

Greetings,

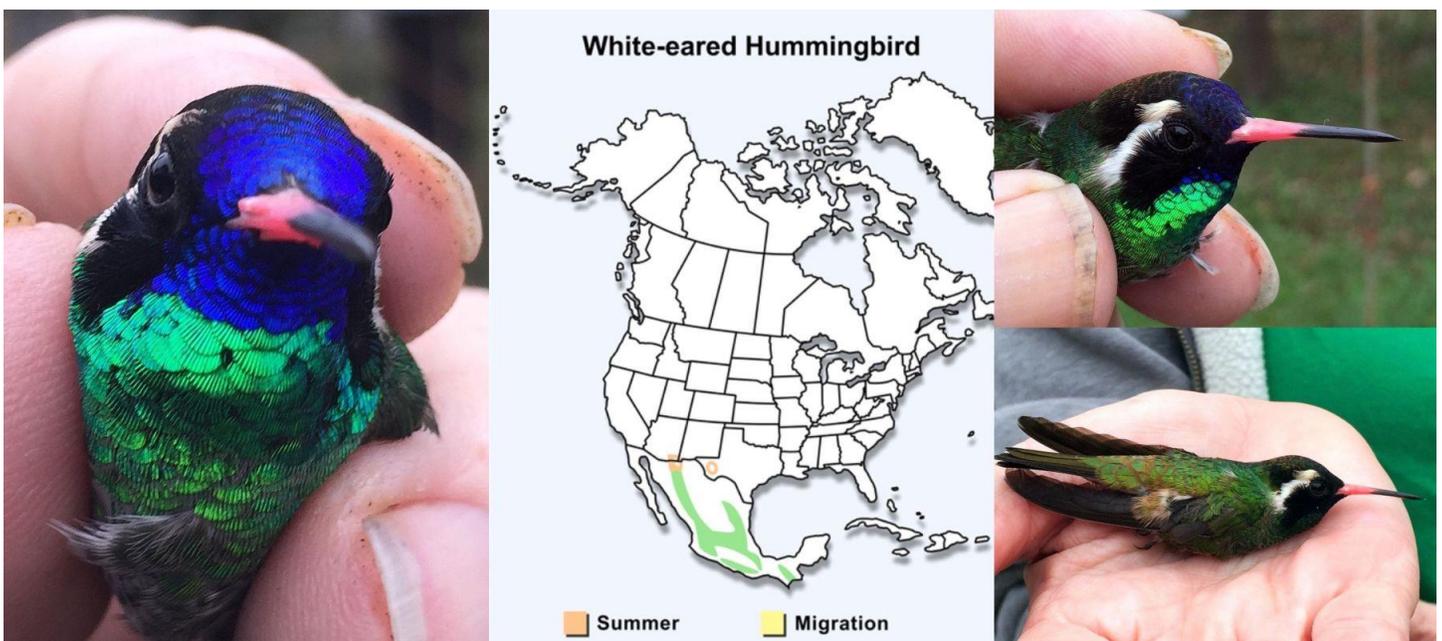
Well, almost all of the migrating Ruby-throats in our area left around the middle of October with a mild cold front that pushed through the area. I don't band Ruby-throats except from November 15th to March 1st since we are only conducting research on the birds that spend their winters in the southeast. All birds that are around now are eligible to be part of our research project. Hopefully this recent push of cooler weather will bring in some of our western migrants.

I have captured one bird this season, a Female Rufous that is back for her third year at Jody Elliott and Claudia Mason's home. I banded her on 11/12/13 and I believe she was around all last year but would not go in the trap for me. Not only that, she kept any other birds that in the yard away from "her" yard all winter.

I'm still waiting for the 2015-16 winter hummer season to get underway, and typically we see a spike in reports around mid-November each year. It will be very interesting to see if the number of birds in our area rebound after last year's numbers. All across the east and southeast the number of birds banded was about a third of what it had been the past couple of years. I don't think that the hummingbird populations declined, just the number of birds in the area. Many people reported that this summer's Ruby-throat populations were higher than usual, but that is just a subjective count. I'd be more concerned if everyone had reported far fewer birds than normal.

The months of December and January produce about 85 percent of our winter birds so be on the lookout. If you have a wintering bird, it will be at your feeders at first light as it tanks up for the new day. Hummingbirds need to feed every 15-20 minutes since they have such high metabolism rates. Make their sugar water using granulated sugar and plain water in a 4:1 ratio of water to sugar. You can use warm tap water which will make the sugar dissolve faster. You can make more than you need and store the rest in the refrigerator for several weeks. There is no need to fill the feeders completely since there will not be the volume of birds as during August and September. Just remember where the water line was and if you see it drop, there is a good chance that you have a winter hummer.

This past week there was a lot of excitement in Alabama as a White-eared Hummingbird showed up in Mobile. This is a species that lives primarily in Mexico with a few birds in SE Arizona and West Texas each year. Fred Bassett was able to band this bird which was the first record of it ever in Alabama. If it flew that far, maybe it will continue on here.



You can visit our website for the latest events in our research – <http://www.hummingbirdresearch.net/>

Now is the time for you to watch your feeders closely, our winter guests will be arriving soon and will be looking for a good place to stay while they are in the area. We are making new discoveries each year, none of which would be possible without your willingness to share “your” birds with.

Hope to hear from you soon,

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