

INDIANA LAKEFRONT: SUMMER REPORT 2019

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This splendid photo was taken at Michigan City Harbor on 29 July. Although Marbled Godwits occur regularly on the lakefront, they are rarely seen on the beach. This adult joined four Willets and genially posed for this shot, which was taken by John K. Cassady.

Weather

The summer of 2019, especially July, was quite warm. About 10 July a sweltering hot spell swept into the state and lingered for some ten days. This stifling heat served to evaporate most of the residual water from the unusually wet spring, bringing shorebird habitat to some areas.

Temperature & Precipitation at Chicago: Departure from Normal

	Temp (°F)	Rainfall (in.)
Jun	-1.2	-0.4
Jul	+3.1	+0.24

Summer Highlights

Although super rarities were not reported, several noteworthy reports occurred, including: a male Redhead at Striebel Pond, a new Osprey nest in Gary, a Wilson's Phalarope at Michigan City Harbor, Michigan City's first Monk Parakeet, a Lark Sparrow at Miller Beach, and a territorial Blackburnian Warbler at the Brincka-Cross Gardens.

Reynolds Creek Declines

Since about 2016 lakefront birders have enjoyed the prairie habitat provided by the relatively new Reynolds Creek G.H.A. site. However, the numbers of several Reynolds Creek prairie species dropped precipitously this summer. Compared to reports from the summer 2018, this season's totals declined by the following percentages: Henslow's Sparrow (50%), Grasshopper Sparrow (75%), and Dickcissel (67%). An explanation for this decline is not available.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Blue-winged Teal:- On 27 May Walter J. Marcisz flushed a female off a nest containing 10 eggs at the DuPont site. This is the lakefront's 16th confirmed breeding record.

Redhead:- A male at Striebel Pond on 2 July (KJB) was quite unexpected, as this duck is quite rare on the lakefront in summer (TYM=0.5).

Black-billed Cuckoo:- For the third consecutive summer two were reported in the Dunes area (TYM=0.75). Kyle Wiktor logged the first during a 1 June lakewatch at the Green Tower site. John K. Cassady spotted the second as it flew across a field at Reynolds Creek G.H.A. on 8 July.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo:- The 15 birds reported this summer (TYM=7.35) constitute the largest count since 2008. The season's peak tally consisted of (3) that were reported in the Heron Rookery on 3 July (Brad Bumgardner).

Eastern Whip-poor-will:- A summer record of 13 birds was logged this season (TYM=3.7). Kenneth Wysocki identified (2) at West Beach on 17 July, providing the first site record since 2003 and the largest count ever made at West Beach.

Osprey:- A new nest site was discovered on West 25th Avenue in Gary. On 2 July Matt Kalwasinski observed 2 adults and a nestling at the site.

Black-bellied Plover:- The lakefront's first summer record in seven years was logged on the Beverly Shores lakefront. This molting adult was found and photographed by Matthew Beatty on 29 July.

American Avocet:- See table (season total=10 ; TYM=14.9).

Summer 2019 American Avocet Records			
No	Date	Location	Observer
2	16-Jul	Miller Beach	M. Topp
3	16-Jul	Michigan City Harbor	J. Kendall
2	21-Jul	Michigan City Harbor	Vanderbilts
1	22-Jul	Michigan City Harbor	J. Kendall
2	25-Jul	Michigan City Harbor	E. Michael

Whimbrel:- The season's only report consisted of (2) that William Sharkey found on the Michigan City outer breakwall on 11 July (TYM=4.35).

Marbled Godwit:- See table (season total=8 ; TYM=6.4)

Summer 2019 Marbled Godwit Records			
No	Date	Location	Observer
4	10-Jul	Michigan City Harbor	E. Hopkins
2	10-Jul	Miller Beach	M. Topp
1	16-Jul	Michigan City Harbor	KJB
1	29-Jul	Michigan City Harbor	J. Cassady

Solitary Sandpiper:- A juvenile at Carlson Oxbow Park on 8 July (Randy J. Pals) provided an early record for this age group on the lakefront. The next earliest date is 31 July.

Wilson's Phalarope:- This lakefront rarity, seen atop the Michigan City Harbor outer breakwall on 25 July (Eric Michael), constitutes the lakefront's first summer report in a decade (TYM=0.35).

Willet:- It was a better than average summer for Willets with 231 reported for the season (TYM= 113). The (25) that Matt S. Kalwasinski tallied at Michigan City Harbor on the 26th constitutes Indiana's largest count for the month of June. In addition, Indiana's earliest juvenile was recorded on 15 July when John K. Cassady, Randy J.

Pals, & KJB observed two juvs on the Michigan City Harbor outer Breakwall.



Four Willets and a Marbled Godwit on the beach at Michigan City Harbor 29 July. The Willet in the foreground displays the unmarked breast of a juvenile: compare it to the breast markings of the other three birds. Photo by John K. Cassady.

Lesser Black-backed Gull:- The season's only report was photographed on the outer breakwall at Michigan City Harbor on 21 July (Randy & Lisa Vanderbilt). The TYM=0.30.

Least Bittern:- An impressive 7 birds were reported this summer (TYM=3.20). The peak count was (2) that Michael A. Topp logged at Grant Street Wetland on 21 July.

Great Blue Heron:- On 27 June Matt S. Kalwasinski visited the new rookery in Hammond (near Purdue Northwest) and found 41 nests that contained (87) young.

Monk Parakeet:- The one that landed on Susan R. Bagby's balcony on 15 July provided a first ever record for Michigan City. This was also only the second record for LaPorte County.

Alder Flycatcher:- A presumed fall migrant was heard singing in central Beverly Shores on 23 July (John K. Cassady).

Willow Flycatcher:- The summer of 2019 proved quite favorable for this Empid with 139 reported (TYM=63.0). The peak

summer tally was (15) that John T. Caruso logged at Beverly Shores on 1 June.

Marsh Wren:- It was a fine season for this wren with 218 reported (TYM=88.5). The season's best daily count was the (31) that Matt S. Kalwasinski logged at the Grant Street Wetland on 2 July.

Northern Mockingbird:- Two breeding occurrences were reported along the lakefront this summer. Michael A. Topp observed two adults at a Miller Beach nest on 6 July and Randy J. Pals discovered a family group (adult and three fledglings) at Cowles Bog on 30 July.

Lark Sparrow:- The season's only report involved a singleton that Michael A. Topp found at Miller Beach on 6 July (TYM=0.40).



Pinkish Ring-billed Gulls occasionally appear on the Indiana lakefront; however, they are rarely this deeply colored. Presumably these individuals become stained at some industrial location. Birds stained dark gray are observed more frequently than the pink birds. KJB photographed this bird at Michigan City Harbor on 8 July 2019.

Grasshopper Sparrow:- This summer the number reported at Reynolds Creek G.H.A. plunged with only a paltry 5 birds reported (20 were logged last year).

Baltimore Oriole:- The 78 reported this season is a record summer total for the lakefront (TYM=27.6).

WARBLERS

Worm-eating Warbler:- For the third summer, in the last four years, this species was reported at Dunes State Park. Brad Bumgardner found singletons on both 1 and 17 June.

Prothonotary Warbler:- It was a record season for this warbler with 22 reported (TYM=7.05). The peak daily count was (7) that Lindsay Grossmann logged at Dunes State Park on 11 June.

Hooded Warbler:- Lakefront birders enjoyed the best summer in six years with 10 birds reported (TYM=14.5). The peak tally was (3) at Dunes State Park on 1 June (Brad Bumgardner).

Blackburnian Warbler:- On 13 June Brad Bumgardner discovered a territorial bird at the Brincka-Cross Gardens. This provided the Dunes area's first evidence of breeding away from Dunes State Park.

Scarlet Tanager:- It was an above average summer for this species on the lakefront with 23 reported (TYM=17.6).

Blue Grosbeak:- A singing male was observed at West Beach on 27 June (Rob Bielawski). On 20 July Michael A. Topp found another male at Miller Beach, marking the 15th summer in which this species has occurred at that location.

Dickcissel:- Following three years of marvelous counts from Reynolds Creek G.H.A., numbers fell dramatically this season with only 67 birds reported (last summer 203 were logged).

Conventions Summer totals are frequently compared to average seasonal counts in the "Dunes area" (Calumet Region or lakefront) over the past 20 years, including the present year. This value is abbreviated "TYM" for Twenty Year Mean. The term "STYM" refers to the twenty-year mean for the entire state. Species marked by "*" were observed outside the lakefront area.