

The freeze we had the first week in January evened the playing field with winter hummers, since they needed those feeders we have been maintaining all winter. I've been busy the past three weeks, but I think the rush may be over.

I started 2017 hummer banding on 3 January when I went to Enterprise to band a Rufous for Maisie Stanley. Maisie was complaining about all the Baltimore Orioles that empty her feeders, and I reminded her that every other hummer host in Alabama would love to have to deal with Baltimore Orioles at their feeders. I went on to Dothan to band a Rufous for Dana Eidson.

I had my first decent day of the season on 7 January when I started in Mobile in Velma Britain's great yard. I banded a Rufous and my first ALLEN'S of the winter for Velma, and she was happy to add another species to her hummer yard list. At Vicki Dykes' home, I was surprised to find her Ruby-throated was a second year return. South of Mobile, I banded a Rufous for Nick and Donna Southwold and then headed across to Baldwin County. At Eleanor Livaudais' home on the bay in Point Clear, I banded a Rufous, and then finished up a good day in Foley where I banded a Black-chinned and a Ruby-throated in Eva Barnett's great yard.

Seriously cold weather (for Florida) greeted me as I started 8 January in Cantonment at the home of Brenda and Jerry Callaway where I caught their fourth year return Rufous. In Milton, I introduced Tana and Larry Tynes to the fun of winter banding when I banded their reluctant Ruby-throated. As I left their home, I got a text from Daniel Stangeland in Pace that he had a hummer. Great timing as I got to his home in 15 minutes to band his Rufous. Bob Reid and Betsy Clark in Niceville had a very cooperative Black-chinned, and I finished up in Watersound banding a Rufous for Debbie and Larry Taylor.

13 January I started my annual swing down into central Florida with a stop in Niceville at Renee and George Gollehon's home where I banded a Rufous that had been eluding me for two winters. My first hummer on 14 January was Black-chinned I banded in High Springs for Pam and Gene Stine. In the Alachua area, I banded a Rufous for Greg and Linda Hart and a Rufous for Lee Palmore. In Gainesville I caught Ron and Elaine Robinson's third year return Rufous and then banded another Rufous for them. Across the street, I banded a Ruby-throated for Tina and Art Greenburg. Last hummer of the day was a Ruby-throated I banded for Dot Fagan.

First stop 15 January was at Tom Green's home in Ocala where I caught his third year return Rufous. Near Brooksville, I banded a Ruby-throated for Chris and David Cock. I was happy to catch a third year return Ruby-throated for them and was really surprised when the third Ruby-throated was wearing a band that wasn't mine. After dreams that it might be my first winter Ruby-throated from far away, I found out Doreen Cubie banded that bird in 2010 at Chris and David's home. Not the exotic foreign recap I hoped for, but a great bird because it is at least eight years old, since it was an adult when Doreen banded it.

I went on to Lakeland to Roy and Kat Morris' great garden where I banded five Ruby-throated hummers. Roy wanted some of them to be returns from the five I banded there last January, but they were all new.

I banded a Ruby-throated for Susan Schenk and finished up banding two Ruby-throated hummers for Joe and Nancy Misiaszek.

First light 16 January found me at Steve and Debbie Backes' great home in Valrico, but his hummers weren't interested in going in a trap with all the flowers available to them. We were able to catch his third year return Rufous. I went on to Winter Park where I caught Mary Plercey's second year return Rufous and banded a Ruby-throated for Suzanne Pope. On the way home the next morning, I stopped in Lynn Haven to band a Ruby-throated for Odessa and Donald Kelley.

18 January started with a bang in Saraland, north of Mobile, when I caught a Rufous at Pat Hopper's home. The bird was wearing a band that wasn't mine. When I reported the band to the National Bird Banding Lab, I found out the bird was banded near Lafayette LA in January 2015 by my friend Dave Patton. Across the bay, I banded a Ruby-throated for Linda Tomlin and then I banded a Black-chinned and a Ruby-throated for Bill Summerour in Silverhill. South of Fairhope, Jamie Marston was happy to hold her Rufous as I introduced her to winter hummer banding. In Foley, I banded my second Allen's of the season for Ellen Crotty and then went to Kathie Farnell's where I banded a Rufous and caught another Rufous I banded two years ago at Ellen Crotty's home. There are several homes in Foley that regularly share hummers.

I started 19 January at Powers and Rosann McLeod's new home in Pensacola. Kay Keigley's return Buff-bellied from the next block over made an appearance but wasn't about to go in my trap, but I did band a Ruby-throated. I banded a Rufous for Vickie and Ron Parker and called it a trip.

The first of our winter hummers are already starting to migrate, but I hope to get a few more. You may get a new hummer that will just stopover as it migrates. If so, please let me know, and I'll try to get there before it moves on.

Thanks

Fred