

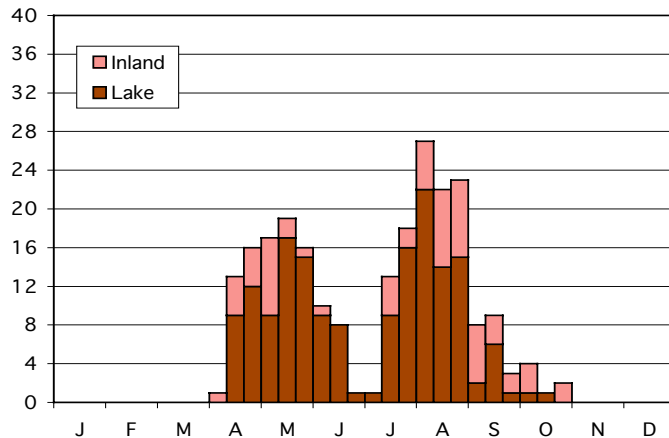
Piping Plover

Charadrius melodus

Historical Information

First Published Record: Brayton (1879) indicated that this species was a common summer resident along Lake Michigan's shores; however, the first specific record involved a pair collected by H.K. Coale near Whiting 25 May 1879 (Butler 1898).

Butler (1898) described the Piping Plover as a migrant, which was present in considerable numbers along Lake Michigan. By the mid-twentieth century it was characterized as a very rare nesting species in Lake and Porter Counties (Keller 1957). Within two decades numbers dwindled to the point that it was described as a casual migrant by Keller et al. in 1979. Mumford and Keller (1984) provided evidence that early writers were too optimistic regarding the abundance of breeding on Indiana's Lake Michigan beaches. They quoted H.L. Stoddard as follows: "...on the whole western shore of Lake Michigan, only a small part was ever suitable for the breeding of the birds."

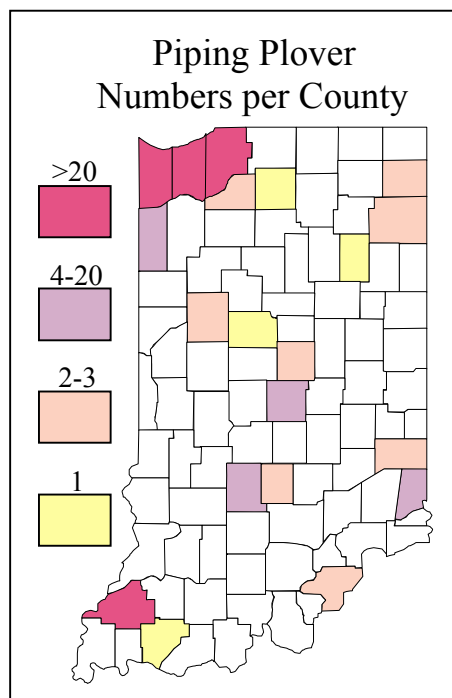


Status

Physical Evidence: More than 14 specimens are housed in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE

Specimens				
Museum	No.			
Chicago Academy of Sciences	3*			
Chicago Field Museum	10			
National Museum of Natural History	2			
Univ. of Michigan Museum	2			
* Egg(s)				
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	8	7	7
Central Tier	n	n	n	9
Southern Tier	n	8	9	7
Entire State	n	8	7	7



Current Status

Today the Piping

Plover is a Federally Endangered Species. It is a Very Rare (8) spring and Rare (7) fall migrant along Lake Michigan Beaches. It is Rare (7) to Occasional (9) away from the lake.

Occurrence

Although a majority of the Piping Plovers occur along Lake Michigan's shores, it has been recorded in at least 17 inland counties. Foremost among these is Gibson County, which has a dozen records (primarily at Lake Gibson). Over the past two decades an average of 3.5 birds per year has been reported statewide. It has been reported annually since 1985. The maximum inland count of three was made by R.E.



Adult Piping Plover, Miller Beach 30 August 2003.
Photo by J.K. Cassady.

Mumford on 2 October 1953 at Willow Slough FWA (Mumford files) and duplicated by Denny Jones on 3 May 1986 at Lake Gibson (Brock 1987).

Summer Records

Many summer records involve breeding birds recorded during the early twentieth century. However, C.E. Mills periodically recorded a very late migrant (or non-breeder) at Lake Gibson from 25 April through 6 June 1993 (Jackson 1994). Only one record exists between 24 June and 12 July; B.J. Grube observed a

single bird on the U.S. Steel break-wall (Miller Beach) on 1 July 1999 (Brock notes).

Breeding

Keller (1957) summarized the published breeding data, and added prophetically, "It becomes increasingly evident that this species is making a last ditch stand as a breeder in Indiana. Whether or not the bird will remain is something that only the future can foretell." The last known breeding occurred at Wolf Lake 6 June 1955 where W.M. Davis observed two adults and a downy chick (Mumford and Keller 1984).

Piping Plover Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
8	16-May-1920	West Beach	H.L. Stoddard	HLS
7	22-Apr-1917	Multiple Sites	H.L. Stoddard	HLS
4	05-May-1917	Indiana Dunes	H.L. Stoddard	HLS
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
6	24-Aug-1919	West Beach	H.L. Stoddard	HLS
5	14-Jul-1897	Miller Beach	???	K57
5	05-Aug-1916	Lakefront	H.L. Stoddard	HLS

Migration Envelopes						
Spring						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	6-Apr-2002	15-Apr	12-May	3-Jun	7-Jun-1948	42
Central	15-Apr-1929	---	---	---	28-May-1977	3
South	14-Apr-2004	---	---	---	6-Jun-1993	7
Fall						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
North	1-Jul-1999	21-Jul	11-Aug	20-Sep	16-Oct-1979	61
Central	5-Aug-1988	---	---	---	28-Oct-1949	9

South	17-Jul-1988	---	23-Aug	---	30-Oct-03	22
By Age: Fall flight						
Adult	15-Jul-1992	---	31-Jul	---	30-Aug-03	13
Juv.	1-Aug-2001	---	---	---	21-Aug-03	8

References Cited

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Brayton, A.W. (1879) A Catalogue of the Birds of Indiana, *Transactions of the Indiana Horticultural Society*, pp. 144-146.

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

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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.