

2023/2024 Winter Hummingbird Banding Summary

Our Hummingbird Research banding team has completed our twenty-sixth winter hummingbird banding season in the Southeast. The number of hummingbirds banded this winter decreased from 154 last winter to 99 this winter. The number of species decreased from seven to five. We banded 36 Rufous, 33 Ruby-throated, 27 Black-chinned, 2 Calliopes, and 1 Broad-billed. The decrease was due to several things. We are slowly turning our winter banding over to Banding Coalition of the Americas banders. Fred Bassett was unable to make his normal mid-January swing down through central Florida, and numbers of winter hummingbirds was down all over the Southeast. Banding was still within the normal range over the past twenty-five years.

Thirteen of our previously banded hummingbirds of four species returned to or near the original banding location. Eight Rufous returned including four back for the second winter and four back for the third winter. Two Buff-bellied returned including one back for the second winter and one back for the third winter. Two Ruby-throated returned including one back for the second winter and one back for the fifth winter. One Black-chinned returned for the second winter.

One hummingbird was encountered at a location other than the original banding location. In mid-January, a photographer in Gretna, LA took enough pictures to read the band number on an adult male Buff-bellied Fred Bassett banded December 28, 2022 at a home in Pensacola, FL.

Comparisons with the previous five winter seasons are:

2018/2019 – 151 banded with 19 returns and 3 recaptures

2019/2020 – 139 banded with 14 returns and 3 recaptures

2020/2021 – 281 banded with 14 returns and 5 recaptures

2021/2022 – 110 banded with 17 returns and 5 recaptures

2022/2023 - 154 banded with 23 returns and 6 recaptures

2023/2024 - 99 Banded with 13 returns and 1 recapture

Highlight of the winter season was the beautiful adult male Broad-billed banded in mid-November at Lea Taylor's home in Blakely, GA. Lea hosted visitors to see the bird all winter, and it was still at her home March 6.

Our twenty-six years of winter hummingbird research documents cycles and trends and works to educate people about how to attract and take care of wintering hummingbirds. The data for our research is dependent of the many hosts who allow us to include their wonderful winter visitors in our research. We thank you and look forward to seeing you and your hummingbirds again next winter.