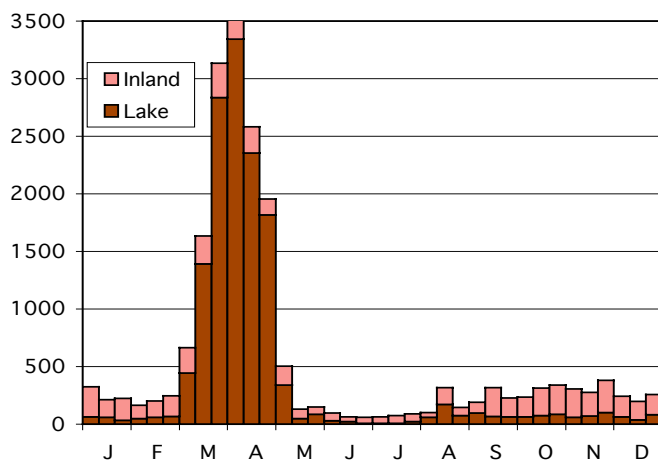
Red-tailed Hawk

Buteo jamaicensis

Historical Information

First Published record: Though no doubt present in the state for hundreds of years, the first fully dated Red-tailed Hawk report came from Carroll County 15 April 1883 (DNR files).

Butler (1890) described the "Hen Hawk," as it was locally known, as a common resident throughout the state. Keller et al. (1979) deemed it a fairly common migrant, rare summer resident, and uncommon winter resident. Mumford and Keller (1984) characterize this widespread buteo as a fairly common migrant and rare to uncommon summer resident; generally more common in winter.



Current Status

The Red-tailed is the most common hawk in Indiana. It is a Very Common (3) migrant; it is Common (4) in winter and Uncommon (6) in summer.

Occurrence

This widespread raptor has been reported in every Indiana county. The largest numbers occur during spring migrations in the Dunes where this is the most numerous raptor observed. On average the Dunes hawk flights yield about 1.6 Red-taileds for every Sharp-shinned (the second most common migrating raptor). For the balance of the year it is widespread across the state.

Subspecies and distinctive forms

Western Red-tailed Hawk: This form was listed as hypothetical by Butler (1890). At least 49 dark morph and seven rufous morph types have been reported in the state.

"Krider's" Hawk: Now believed to be a pale Red-tailed morph, was considered a hypothetical subspecies by Butler (1898). Indiana now has more than 22 Krider's records.

Status

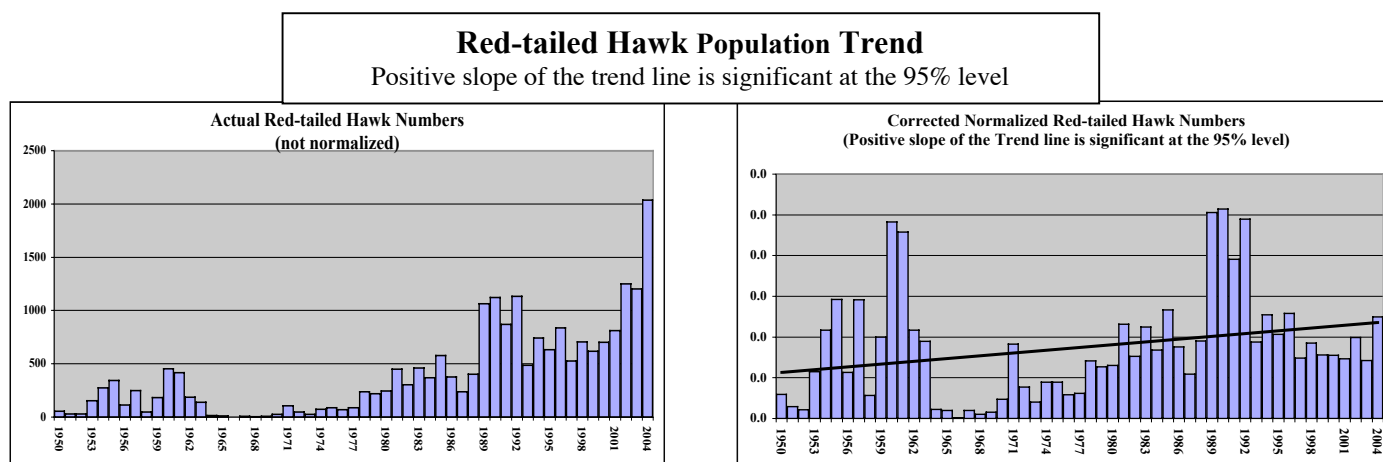
Physical Evidence: Some 36 skins and eight eggs exist in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Field Museum				9
National Museum of Natural History				19
Univ. of Michigan Museum				9*
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				7
*Includes eight eggs.				
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	5	3	6	4
Central Tier	6	7	7	6
Southern Tier	5	6	6	5
Entire State	4	3	6	4

“Harlan's” Hawk: One was shot in Boone County in September 1887 and the specimen preserved Butler (1897). Butler (1898) designated this raptor, which is currently a dark Red-tailed subspecies, an accidental visitor to Indiana. Seven records of this rare form have been recorded in the following counties: Fountain, Harrison, Newton, and Porter. Skip Stocksdales photographed two different birds on 10 and 12 January 2004 in Harrison County (IN-BIRD). Brian Wheeler confirmed that both images were indeed adult *B. j. harlani*. Interestingly, Wheeler also noted that one of the Boone County records constitutes Indiana’s only known specimen.

Population Trend

Despite suggestions of a decline since the early 1990s, positive slope of the 50-year trend line is statistically significant at the 95 percent level.



Breeding

The Red-tailed Hawk is clearly Indiana’s most common breeding buteo. The Indiana Atlas reported breeding evidence in 83% of the priority blocks (Castrale et al., 1998), attesting to the abundance and broad distribution of this breeding raptor. Mumford and Keller (1984) noted that nests have been found from 17 March to 30 April; however, the present work expands this range to 11 March through 3 June.

Red-tailed Hawk Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
306	29-Mar-1998	Johnson Beach	Hal Cohen	KJB
274	25-Apr-1955	Baileytown	Raymond Grow	Grow
239	23-Apr-1961	Baileytown	Raymond Grow	Grow
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
77	15-Aug-1971	LaPorte Co	V. Reuter-skiold	DNR
75	20-Sep-1981	Eagle Creek Park	Bud Starling	NIQ
58	04-Sep-1957	Indiana Dunes	Raymond Grow	Grow

Migration Envelopes						
Entire State						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
Spring	Win. Res.	12-Mar	8-Apr	9-May	Sum. Res.	1554
Fall	Sum. Res.	14-Aug	9-Oct	21-Nov	Win. Res.	1219

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. (1897) The Unusual Occurrence of Brünnich's Murre (*Uria lomvia*) Far Inland, with Notes on Other Rare Birds, *Auk*, 14: 197-200.

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

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.

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.