

Greetings,

We have just begun the winter season here with a couple of reports of western birds that are in the area. After a big surge of Ruby-throated hummingbirds following hurricane Irma's visit, the persistent north winds have helped them continue their southern journey to the tropics for the winter. We have about two more weeks to enjoy them before they have all migrated. We don't band Ruby-throated hummers until November 15<sup>th</sup> since these birds are going to be spending the winter here rather than heading across the Gulf of Mexico. All other species that show up here are part of our research and can be banded at any time. It is not unusual for a few Rufous to show up in July or August but those rarely hang around more than a day or two.

I got a call from Annaliese Whipple on September 13<sup>th</sup> who said she was seeing a male Rufous that showed up following hurricane Irma. With all the mess following the hurricane I didn't get a chance to go there until the 19<sup>th</sup>. Annaliese's yard is something to see and the wet weather this summer has everything in peak shape. Her Rufous had picked out his own feeder and was running everything away from it. I set my trap and after a couple of looks he flew in to get a drink. He was a beautiful bird as you can see from the photo below and surprisingly weighed about 25 percent more than average. I suspect that he had just arrived and was still carrying some fat or maybe he just liked Annaliese's food. He remained there and is back defending his territory.



Since I have not banded any other birds, I have attached fellow bander Fred Bassett's update below. Fred bands primarily in south Alabama, western Georgia and the panhandle of Florida but will go wherever there is a winter hummingbird. We are hoping this will be a great year for the hummingbirds and I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Fred Dietrich

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Fred Bassett's update -

Fellow Hummer Lovers

We have had a great fall migration for Ruby-throated hummers. Most people, including me, have enjoyed lots of hummers. Numbers at my feeders are beginning to drop, and you should see a big decrease by the first week in October. Most will be gone by mid-October, and you will need to start watching for "winter" hummers.

A few western hummers have already arrived. I gave a talk about hummers in Niceville early this month for the Fort Walton Beach Audubon Society and told MaryAnn Friedman there to get me a Buff-bellied. Less than a week later, she sent me a message that she had a Buffy. I went down on 14 September and banded an adult female Buff-bellied for her.

Jim Yarborough in Ashburn GA sent me a picture of an adult male Calliope at his feeder. I called Jim, and he told me there was little chance of catching the bird, because it was mixed in with lots of Ruby-throated hummers. I took that as a challenge and went to his home on 16 September. I thought I might have made a mistake when I saw large numbers of Rubies in his backyard. My motto of "Better lucky than good" still works, because I caught and banded that beautiful little fellow pretty quickly. Fred Dietrich has banded an adult male Rufous in Tallahassee, so we are off to a good start with three species banded.

I've also gotten reports of at least three return banded Rufous. Steve Backes in Valrico FL reported that his fifth year return male Rufous made it through Irma with no problem. I stopped by Norris Wooten's home in Sasser GA on 16 September to try to catch her return Rufous. I worked with her wary female Rufous for two hours before it finally decided to go in my trap. Then it beat the door when I tried to catch it. I'll be back there later with a new plan. Ken and Jan Taylor just got home from a trip and reported a female Rufous which I'm sure is my nemesis that I've tried to catch without success the past two winters. Hummer banding wouldn't be fun if it was always easy.

Please contact me if you have a hummer that is not a Ruby-throated. They don't count as winter birds until 15 November when all count as winter birds. Please keep a feeder up all winter and don't give up hope because most western hummers don't begin to show up until November. We band 80% of our winter birds in December and January, so you may have a chance all winter.

I hope to see you and your hummer soon,

Fred