

ALASKA HUMMINBIRD BANDING
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I traveled to Alaska this June to study hummingbirds. Prior to the trip, I tried to locate homes at which to band by posting requests on birding list serves, contacting local birding organizations, and trying to make contact with local birders. I traveled on ferries through the Inland Passage to Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka, and Haines looking for places to band Rufous hummingbirds, the only species documented to breed in Alaska.

I succeeded in finding 28 banding locations where I banded 438 adult Rufous hummingbirds, including 105 males and 333 females. During the time period I banded, June 2nd through June 17th, females were incubating eggs or feeding young in nests, and no young birds had fledged.

I started in Ketchikan with one contact. Word spread about my research, and I banded 78 birds at five homes in three days I was there. I started in Juneau with several contacts which led to finding 13 homes where I banded 99 hummingbirds.

Heading out to Sitka, I had contact with two local birders who found five banding locations for me where I banded a total of 152 birds. Best location of my trip was the fish hatchery where I banded 123 Rufous on two visits. Another Sitka highlight was the opportunity to band at two homes on islands off shore. In Haines, I made prior contact with a local hummingbird aficionado who took me to six homes where I banded 109 birds, including 52 at her home.

I tried to make contacts to band in south central Alaska but did not find any places to band. I turned into tourist there and took the opportunity to see some of the most beautiful scenery in the world.

I knew the probability was very small, but I hoped to catch a preciously banded bird to learn more about Rufous migration. That didn't happen, but I still hope at least one of the birds I banded will be recaptured.

The opportunity to band hummingbirds in Alaska was truly wonderful. Traveling the ferry system up the Inland Passage was educational and fun. Finding new banding locations was challenging and fun. Learning more about Rufous hummingbirds is always interesting and fun. But the best thing about my trip was all the wonderful people who made my trip possible. Everyone was enthusiastic about their hummingbirds and helpful with my research. I'm lucky to be a hummingbird bander.