

2014 CANADA BANDING SUMMARY

Fred Bassett

Doreen Cubie offered me the unique opportunity to band hummingbirds in British Columbia this summer. The object of my trip was to provide more data for a paper Doreen will write about hummingbirds in northeast British Columbia. In a whirlwind week in Canada the last of June and early July, I banded 252 Rufous and Calliope hummingbirds at fifteen homes.

Bonnars Ferry, Idaho was my jumping off point of my trip. With my normal good luck, I stumbled upon the Northside Inn for a place to stay the evening of June 27. No doubt I was going to stay there as soon as I saw all the hummingbirds at four feeders on the upstairs deck. The B&B is in an old school with very nice rooms and an excellent breakfast. The hospitality there was as enjoyable as 37 Calliope, Black-chinned, and Rufous hummingbirds I banded.

I wanted to do some sightseeing on my trip so, rather than going straight to my first banding location, I headed off into Alberta on June 28 to see some of the beauty of Canada. I drove to Invermere and went through the mountains toward Banff. I enjoyed the scenery through Banff National Park and Lake Louise but was even more impressed with the mountains and valleys on the way up to Jasper. The next morning I got to see lots of beautiful forests as I drove up to Grand Prairie and then into British Columbia.

Into British Columbia just across the border from Alberta, I made my first two stops at Swan Lake. I struck out at Murray Clark's home and then banded 2 Calliopes and 1 Rufous at the home of Carol and Dave Ellison. I settled in at Dawson Creek and came up with a plan for June 30. The next morning I went west of Dawson Creek to band at two homes. Chris and Debbie Carrigan had lots of Calliopes at their feeders, and I banded 27 for them. Then I went nearby to meet Joan and Bruce Derrien and band 8 more Calliopes at their beautiful log home. I felt like the "ugly American" when I found out July 1 is Canada Day, and I would miss some hosts who were on vacation over that weekend.

The next morning I went to South Taylor on the Peace River where it took me an hour to convince a Calliope to go in my trap after I missed it the first time. I was very happy when I finally caught it to show Jody Hickey and her mom. Also in South Taylor, two Calliopes were much more cooperative at Dave and Mary Neal's home. Later that afternoon in Fort St John, I banded two Calliopes for Shannon Ross and her granddaughter and another two Calliopes for Jason Lee.

Canada Day, July 1, I started in Charlie Lake north of Fort St John at the home of Ellen Titley. Her home is where three years ago Doreen Cubie banded Ruby-throated hummingbirds the farthest north ever recorded in British Columbia. I hoped to catch one of Doreen's Ruby-throated, but I was only able to band 5 Calliopes for Ellen and her husband. I headed west from Charlie Lake and stopped before Hudson Hope to band 2 Rufous for Ross and Deborah Peck before going on to Chetwynd.

Next morning found me southeast of Chetwynd where I banded 9 Calliopes at Verne Steeves' ranch. My second stop west of Chetwynd I banded 12 Rufous and 2 Calliopes for Julie Harroff and her sons. Heading on to Prince George, I thought I might have a bad end to my trip when I went through a serious hail storm that covered the road with ice. The weather was much nicer west of Prince George where I enjoyed banded 13 Calliopes and 14 Rufous for Mari and Robert Wood.

On the east side of Prince George, I started July 3 banding 40 Rufous and 10 Calliopes at the home of Sandra and Larry Kinsey. I thoroughly enjoyed going birding with them the rest of the morning. Then I headed off on a great trip along back roads to Sinclair Mills to the home of Lyn Mueller and her husband. Lyn had sent me a video of hundreds of Rufous around her feeders in late May, but numbers were down as expected in early July. I banded 42 Rufous and 1 Calliope at their home and enjoyed the moose and black bears I got to see in the area. I celebrated the fourth of July by going back to Prince George to Louise Levy's home where I banded 38 Rufous and 18 Calliopes to finish up my banding trip and heading back to Idaho.

I always enjoy going to new places to find out what hummingbirds are there and meeting new friends, and I found northeast British Columbia to be a beautiful place with friendly people. I appreciate the hospitality and interest in hummingbirds I found everywhere I went and hope I can get back there.