

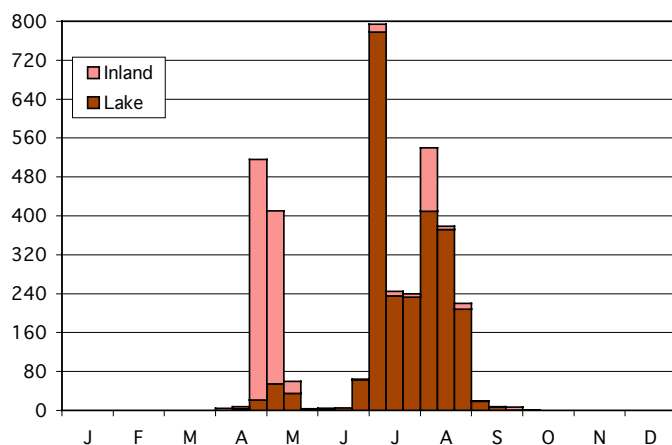
Willet

Catoptrophorus semipalmatus

Historical Information

First Published Record: Butler (1898) listed a specimen taken in Franklin County in fall 1878, but the earliest fully dated report involved four collected by C.F. Brandler, at Miller's (an early name referring to the Miller Beach area) on 14 August 1897 (Mumford files).

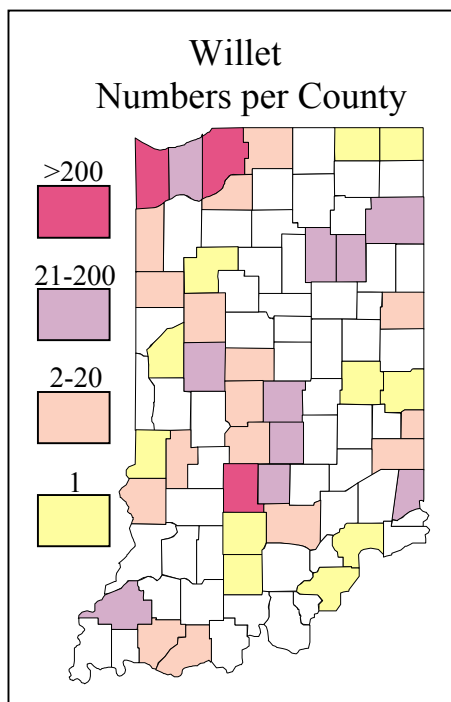
Butler (1898) considered this species a rare migrant and possible summer resident. Keller (1958) deemed the "Western" Willet a rare migrant. Keller et al. (1979) characterized it as a very rare migrant. The status was modified by Mumford and Keller (1984) to uncommon migrant, except near Lake Michigan where it is fairly common in early summer.



Status

Physical Evidence: A dozen specimens are known to be housed in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Field Museum				6
National Museum of Natural History				2
Milwaukee Public Museum				4
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	6	5	5
Central Tier	n	7	7	6
Southern Tier	n	6	8	7
Entire State	n	5	5	5



Current Status

The Willet is a Fairly Common (5) to Uncommon (6) migrant on the lakefront; it is Uncommon (6) to Very Rare (8) elsewhere.

Occurrence

This large shorebird is attracted to sizeable lakes and reservoirs. Although it has been recorded in 40 counties, the greatest numbers occur on the lakefront during fall migration.

Extreme Record

On 4 July 2005 B.J. Grube and J.J. McCoy recorded a phenomenal Willet count at Michigan City Harbor. Upon their arrival some 260 birds were observed on the beach at Mount Baldy (roughly 2 km west of the harbor). An additional 188 birds, including single flocks of 90 and 70, flew westward past the harbor, yielding an incredible total of 448 Willets (IN-BIRD).



Juvenile Willet (center) and adult Willet (right) at Miller Beach 20 August 2005. Photo by J.K. Cassady.

High Inland Counts

Paradoxically, Willets are seen most frequently on the lakefront, but most of the largest counts come from inland sites, especially in spring. A fine example is provided by Monroe County, which claims the state's two highest spring tallies. The largest of these, 135 birds seen 1 May 2003, was the conservative sum of three flocks seen by D.R. Whitehead and Ross Brittain (IN-BIRD). The second large tally, 26 April 1991, involved 100 Willets seen resting on the rocks along the 446 causeway across Lake Monroe (Brown 1992).

Migration

Though not visible on the migration histogram, no records occur between 23 May and 4 June. In calculating the migration envelopes it is assumed that this hiatus represents the transition between spring and fall migration.

Willet Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
135	01-May-2003	Lake Monroe	D.R. Whitehead	INB
100	26-Apr-1991	Lake Monroe	D.R. Whitehead	IAQ
62	02-May-2002	Salamonie Res	DNR- staff	INB
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
448	04-Jul-2005	Mich. City Harb.	J.J. McCoy	INB
117	05-Aug-1985	Atterbury FWA	Boyd Gill	IAQ
77	02-Aug-2001	Miller Beach	B.J. Grube	INB

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	15-Apr-1954	25-Apr	4-May	15-May	23-May-2002	65
Central	23-Apr-1960	26-Apr	30-Apr	10-May	18-May-2000	33
South	1-Apr-1995	20-Apr	29-Apr	13-May	17-May-2001	30
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	4-Jun-1998	4-Jul	1-Aug	26-Aug	2-Oct-1988	289
Central	5-Jul-1986	---	5-Aug	---	22-Sep-1965	17
South	7-Jun-1994	---	30-Jul	---	26-Sep-1999	28

References Cited

Brown, M.R. (1992) Field Notes Spring 1991, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 70:62-73.

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

IN-BIRD, a Listserve 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. (1958) The Shorebird families: Charadriidae, Scolopacidae, Recurvirostridae, and Phalaropidae of Indiana. Part 4. *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 36:2-39.

Keller, C.E., S.A. Keller, and T.C. Keller (1979) *Indiana Birds and Their Haunts*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 214 pp.

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.