

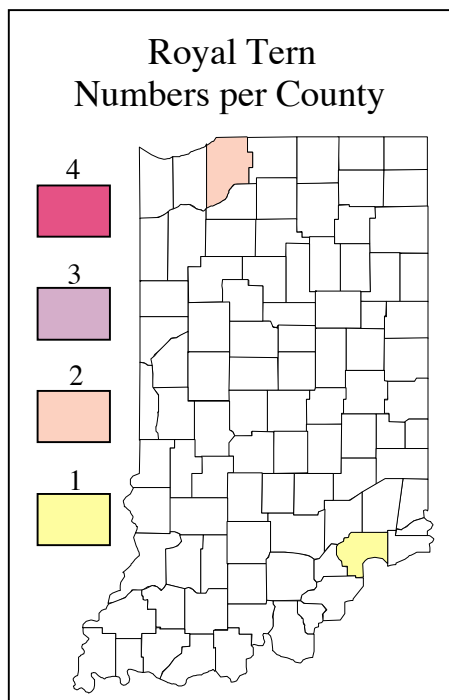
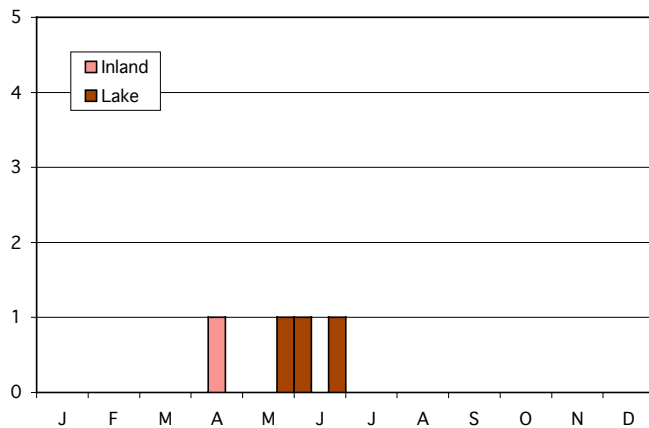
# Royal Tern

## *Sterna maxima*

### Historical Information

**First Published Record:** Mumford and Keller (1984) were equivocal about a 15 April 1960 report by J.D. Webster in Jefferson County. This sighting was described by Webster (1980) who conducted a lengthy observation at moderate range and eliminated the similar Caspian Tern based on small size, ragged crest, orange bill, and deeply forked tail. Although the Indiana Bird Records Committee has not evaluated this report, it is accepted as Indiana's first Royal Tern record.

Butler (1898) relegated the Royal Tern to the hypothetical category. Keller et al. (1979) failed to mention this species and Mumford and Keller (1984) listed only the above Jefferson County report.



### Status

**Physical Evidence:** No known specimens, but numerous photographs of the 1996 bird were taken and several were published. One taken by J.K. Cassady occupies the front cover of the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 2.

| STATUS TABLE            |     |     |     |      |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Specimens               |     |     |     |      |
| Museum                  |     |     |     | No.  |
| No known specimens      |     |     |     | 0    |
| 20-Year Abundance Table |     |     |     |      |
|                         | Win | Spr | Sum | Fall |
| Northern Tier           | n   | n   | 10  | n    |
| Central Tier            | n   | n   | n   | n    |
| Southern Tier           | n   | n   | n   | n    |
| Entire State            | n   | n   | n   | n    |

### Current Status

Two records have occurred within the past 20 years placing the Royal Tern in the Accidental (10) category.

### Occurrence

Indiana's first confirmed Royal Tern was found by J.J. McCoy at Michigan City Harbor 29 June 1996; it was seen by nine other observers and photographically documented (Jackson 1997). The third state record, again discovered by J.J. McCoy at Michigan City Harbor, was first seen 22 May 1999 and was observed periodically through 7 June (Brock 1999a&b).

| Royal Tern Records |              |                   |              |      |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|------|
| All Records        |              |                   |              |      |
| No.                | Date         | Location          | Observer     | Ref. |
| 1                  | 15-Apr-1978  | Jefferson Co      | J.D. Webster | IAQ  |
| 1                  | 29-June-1996 | Mich. City Harbor | J.J. McCoy   | IAQ  |
| 1                  | 22-May-1999  | Mich. City Harbor | J.J. McCoy   | IAQ  |



Royal Tern on the Michigan City Harbor beach June 1996.  
Photo by J.K. Cassady.

### References Cited

Brock, K.J. (1999a) Middlewestern Prairie Region, Spring Season 1999, *N. Am. Birds* 53:284-287.

Brock, K.J. (1999b) Middlewestern Prairie Region, Nesting Season 1999, *N. Am. Birds* 53:391-394.

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

Jackson, S.F. (1997) Field Notes Summer 1996, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 75:191-210.

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.

Webster, J.D. (1980) Scattered Field Notes from Southern Indiana, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 58:139-142)