

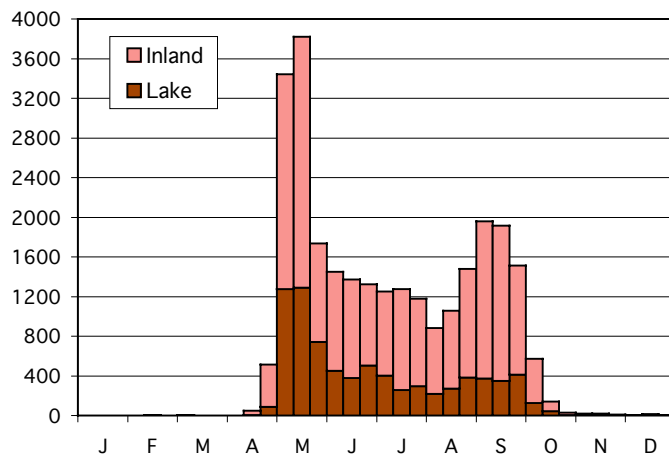
Gray Catbird

Dumetella carolinensis

Historical Information

First Published Record: A specimen taken in Knox County 24 April 1883 (Mumford files) appears to constitute the earliest formal Gray Catbird record.

Butler (1898) referred to the “Cat Bird” as a “too well known summer resident.” Keller et al. (1979) considered it an abundant summer resident, which was casual in winter. Mumford and Keller (1984) deemed the Catbird a common migrant and summer resident, with small winter numbers.



Current Status

The Gray Catbird is a Very Common (3) summer resident and migrant.

Occurrence

Having been recorded in every Indiana county, the Catbird is an exceedingly well-known member of the Indiana avifauna. It prefers the vines and tangles of overgrown fields, marshes, or the edges of woodlands. As shown in the migration histogram spring migrants are somewhat more numerous than fall birds. Although the fall flight is distinctly evident away from Lake Michigan, it is barely discernable along the lake (see migration histogram).

Winter Records

Over the past two decades Catbirds have been reported in nine winters, providing an average of one bird per year. The distribution of records over the winter months includes 22 in December, five in January, and three in February. Curiously, over the past 20 years there has been only one winter report from the southern tier.

Status

Physical Evidence: At least 17 specimens, plus eggs, are housed in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list, J.B. Dunning unpublished computer list, and Richards 1987).

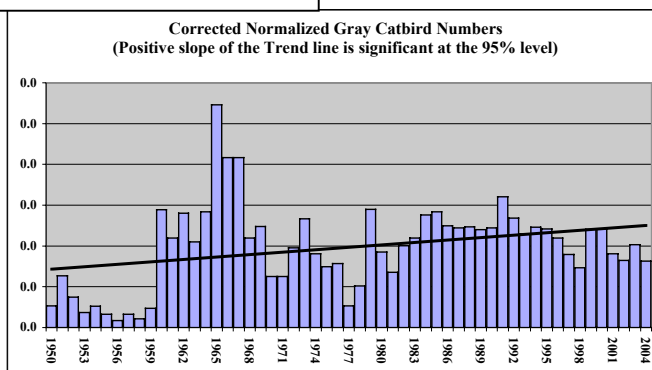
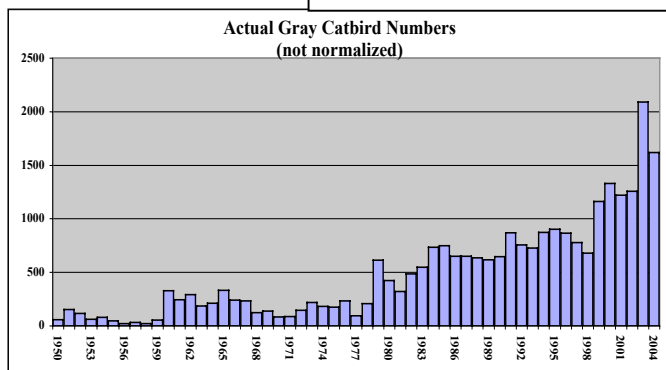
STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Academy of Sciences				2
Chicago Field Museum				4
National Museum of Natural History				1
Indiana State Museum				1
Purdue Univ. Wildlife Laboratory				7
Univ. of Michigan Museum				4*
Milwaukee Public Museum				1
*Includes eggs				
20-Year Abundance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

Population Trend

The 50-year population trend curve suggests that Catbirds are doing quite well in the state. This conclusion is consistent with that of Castrale and Donaldson (1986) who reported an Catbird increase during the interval 1966 – 1984. Positive slope of the trend line is statistically significant at the 95 percent level.

Gray Catbird Population Trend

Positive slope of the trend line is significant at the 95% level



Breeding

Castrale et al. (1998) reported breeding evidence in an impressive 98 percent of the state's 647 priority blocks, with evidence from every Indiana county. Mumford and Keller (1984) list egg dates from 8 May through 16 August.

Gray Catbird Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring/Summer				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
90	08-May-1997	Lakefront traps	Sebastian Patti	KJB
85	16-Jul-2000	Eagle Creek Park	R.F. Buskirk	IAQ
80	15-May-1965	Tippecanoe Co	I.W. Burr	IAQ
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
50	14-Sep-1988	Clark Co	Lene Rauth	LRa
45	20-Sep-1985	LaPorte Co	R.S. Plank	IAQ
40*	25-Sep-1983	LaPorte Co	R.S. Plank	IAQ
*40 were reported on two additional occasions				

Migration Envelopes						
Entire State						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
Spring	Win. Vis.	1-May	15-May	5-Jun	Sum. Res.	2498
Fall	Sum. Res.	21-Aug	14-Sep	5-Oct	Win. Vis.	2210

References Cited

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

Castrale, J.S. and L. Donaldson (1986) Summer distribution and population trends of Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, and Northern Mockingbird in Indiana. *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science*, 95:195-201.

Castrale, J.S., E.M. Hopkins, and C.E. Keller (1998) Atlas of breeding Birds of Indiana, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 388 pp.

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.

Richards, R.L. (1987) The Vertebrate Collection of the Indiana State Museum: "Old" Specimens and Records, *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 97:547-570.