



State of Illinois
Illinois State Police
Brendan F. Kelly, Director

Illinois Missing Children Report 2020



www.amberillinois.org

2020 Annual Report

I. INTRODUCTION

The Illinois State Enforcement Agencies to Recover Children (I SEARCH) program was created by the passage of the Intergovernmental Missing Child Recovery Act of 1984 (325 ILCS 40/1, et seq.). The program was designed to educate the public, improve the criminal justice system, affect legislative change, and direct assistance for local programs designed to improve child safety. This report is submitted for Calendar Year 2020 in compliance with the final paragraph of the Act, entitled, “Annual Report.”

On January 1, 2013, Illinois changed from the I SEARCH program to the Illinois Missing Persons Clearinghouse. This move was necessary to bring Illinois in line with all other states’ clearinghouse structure for missing persons. Currently all 50 states have a missing persons clearinghouse. The Missing Persons Clearinghouse is managed by the Illinois State Police.

The Illinois State Police Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) is the information system linking Illinois police agencies, other state agencies, and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The Intergovernmental Missing Child Recovery Act of 1984 and the National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 mandate immediate entry of all reports of missing children into LEADS, which are automatically entered into the nationwide NCIC database.

II. ILLINOIS STATE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MISSING PERSONS

An effective resource in solving cases of missing and exploited children, the Clearinghouse is a focal point for the coordination of efforts by law enforcement, social services, education and prevention programs, as well as legislative advocacy and the dissemination of missing children’s photographs. Its responsibilities include:

- Collecting and maintaining computerized data and investigating information on missing persons and unidentified bodies in the state;
- Coordinating with and providing assistance to state and local public and private nonprofit agencies, including those of other states and the federal government, in the location and recovery of missing persons and the identification of unidentified persons and bodies;
- Establishing and operating a statewide, toll-free telephone line for reports of missing persons and reports of sightings of missing persons;
- Providing a uniform missing person reporting and investigation protocol for law enforcement agencies within the state;
- Publishing a directory of missing persons for dissemination to state and local public and private nonprofit agencies and the public;

- Compiling statistics on the missing children cases handled and resolved by the Clearinghouse each year, as well as summaries of the circumstances of each case;
- Assisting in the training of law enforcement and other professionals about missing and unidentified persons and bodies;
- Operating a clearinghouse of information about methods of locating and recovering missing persons;
- Operating a resource center of information about the prevention of abduction and sexual exploitation of children; and
- Developing and implementing a coordinated program for a statewide emergency alert system to be used when a child is abducted.

III. FISCAL

There is no fiscal liability to the state of Illinois. All activities are performed under the structure of the Illinois State Police.

IV. SPECIAL ACTIVITY

Public Act 93-0310 established the Illinois AMBER Plan Task Force to monitor and review the implementation and operation of the AMBER Alert notification system and the endangered missing person advisory process. The Task Force continues to discuss ways of updating and enhancing the current AMBER Alert system. The Task Force maintains the AMBER Alert website, www.amberillinois.org, while also providing information to law enforcement, educators, media, parents, and the general public regarding the Illinois AMBER Alert Plan.

In 2020, the Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force continued to utilize its partnership with the Illinois Lottery. As a partner, the Illinois Lottery utilizes its digital lottery terminals inside of over 2,000 retail establishments to display all active AMBER Alert and Endangered Missing Person Advisory messages.

The partnerships do not stop at lottery terminals. The AMBER Alert Notification System continues to utilize digital message boards over Illinois interstates and tollways. This partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Tollway Authority has led to increased awareness for drivers of Illinois roadways.



On January 13, 2020, Illinois observed AMBER Alert Awareness Day. A poster contest titled “Bring Our Missing Children Home” was launched by the Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force. School superintendents, principals, teachers, community leaders, law enforcement, and parents joined in the effort to educate children about safety issues.

The Illinois Clearinghouse continues to chair the Interstate Advisory Council for Missing and Exploited Children (I-SEARCH). This council is made up of various law enforcement and child safety agencies throughout 13 midwest states. I-SEARCH states have been meeting biannually since 1982 in an effort to enhance missing person communications and investigations that cross state lines. Clearinghouse managers and AMBER Alert coordinators from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin make up the I-SEARCH Council.

In May 2020, Illinois marked the six-year anniversary of its partnership with Alert GPS. This technology provides a more efficient and effective warning system to law enforcement, media, and the public. The Law Enforcement Alerting Portal (L.E.A.P) delivers major efficiencies to the Illinois AMBER Alert notification system. It provides a quicker more robust alerting technology that enables the issuance of AMBER alerts through a variety of sources including texts, emails, faxes, and website feeds, as well as the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) through cell phone towers. These are the same systems used during severe weather emergencies to provide alerts to broadcasters and individuals through their cell phones. The technology has been expanded to include all Endangered Missing Person advisories, including Silver Search.

In May 2020, Illinois observed Missing Children’s Month by participating in various activities that brought attention to missing children cases in Illinois. The month long education and safety initiative culminates in national activities in Washington, DC on May 25, Missing Child Awareness Day.

The national Missing Person and AMBER Alert conference was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 protocols. A virtual conference will be held in August 2021. AMBER Alert coordinators from all states will come together to collaborate efforts to deal with missing and abducted children’s issues. These workshops will provide the ability for states to discuss cross border issues as they relate to missing and abducted children. This conference will provide great networking opportunities for AMBER Alert coordinators and Clearinghouse managers.

The annual AMBER Alert Task Force meeting was postponed in 2020 and will be held in September 2021. Once again, The Illinois Broadcasters Association will host the Task Force at their annual conference.

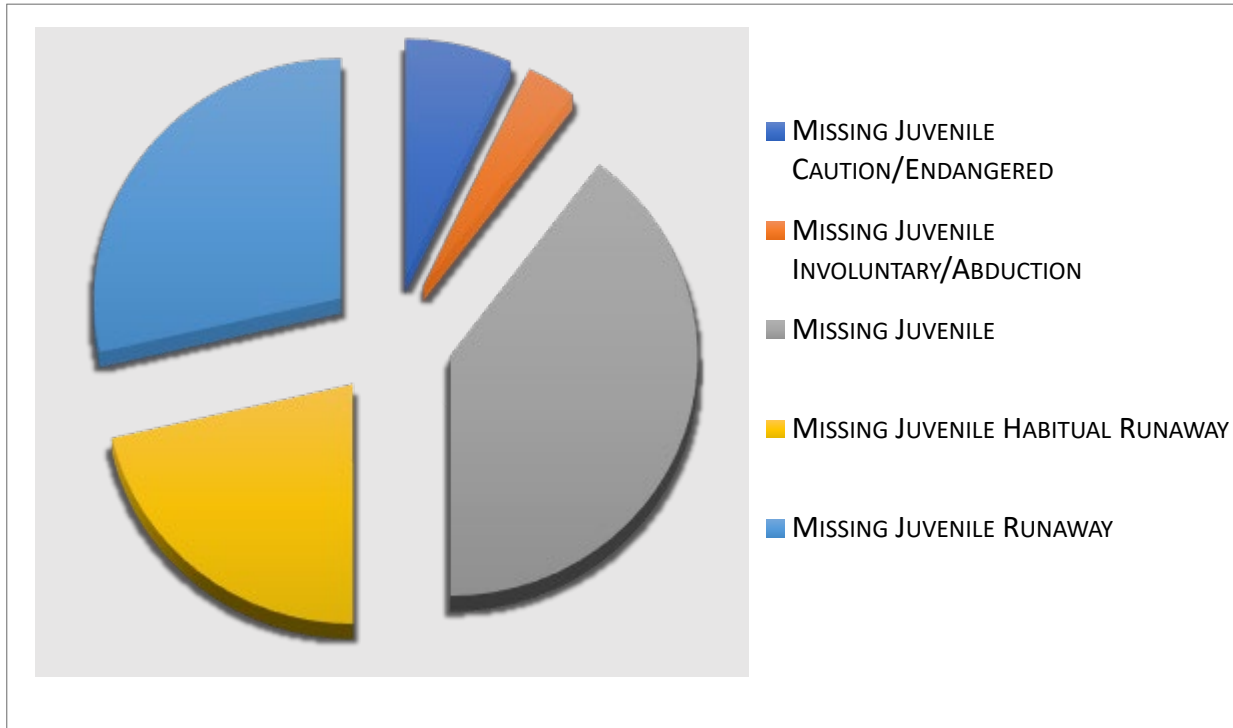
On October 6-8, 2020, the Interstate Advisory Council for Missing and Exploited Children (I-SEARCH) held a virtual fall meeting. The following agencies were represented: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Fox Valley Technical College, Illinois State Police, Michigan State Police, Indiana State Police, Wisconsin Attorney General’s Office, North Dakota Highway Patrol, Missouri Highway Patrol,

Minnesota Division of Criminal Intelligence, Ohio Attorney General's Office, South Dakota Criminal Intelligence Bureau, and Kentucky State Police.

The Illinois clearinghouse continues to electronically disseminate information about missing persons to the Illinois State Board of Education for comparison with student enrollment records to identify disparities. These checks have resulted in the cancellation of numerous missing person records. The clearinghouse also provided the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and 50 state clearinghouses with bulletins on active missing person cases. The bulletins featured long-term missing children and high-risk missing person cases from Illinois.

In a partnership with the Illinois Vital Records Division, the Illinois Clearinghouse provides information on missing children so that their birth record is flagged. This is done to prevent someone who abducts a child from obtaining their birth record to enroll them in school or obtain a new identity. Each month children that are listed as missing have requests made upon their behalf to obtain a birth record. This proactive measure leads to law enforcement closing many missing person cases.

Missing Children 2020: A Statistical Overview



Missing Juvenile Caution/Endangered	966
Missing Juvenile Involuntary/Parental Abduction	448
Missing Juvenile	5,449
Missing Juvenile Habitual Runaway	2,937
Missing Juvenile Runaway	3,930

MISSING PERSON ENTRY CODES:

AMBER Alert - A child under the age of 16 who has been abducted and meets criteria.

Endangered - A child who is missing and in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that he/she may be in danger.

Habitual Runaway - A child who is missing and has a history of running away.

Involuntary - A child who is missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary, i.e., abduction or kidnaping.

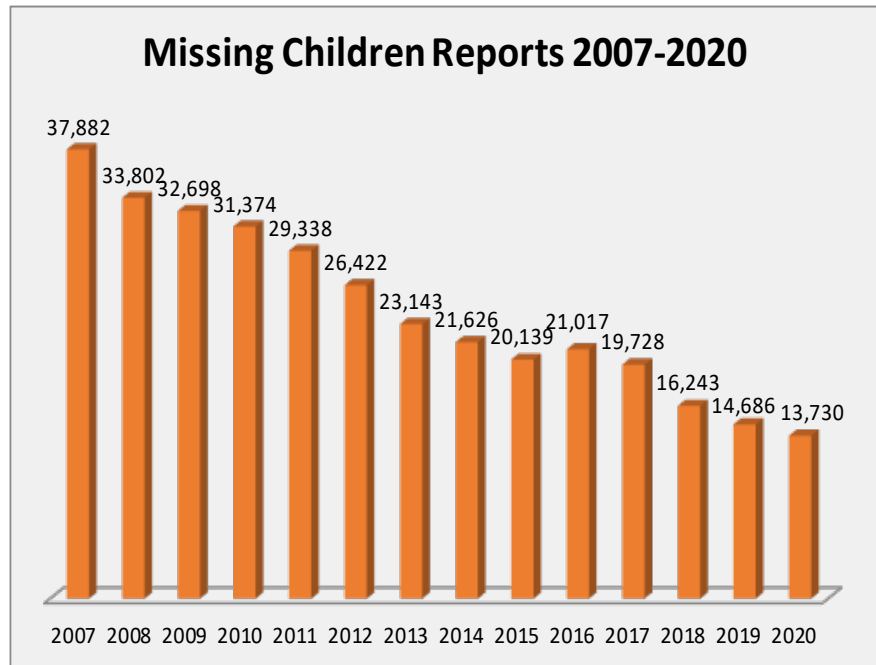
Parental Abduction - A child who is missing and is known to be with a parent (custodial or non-custodial).

Runaway - A child who is missing under circumstances indicating the missing person has run away.

Juvenile - A child who is missing and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in other categories.

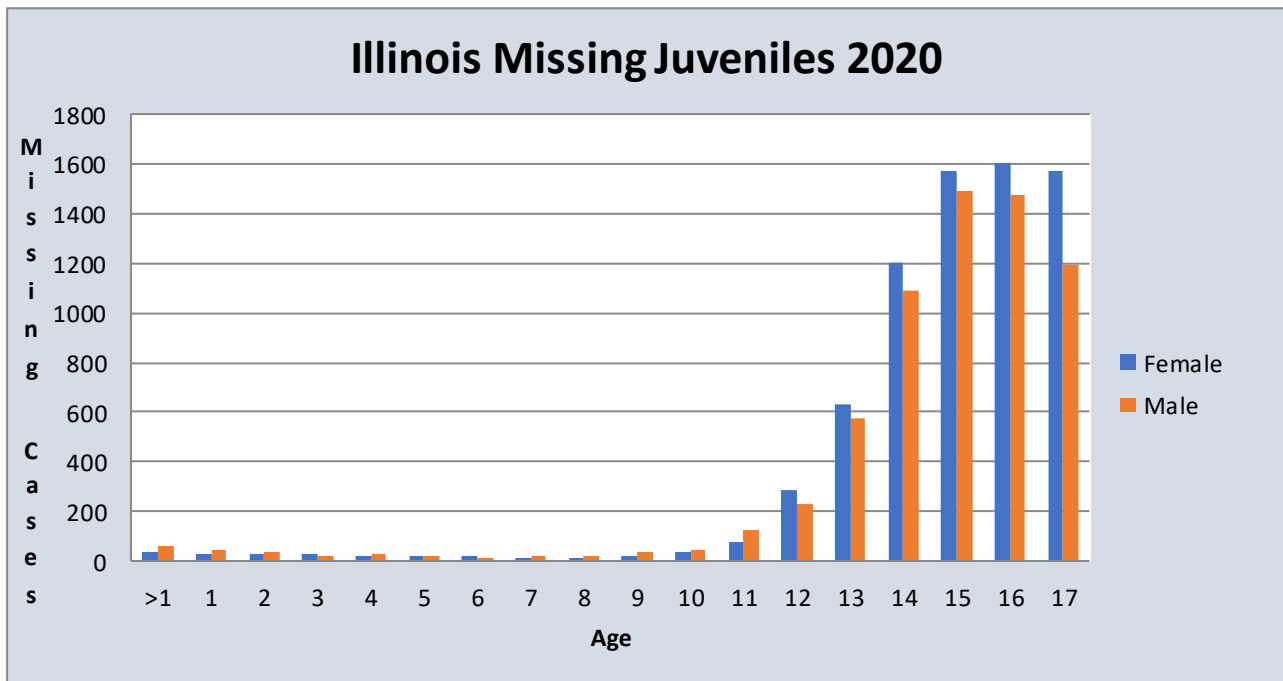
Missing Child Reports

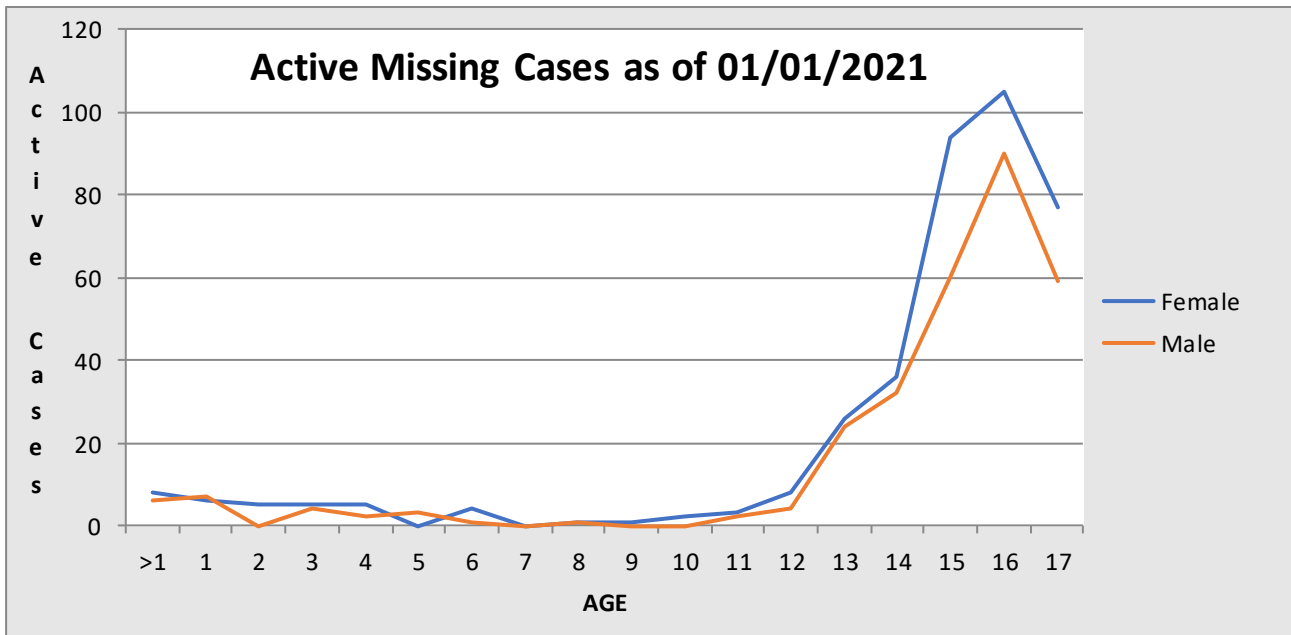
There were 13,730 reports of missing persons under the age of 18 in Illinois during calendar year 2020. This represented a decrease of 956 reports (nearly 6.6 percent) from calendar year 2019. Nearly all categories of missing person reports saw a decrease in 2020. Parental abduction reports increased by over 300 percent in 2020. Missing juvenile reports saw the biggest decrease at over 13 percent while runaway and habitual runaway reports decreased slightly in 2020.



Male vs Female

Female children continued to be reported missing at a higher rate than male children in 2020. In calendar year 2020, there were 7,201 female missing person reports filed compared to 6,529 male missing person reports. This differs greatly with 2017 and 2018 data which shows female children were reported missing at a rate of less than 1 percent more than male children. In 2020, female children were reporting missing at a much higher rate (9 percent). Children age 15-17 were reported missing more frequently than any other group. Children age 12-14 had the second highest frequency. These two age ranges totaled 12,927, or over 94 percent, of all missing children reports for calendar year 2020.





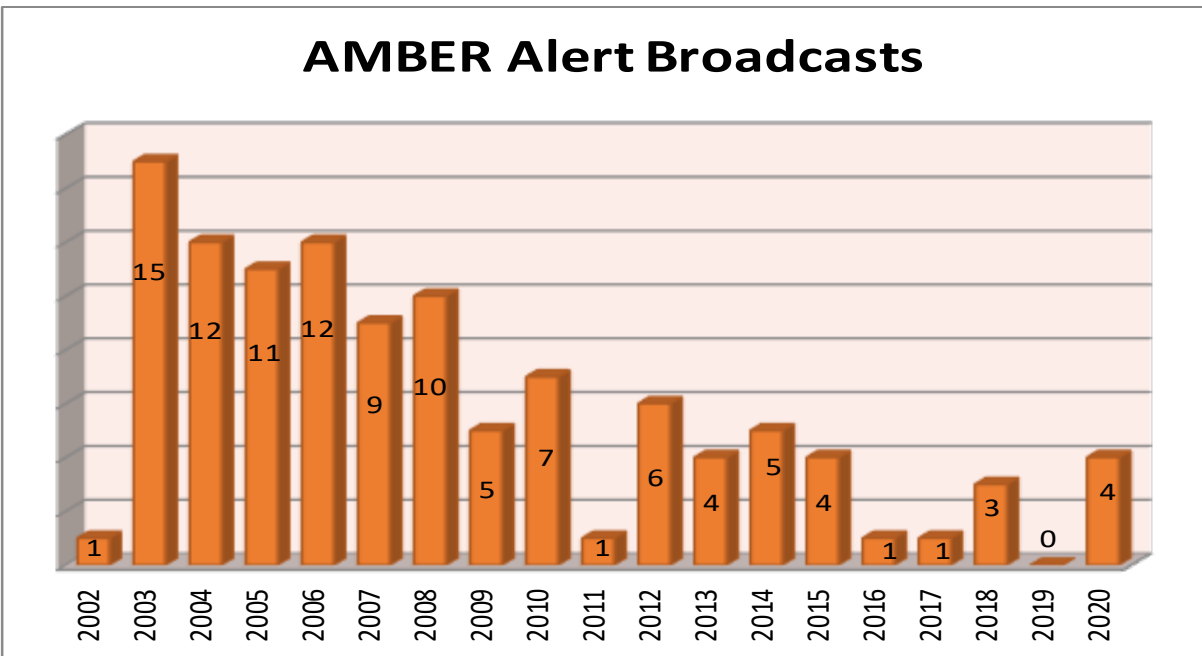
Active Missing Children Cases

Of the 13,730 reported missing children, 13,049 were cleared through arrest for non-traffic offenses; the child was recovered, located, and returned home; or the child was found deceased. This number reflected a nearly 95 percent clearance rate for calendar year 2020. That is up from the nearly 92 percent clearance rate in 2019. As of January 1, 2021, there were 681 children still listed as missing. That is a 38 percent decrease in the amount of active missing person cases on the same date in 2020. The majority (81 percent) are between 14-17 years-of-age with 16 year-old males and females making up the largest percentage (29 percent).

Age	Female	Male	Total
>1	8	6	14
1	6	7	13
2	5	0	5
3	5	4	9
4	5	2	7
5	0	3	3
6	4	1	5
7	0	0	0
8	1	1	2
9	1	0	1
10	2	0	2
11	3	2	5
12	8	4	12
13	26	24	50
14	36	32	68
15	94	60	154
16	105	90	195
17	77	59	136
totals	386	295	681

AMBER Alerts

After not being activated in 2019, The AMBER Alert Notification Plan was activated four times in calendar year 2020. The AMBER system was requested 40 times, with four cases meeting AMBER Alert criteria. The AMBER Alert was credited with helping in the recovery in all four alerts in 2020. Since its inception, the AMBER Alert plan has seen a steady decline from its high of 15 broadcasts in 2003. In 2020 and 2021, AMBER Alert activations have seen increases nationally. This is due to the increases in vehicular hijacking cases nationwide.



Technology Upgrades

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA):

In 2020, the Illinois AMBER Alert system continued to utilize Wireless Emergency Alerts to notify the public via cell phone towers when an AMBER Alert has been issued in their area. This technology allows for anyone with an approved cell phone to receive AMBER Alert messages if they are in the same geographical area where an AMBER Alert has been issued. These cell phone alerts have been improved to allow for more characters to be included in the viewed alerts, as well as URL addresses. These upgrades allow the AMBER Alert program to push information to an approved cell phone and redirect the person to a website with the complete information regarding the AMBER Alert.

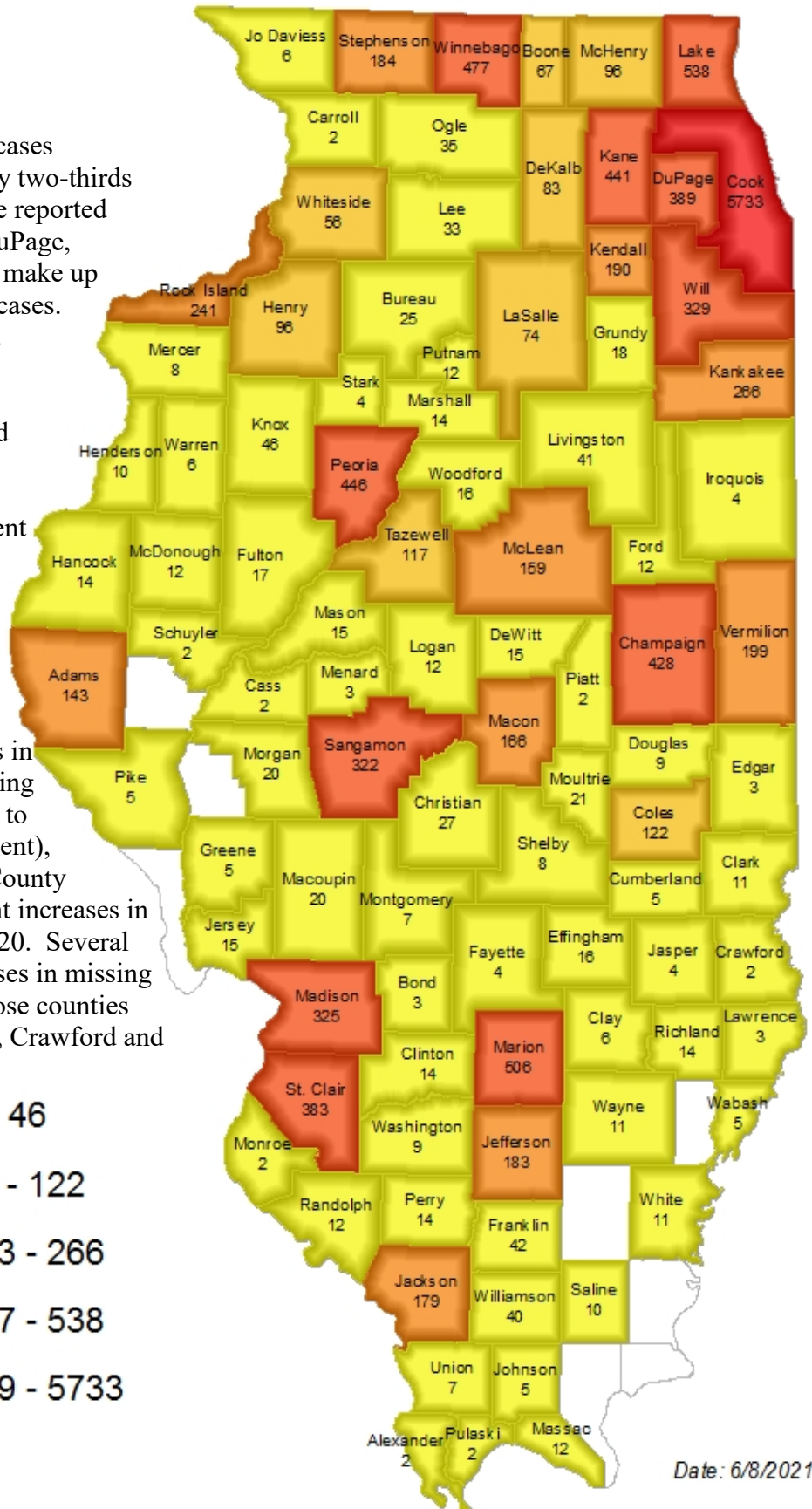
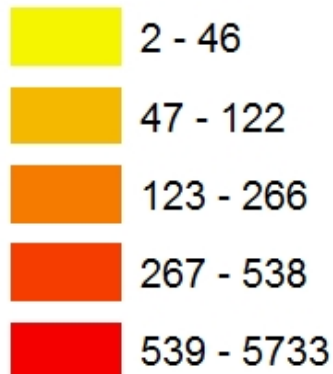
Missing Children Report

Cases Reported 2020

A look at the missing children cases per county will show that nearly two-thirds of all missing children cases are reported in a five-county area. Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, and Kane Counties make up 54 percent of all missing child cases. Down from 55 percent in 2019.

Cook County is responsible for filing the most missing child reports. Over 42 percent of all missing child cases are filed in Cook County, which is consistent with reports filed in 2019. The county with the second highest number of missing child reports in 2020 was Lake County with 538.

Thirty-nine of the 102 Counties in Illinois saw a reduction in missing person cases in 2020 compared to 2019. Putnam County (83 percent), Clinton County and Marshall County (78 percent) reported significant increases in reported cases from 2019 to 2020. Several counties had significant decreases in missing child reports filed in 2020. Those counties include, Edgar, Menard, White, Crawford and Grundy.



Date: 6/8/2021

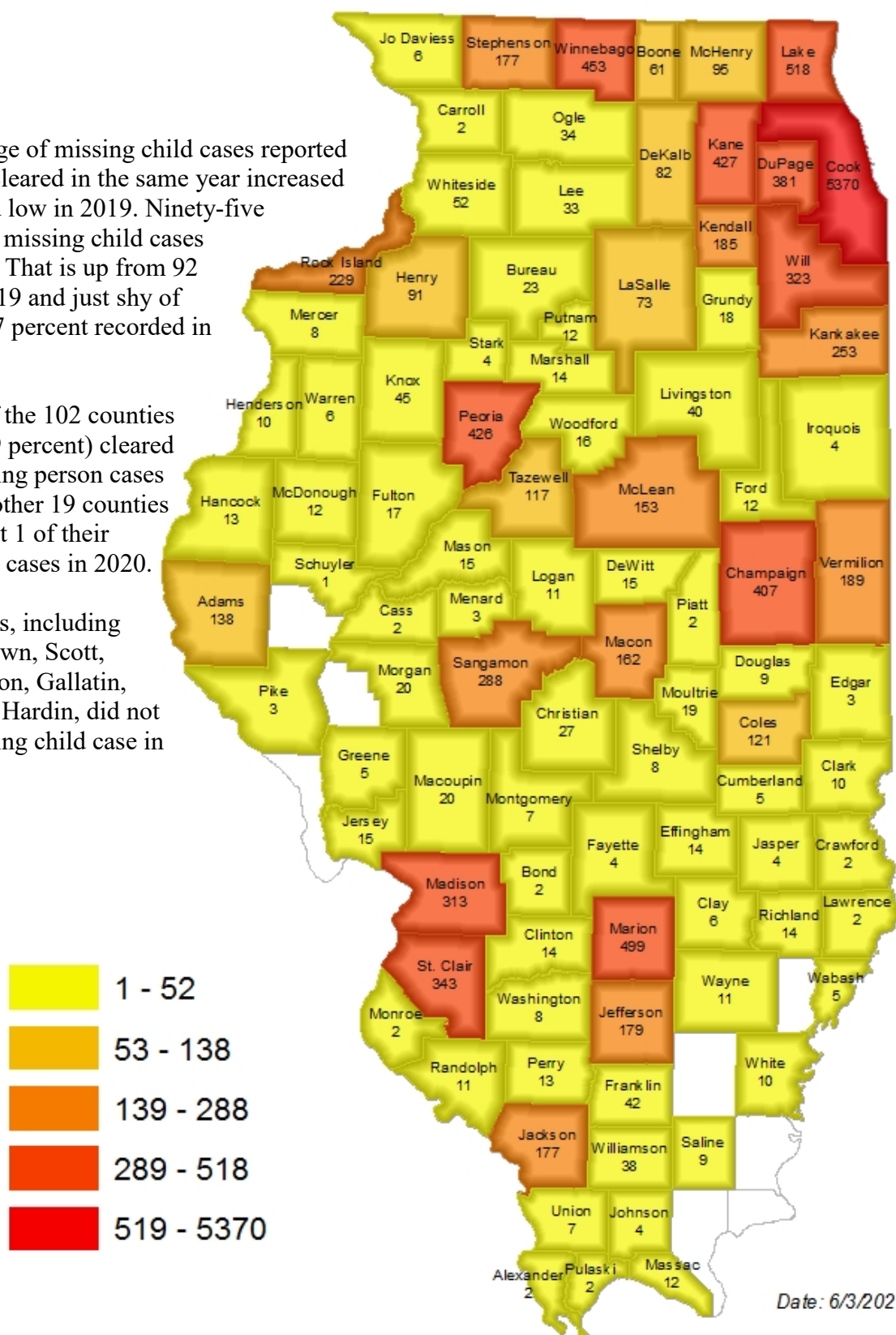
Missing Children Report

Cases Cleared 2020

The percentage of missing child cases reported in 2020 and cleared in the same year increased from a record low in 2019. Ninety-five percent of all missing child cases were cleared. That is up from 92 percent in 2019 and just shy of the high of 97 percent recorded in 2017.

Forty-nine of the 102 counties in Illinois (49 percent) cleared all their missing person cases in 2019. Another 19 counties cleared all but 1 of their missing child cases in 2020.

Eight counties, including Calhoun, Brown, Scott, Pope, Hamilton, Gallatin, Edwards and Hardin, did not report a missing child case in 2020.



Date: 6/3/2021

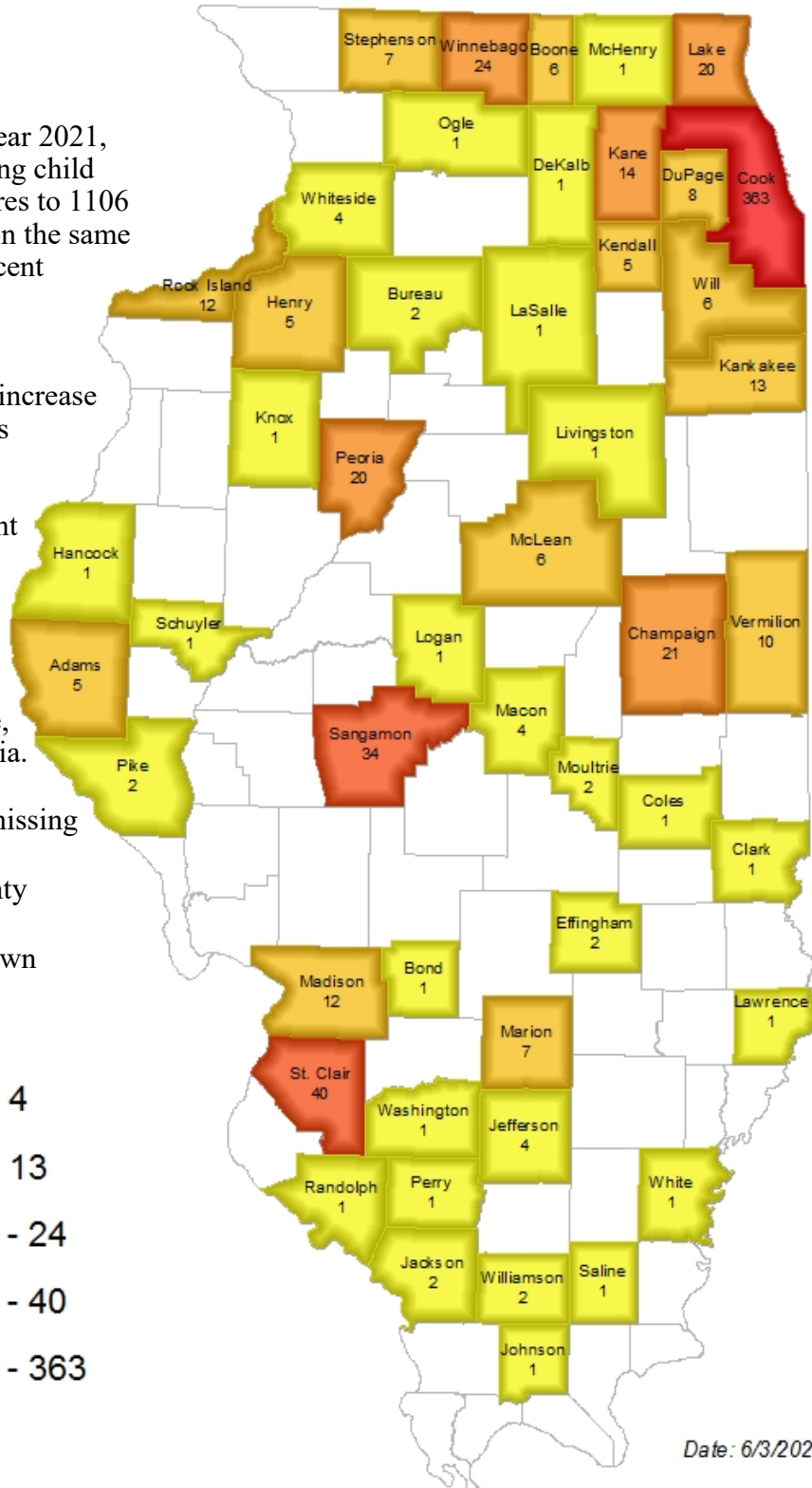
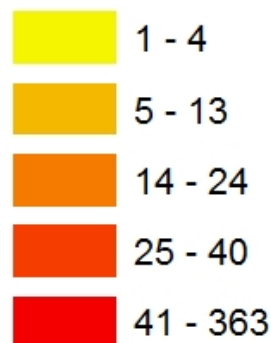
Missing Children Report Cases Pending 2020

On the first day of calendar year 2021, there were 681 pending missing child cases in Illinois. That compares to 1106 pending missing child cases on the same day in 2020. That is a 38 percent decrease.

In comparison to 2019, only St. Clair (12 percent), had an increase in pending missing child cases in 2020.

Most counties had a significant decline in pending missing person cases in 2020 as compared to the same time period in 2019. The counties with the highest decrease in pending cases are Cook, Lake, DuPage, Sangamon, and Peoria.

Sixty percent of all pending missing child cases from calendar year 2020 are in the five-county area of Cook, Lake, Kane, DuPage, and Will. That is down from 66 percent in 2019



Date: 6/3/2021

DEFINITIONS

Child - For the purposes of this report, a child is considered to be any person under the age of 18.

Missing Child - Any child whose whereabouts are unknown to the parent or legal custodian and the disappearance is not the result of an accident, catastrophe, or arrest.

Clearance - Children who were reported missing but have been located, returned home, arrested, or found deceased.

Illinois AMBER Alert Notification Plan - A voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, and the National Weather Service to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases meeting the below-listed criteria. This is the same concept used during severe weather emergencies. The goal of the AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe return of the child.

AMBER Alert Criteria

- Law enforcement must confirm a child has been abducted;
- The child must be under the age of 16 or have a proven mental or physical disability;
- Police must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death; and
- There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

ILLINOIS STATE POLICE
CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MISSING PERSONS

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