

Hummer Update # 1

October 11, 2020

Fellow Hummer Lovers

Ruby-throated migration has slowed significantly now except along the gulf coast where some hosts are still feeding large numbers. Most of those Ruby-throated hummers will soon be gone, and we can turn our attention to the start of our winter banding season.

Our winter season got a great start during the middle of the summer. July 27 a lady in Colorado Springs, CO noticed an adult male Rufous with a band. She took enough pictures to get the complete band number to find out I banded that bird January 6, 2019 as a juvenile male at the home of Paula and Ralph Wright in Atmore, AL. That bird had left its breeding grounds in the Pacific Northwest and was migrating south.

Some of our previously banded hummers have already returned to their winter homes. Steve Backes in Valrico, FL is happy and relieved to have his male Rufous back for the eighth winter, and a female Rufous is also back for the eighth winter south of Birmingham, AL. Joe Misiaszek in Lakeland, FL has a couple of male Ruby-throated hummers back. He has identified one as back for the third winter and is taking pictures to identify the other one.

We are getting more early reports of western hummers than we have gotten for several years. Most Rufous have been one-day wonders that did not stick around for banding, but Fred Dietrich has banded two Rufous and a Buff-bellied in the Tallahassee area. I banded my first Rufous September 26 in Birmingham, AL. October 5, Duane Miller in Fairhope sent me a picture of a juvenile male Broad-billed at his feeder. Unfortunately, that bird was only seen once, but I did go to the coast the next day to band a Rufous for Cynthia Walker in Foley, AL and a Rufous for Lucy and Bob Duncan in Gulf Breeze, FL. I hope to get new reports for a trip to the coast next week.

Please look carefully at hummers coming to your feeders now. If the bird has rufous color on its flanks and in the tail, you may have a Rufous. Try to get a picture if possible, and I may be able to identify your bird. Ruby-throated hummers count as winter birds after November 15, so please let me know about any hummer coming to your feeder between November 15 and March 1. One of us will be glad to come to your home to identify and band your special winter visitor.

I hope to see you soon with a hummer.

Fred