



Results of the 2008 wading bird aerial survey in the coastal marshes of New Jersey

&

2009 Pilot Survey for Inland Heron Colonies in Northeast New Jersey



Christina Kisiel

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

Endangered and Nongame Species Program



The target species for this survey were:

- ☀ Great Egret
- ☀ Snowy Egret
- ☀ Cattle Egret
- ☀ Yellow Crowned Night Heron
- ☀ Glossy Ibis
- ☀ Tricolored Heron
- ☀ Little Blue Heron
- ☀ Black Crowned Night Heron

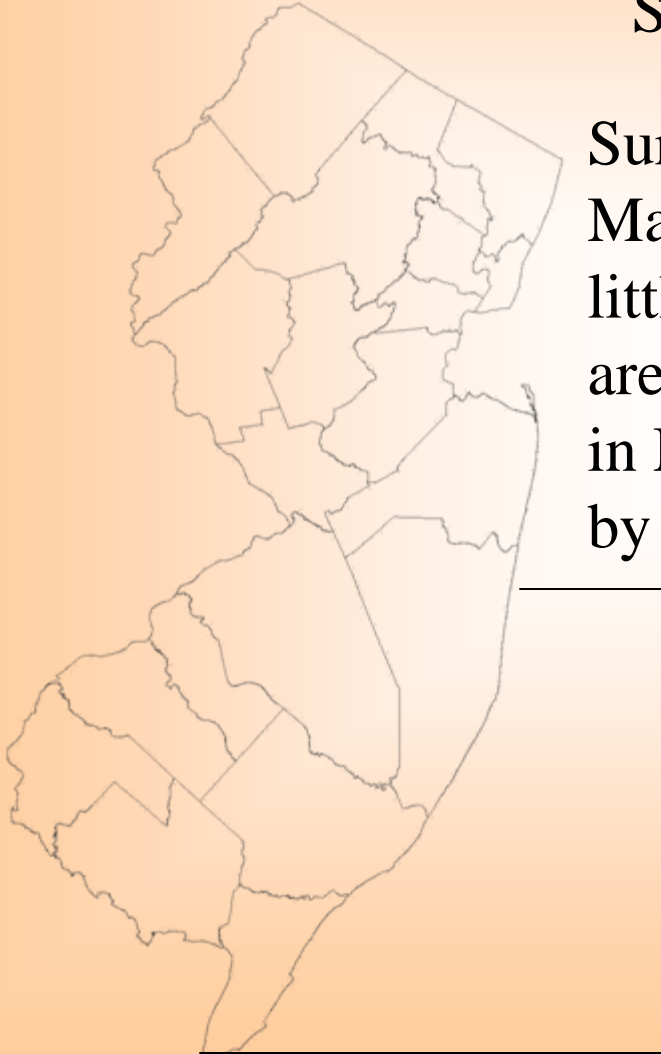
The survey took place on May 28th, 2008. We used a Jet Ranger helicopter with three observers on board. Two observers counted and one was responsible for navigation and recording the data.





Study Area

Surveyed all coastal marshes from Mantaloking to Cape May. There is very little coastal marsh habitat north of this area. There are a few historical locations in Monmouth County that are surveyed by foot.





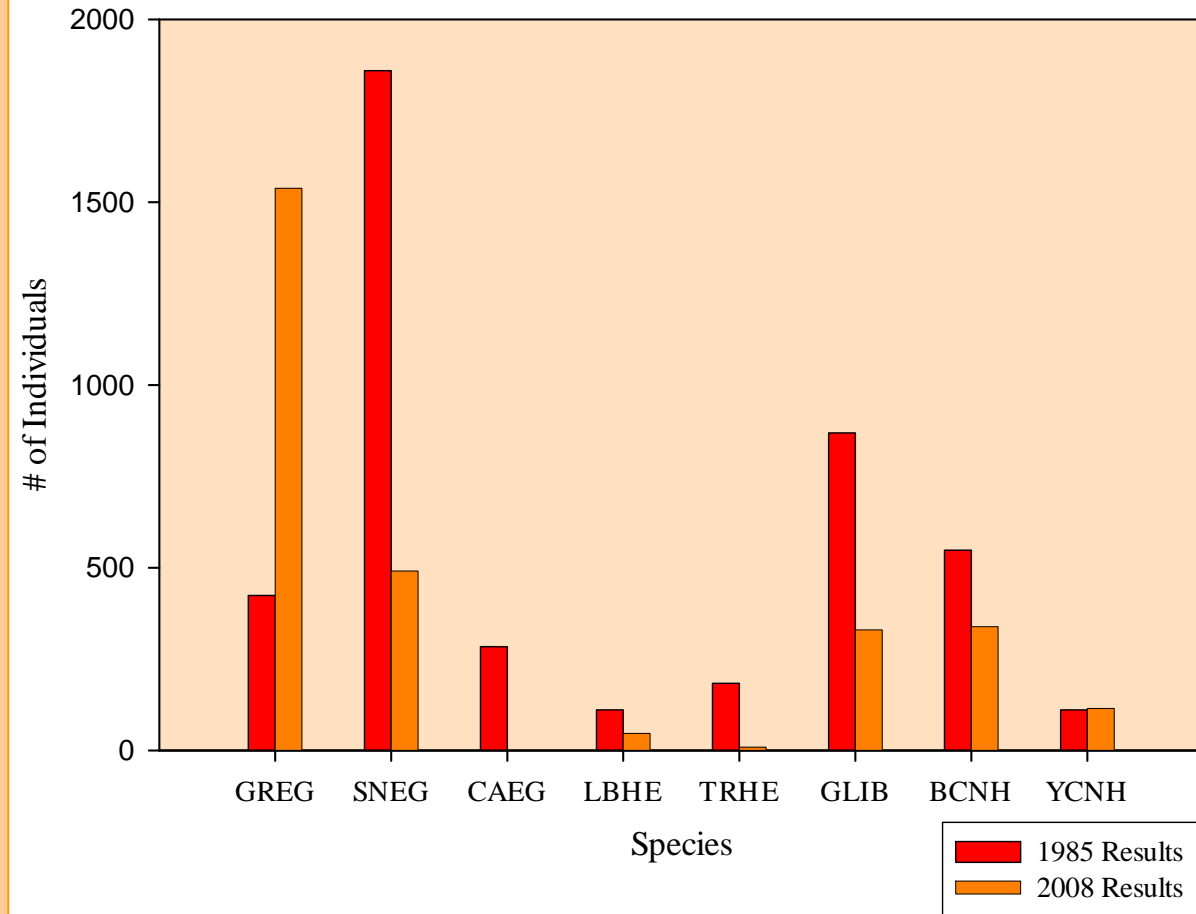
This year we also experimented with using a digital camera to take photographs of the colonies to determine if we could later count the individuals from the photographs. We learned that, as is true when doing the survey, that the white plumaged birds showed up well in the photos while the dark plumaged birds were harder or impossible to pick out.





Results

Long-legged Waders
Aerial Survey Results: 1985 vs. 2008

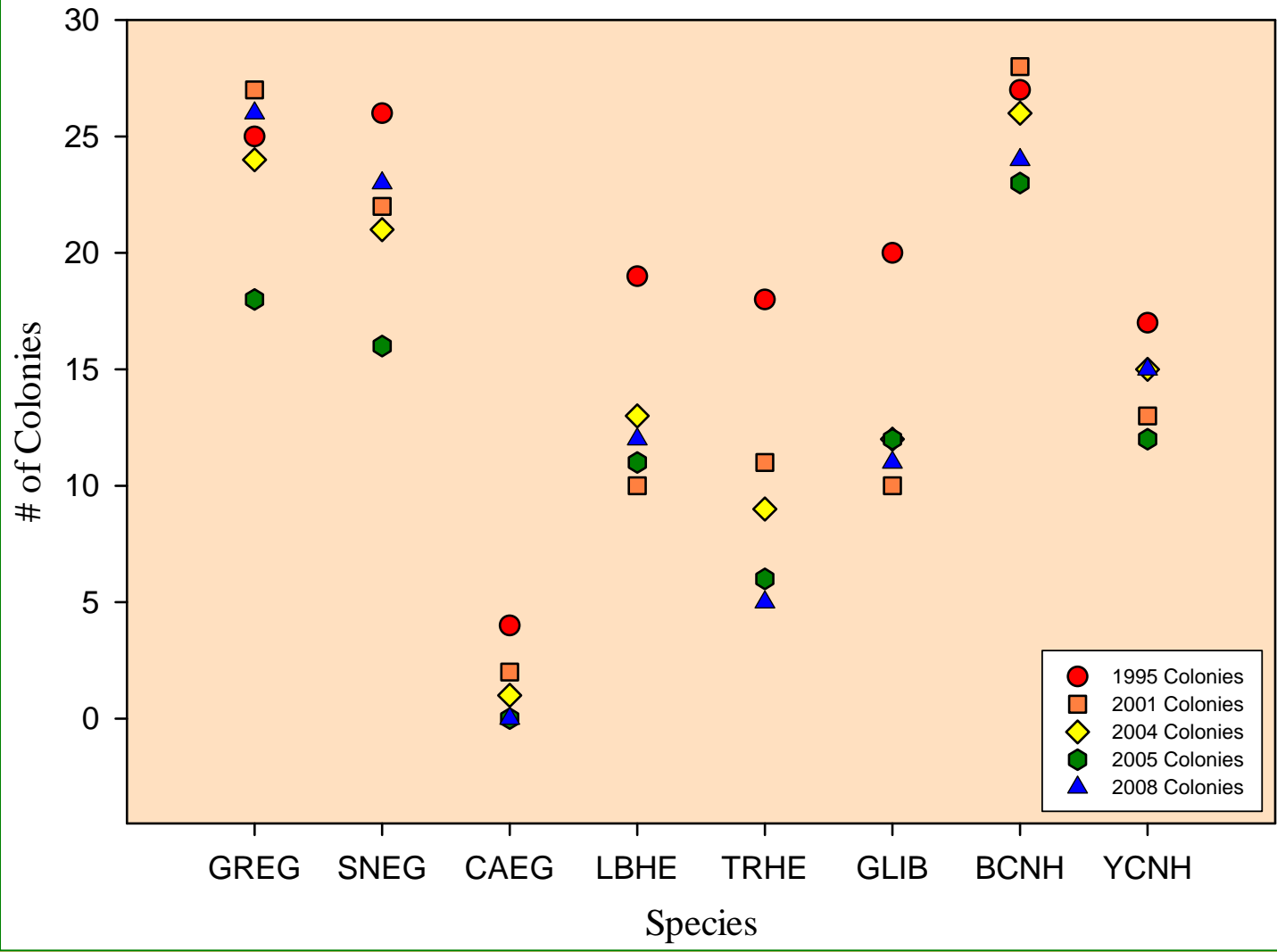


In A Nutshell:
 Atlantic coastal
 aerial results
 1985-2008

All Ardeidae species surveyed appear to be declining (except Great Egrets).

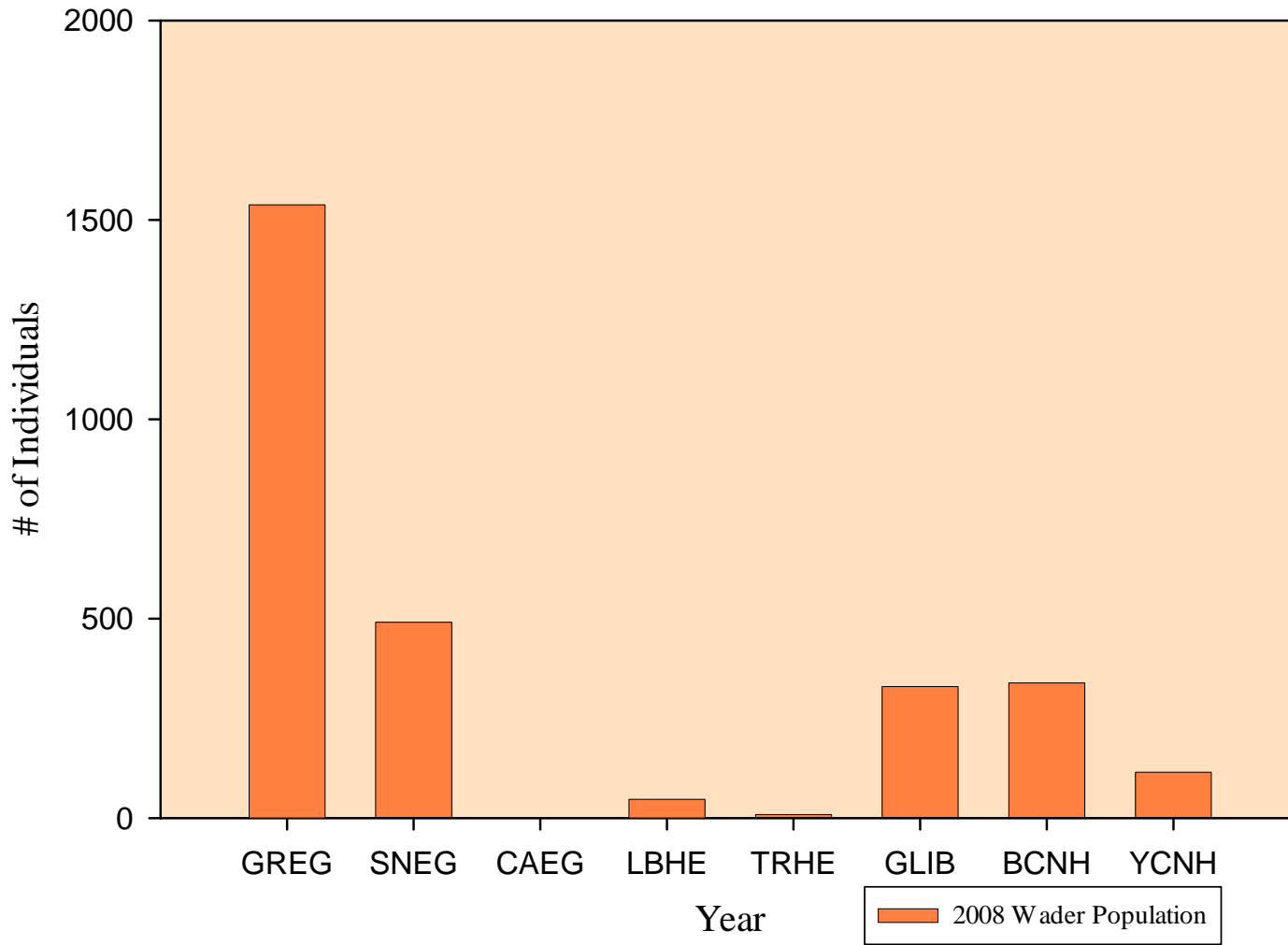


Number of Colonies by Species 1995-2008



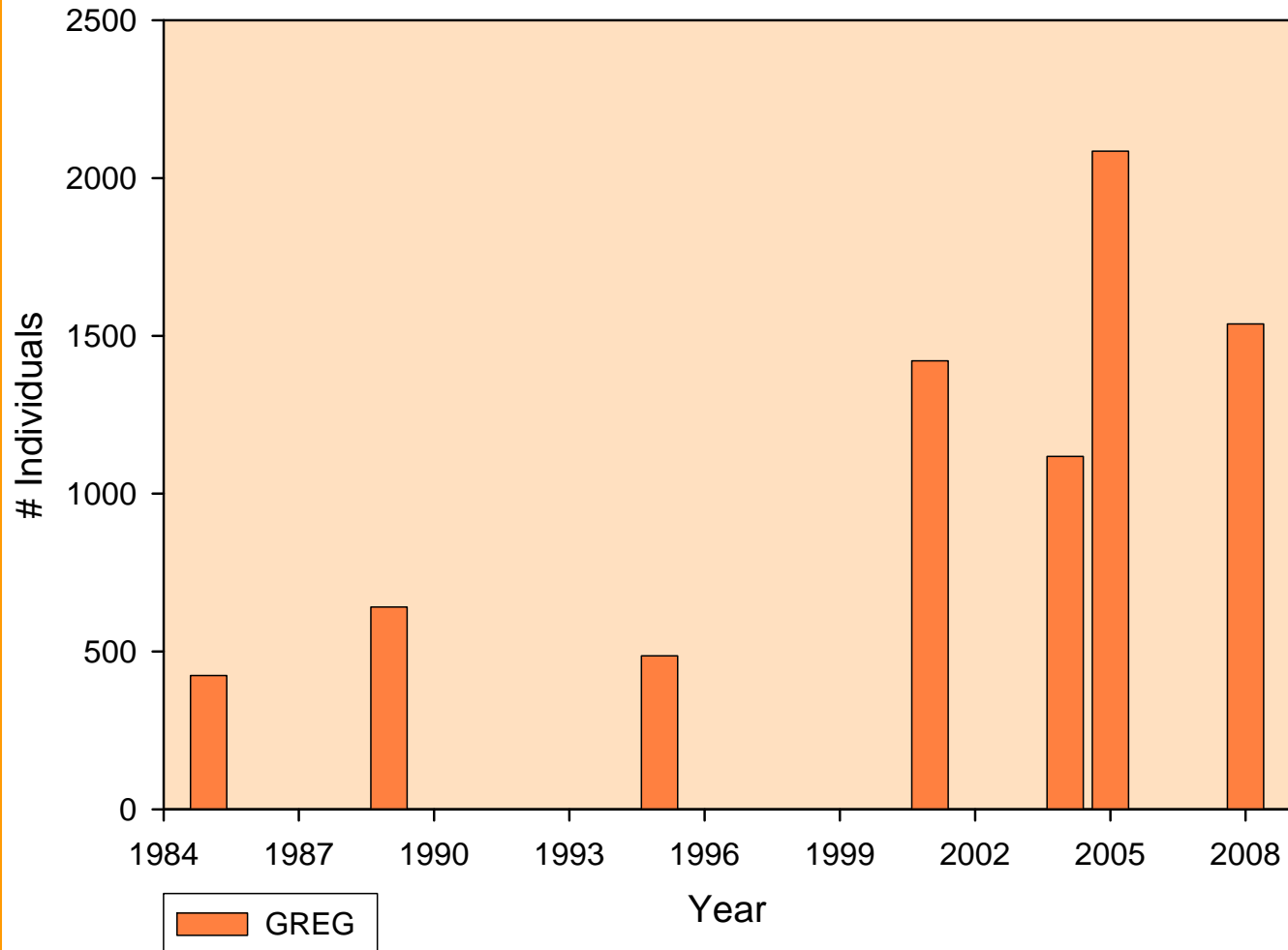


Aerial Survey Data: Long-legged Waders - 2008



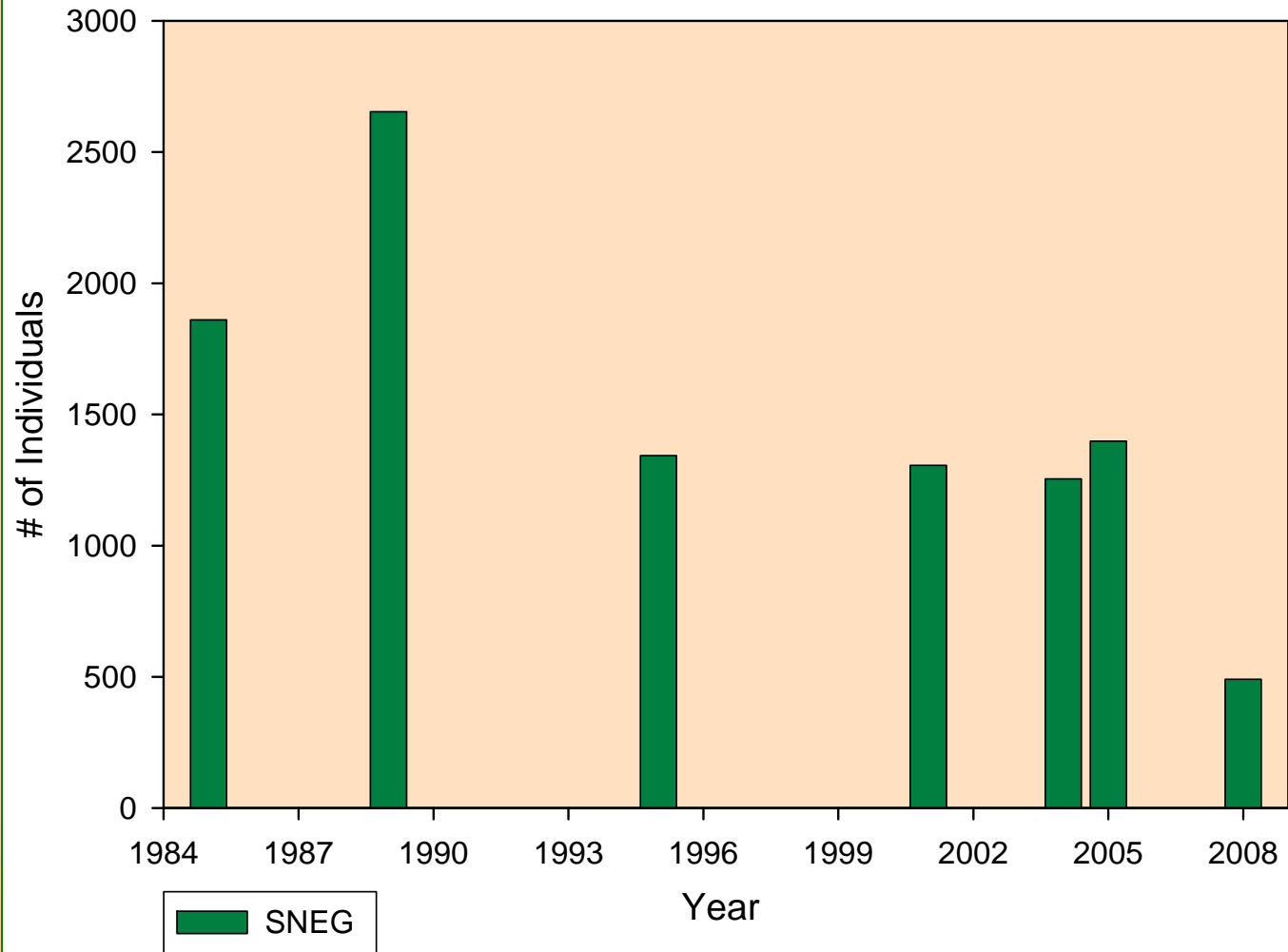


Great Egret Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2008



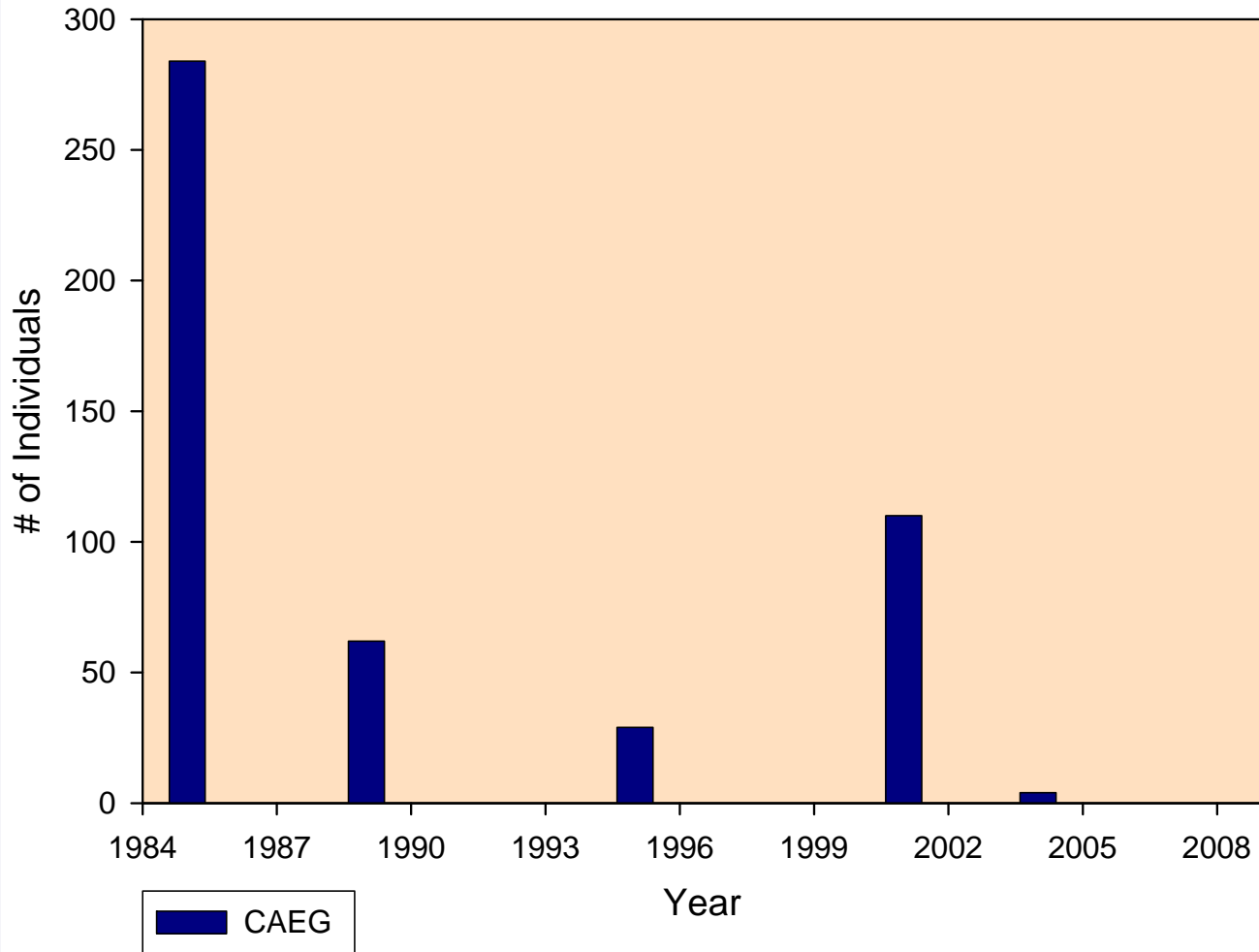


Snowy Egret Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2005



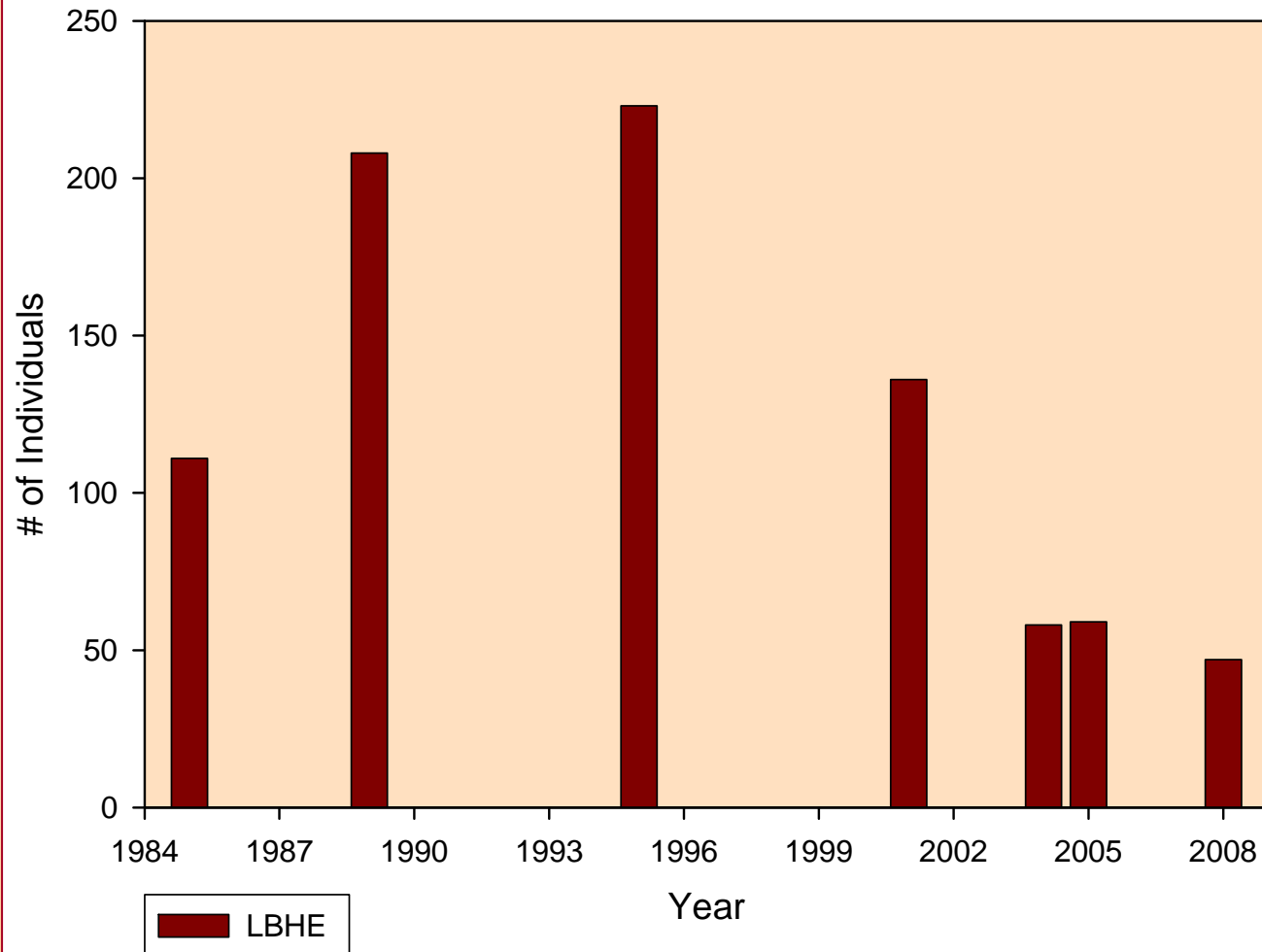


Cattle Egret Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2008



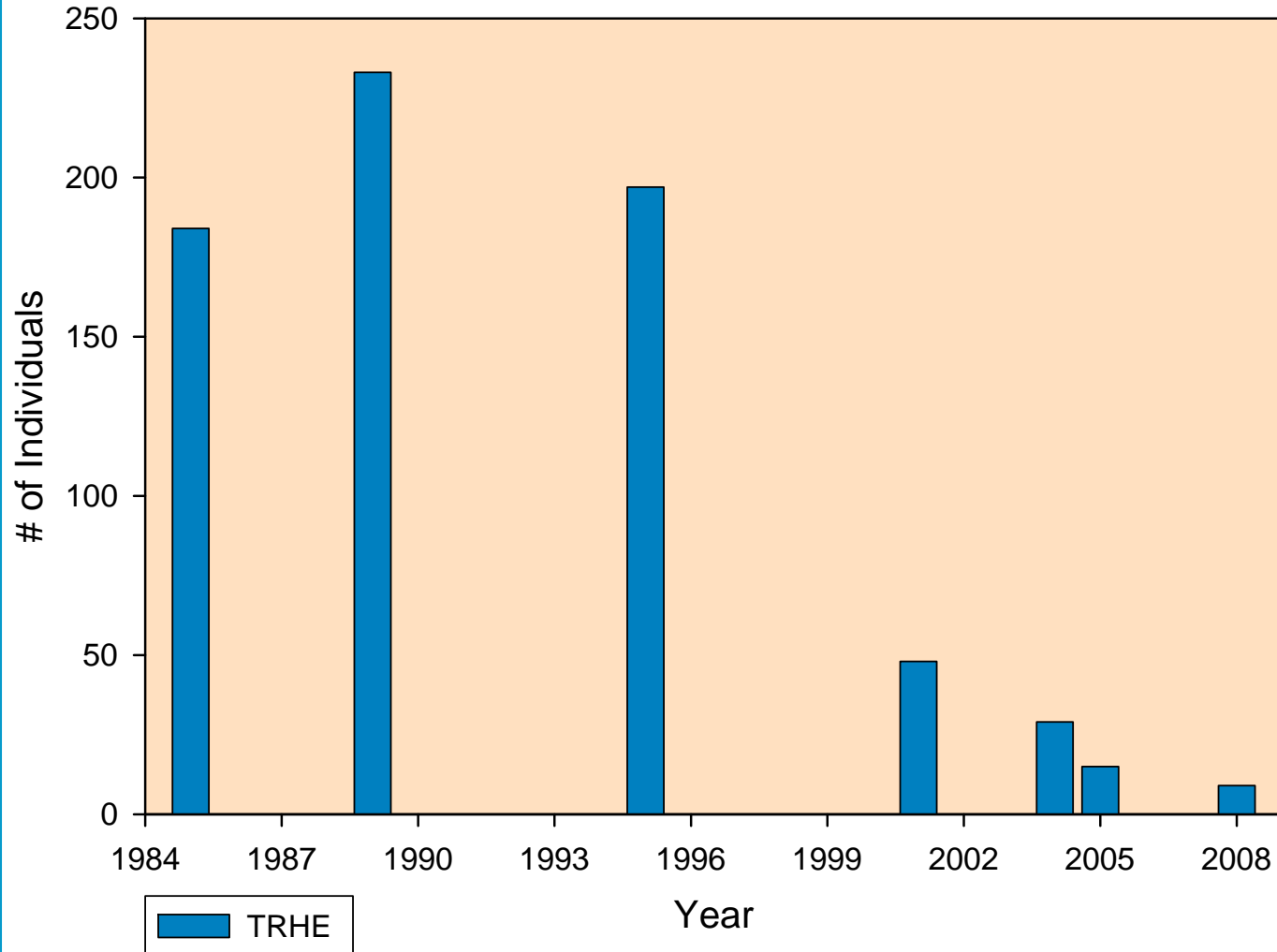


Little Blue Heron Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2008



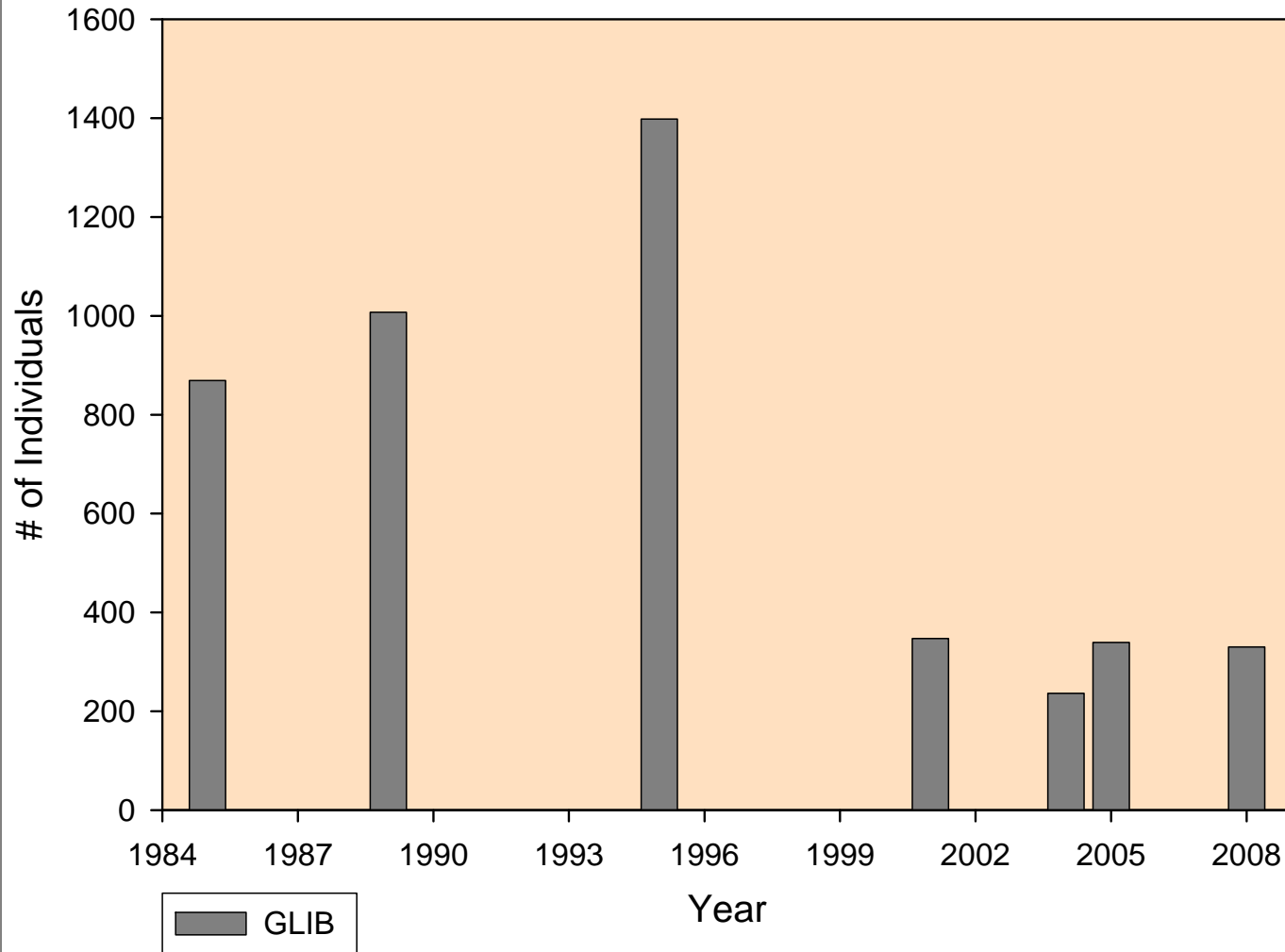


Tricolored Heron Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2008



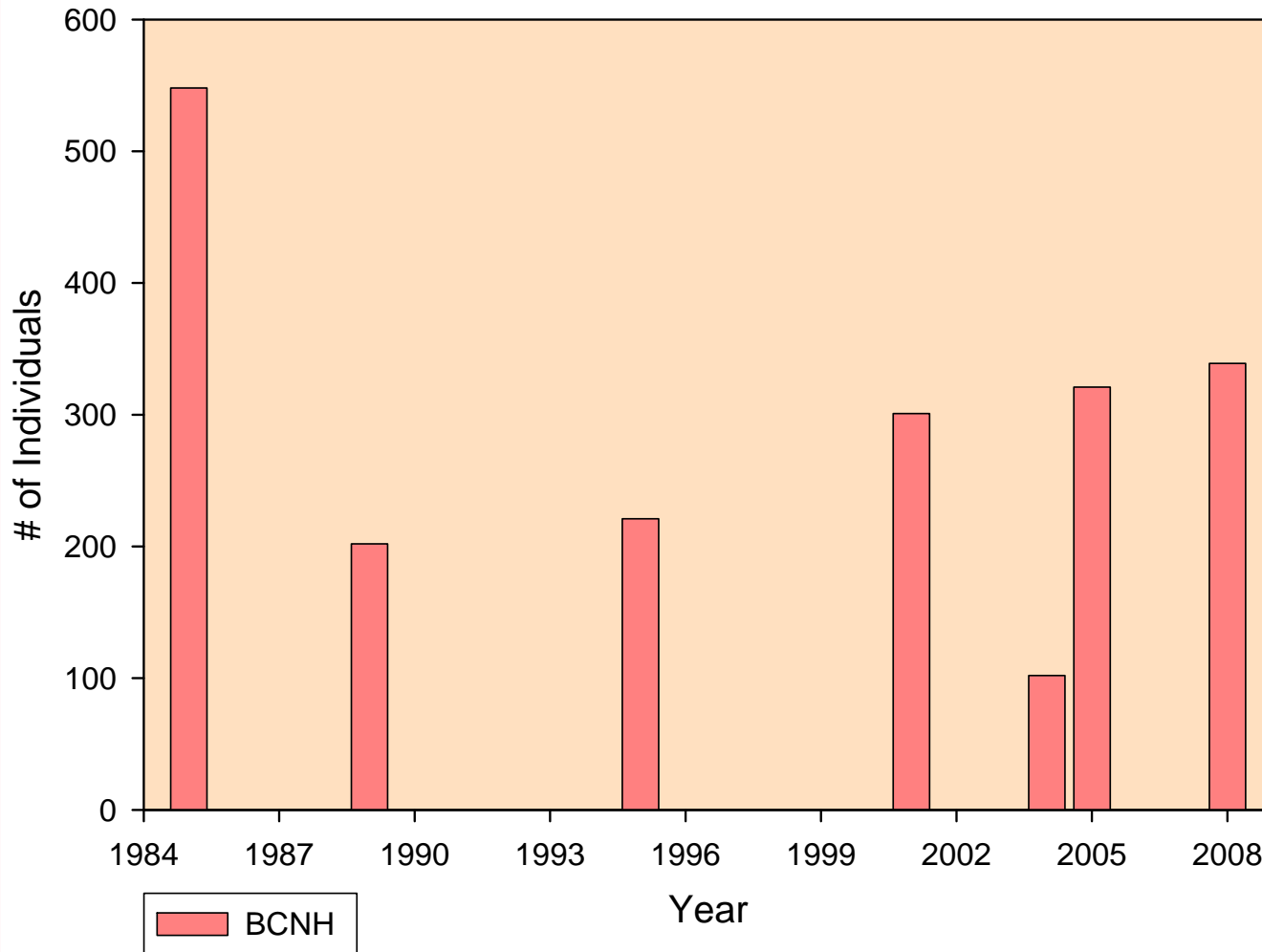


Glossy Ibis Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2008



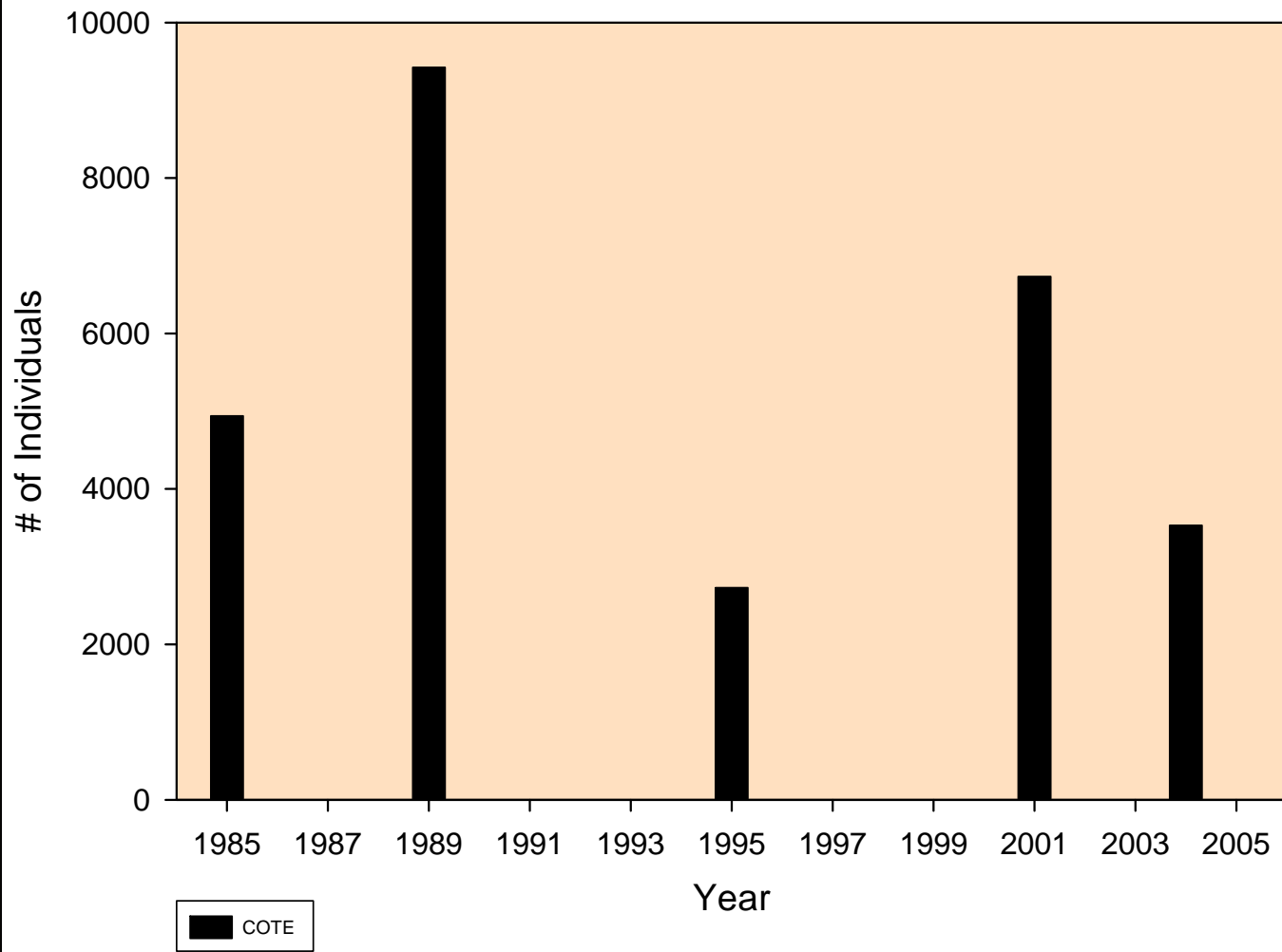


Black-crowned Night Heron Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2008





Yellow-crowned Night Heron Aerial Survey Data: 1985-2008





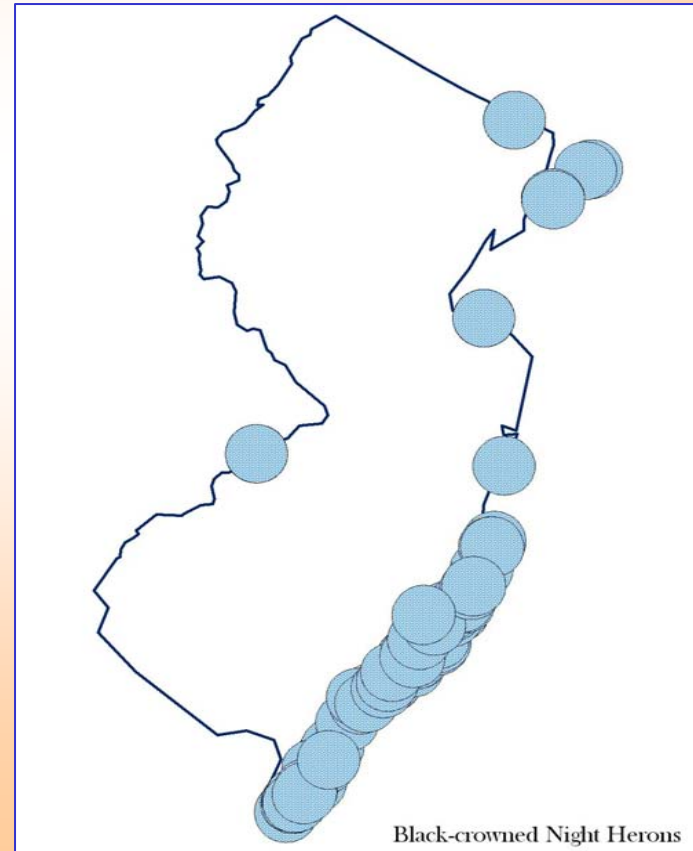
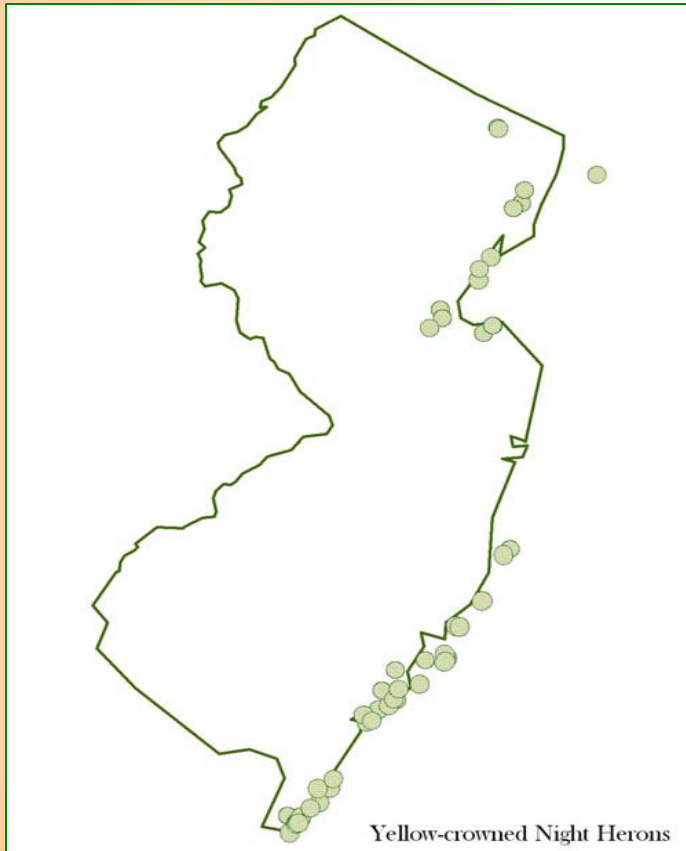
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Study Area – This is just a general outline of where the survey will focus. Areas just outside this area can also be considered.



The ENSP database has a paucity of data for inland colonial waterbird colonies in the northeastern part of the state. This survey aims to address this data gap.





Survey Work Plan

Solicit interested parties, birding organizations, list servs, etc. for location information on colonies that ENSP may not be aware of.

I will then pool all this information to create a list of colonies to survey for 2009.

Finally, I will look for volunteers to conduct the survey. Each person will be responsible for at least one site, but is allowed (encouraged?!) to sign up for additional sites. This is a great survey for beginner birders since the birds are easy to identify. The most difficult part may be getting access to properties.



Survey Work Plan

The survey will be conducted from April – November using the same methods as are utilized for our Great Blue Heron survey. This includes visiting the colonies three times over the course of the survey period:

1. Visit the site in April or May to confirm that the birds returned and colony is active. Conduct adult count.
2. Visit the site in June to determine if the colony was successful. Conduct an adult and chick/fledge count
3. Visit the site in November (after leaf fall) to conduct a post season nest count.



If you know of any colonies in the study area that should be included in this survey or are interested in volunteering for the survey (or both!) please contact me at:

Christina Kisiel

ckisiel@hughes.net

OR

christina.kisiel@dep.state.nj.us

OR

609.628.1919

Thank You!!