

The continuing cold weather in January kept hummers coming to feeders and improved a very slow start to the winter banding season.

I did a one-day dash to the coast January 9 starting in Citronelle where I banded a Ruby-throated for Mike Dees. In Mobile, I banded a Black-chinned for Ainsley McNeely and then headed to Baldwin County. I introduced Ann McLaurin to winter banding when I banded a Black-chinned for her. Down the bay in Point Clear, I banded two Rufous for Eleanor Livaudais. Then I finished up banding a Rufous for Ellen Crotty in Foley.

Back to the coast again, I started a real cold morning January 14 in Foley where I banded a Rufous for Francis Cuellar. In Pensacola, I banded a Ruby-throated for Glenda and Dean Bowman and a Black-chinned for Diana Polizo. Early the next morning in Niceville, I banded a Ruby-throated for MaryAnn Friedman and a Black-chinned for Jean Kammeyer.

I started my annual swing down into central Florida on January 18 when I very carefully sneaked out of 13 degree weather with ice and snow in Montgomery. Roads were clear by the time I stopped in Dothan to band a Ruby-throated for Dana Eidson. On down to the coast in Apalachicola, I banded a beautiful Buff-bellied for Julie O'Malley. Then I took a day off in Tallahassee trying to get up to speed on technology with my smart friends Patty and Fred Dietrich.

Back on the road on January 20, I got a good start near Alachua banding two Rufous for Greg and Linda Hart. In Gainesville, I caught a fifth year return Ruby-throated at Tina and Art Greenburg's. I banded that bird across the street at Ron and Elaine Robinson's home, and they have shared it for several years. My only other hummer in Gainesville was a Ruby-throated I banded for Leah Foster and her son Jonah. They enjoyed being introduced to winter hummer banding. In Ocala, I caught Tom and Judy Green's Rufous back for its fourth winter. It is a great bird that always shows up quickly and goes right in my trap. It's nice to have an easy one once in a while.

The recent freeze that knocked back hummer plants helped me get busy January 21 in Lakeland when I started at Roy and Kat Morris' home banding eight Ruby-throated hummers. I banded four Ruby-throated for Mary Boston and caught another one back for its third winter. I banded four Ruby-throated for Susan Schenk, and finished up at Joe and Nancy Misiaszek's where I banded three Rubies and caught one back for the second winter. I also banded a Black-chinned, so it wasn't an all Ruby-throat day. 22 hummers in one day aren't bad for winter banding.

I got busy again at dawn January 22 in Valrico at Steve and Debbie Backes' when I quickly banded nine Ruby-throated hummers and got photo evidence of their beautiful male Rufous back for the fourth winter. Simultaneously catching hummers in two traps, banding, and showing hummers to onlookers were my imitation of the proverbial one-armed paperhanger. I started back north and stopped near Brooksville to band a Ruby-throated for Chris and David Cock and in Lecanto to band a Ruby for Joe Tripp.

I had enough reports that I made a left turn and headed across the Florida panhandle. I started in Gulf Breeze January 23 banding a Ruby-throated for Sue and Dana Timmons. Also in Gulf Breeze, I banded two Rufous for Lucy and Bob Duncan. I finished up in Foley banding a Rufous for Jan and Ken Taylor. On my way home the next morning, I banded a Rufous for Donna and Nick Southall south of Mobile and a Ruby-throated for Sandy and Art Bennett in Atmore. Nice to get home after seven long days on the road.

New reports have dropped as expected this time of year. A lot of western hummers are starting west now, and I should get some reports as hummers stop for a few days as they migrate. If you get a new bird, please let me know right away because they aren't likely to stick around very long.

Thanks

Fred