

HUMMINGBIRD SURVEY RESULTS - 2004

The Wildlife Diversity Program of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation first began requesting hummingbird data from Oklahomans in the 1988 *Watchable Wildlife Newsletter*. In 1991, the brochure "Oklahoma's Hummingbirds" was published, complete with an Oklahoma Hummingbird Survey Form. Data gathered since that time are compiled and an annual summary of the results are prepared and sent to survey participants. The information provided through the survey allows the Wildlife Diversity Program to learn more about the state's hummingbird population and how long these migrants reside in Oklahoma each year.

Hummingbirds belong to a group of birds called neotropical migrants – birds that winter from northern Mexico to the tip of South America and migrate to North America to breed. Scientists in North and South America have initiated a partnership for the conservation of neotropical migrants called Partners in Flight/Aves de las Americanas. Efforts on behalf of neotropical migrants are currently focused on habitat preservation and restoration, monitoring of wintering and breeding populations, and promotion and public awareness. Oklahoma has 66 breeding songbird neotropical migrants, including the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and in more recent years, the Black-chinned Hummingbird. Your continued participation in the Oklahoma Hummingbird Survey will help the Wildlife Diversity Program develop a quality database that will further the conservation effort directed toward these neotropical migrants. We can't thank you enough!



2004 RESULTS

In 2004, **44 Oklahomans** from **27 counties** participated in the Oklahoma Hummingbird Survey, as opposed to 37 participants from 24 counties in 2003. This reflects a large increase in the number of participants and counties represented! The earliest Ruby-throated Hummingbird sighting reported statewide was on **March 29** from **Grady County** and the latest sighting reported was on **November 14** also from **Grady County**. A map is provided (Figure 1) showing earliest and latest recorded dates of hummingbird observations by county. The most frequently reported date for putting up hummingbird feeders was April 1. Eighty-six percent (86%) of participants put their feeders up before April 15th. The most frequently reported date for removing hummingbird feeders was November 1. Seventy-one percent (71%) of participants took their feeders down between October 15 and the end of November.

Participants were divided into western, central and eastern regions. Alfalfa County south to Cotton County defines the eastern boundary of the western

region, and Osage County south to Bryan County defines the western boundary of the eastern region. In 2004, the eastern region had the most participants with 22 followed by the central region with 14 and the western region with 8. Table 1 provides participant comparison. Regional results are presented in Table 2.

Region	# of Counties	# of Participants
Eastern	11	22
Central	9	14
Western	7	8

Region	# of Reports				Earliest Sighting				Latest Sighting			
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2001	2002	2003	2004	2001	2002	2003	2004
Eastern	18	24	20	20	04-03	04-04	03-22	03-30	10-12	10-30	10-13	10-30
Central	13	18	10	10	03-03	04-03	04-06	03-29	10-13	11-13	10-15	11-14
Western	6	8	7	7	04-02	04-02	03-29	03-31	10-10	10-12	10-06	10-19

The list of other wildlife species visiting hummingbird feeders continues to be quite diverse. Wildlife species reported are as follows:

BIRDS

- Baltimore Oriole
- Oriole sp.
- House Finch
- Wren sp.
- Downy Woodpecker
- American Goldfinch
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Carolina Chickadee
- American Robin
- (butterfly)
- Unidentified Blackbird sp.
- (butterfly)
- Unidentified Tanager sp.
- Eastern Phoebe
- Blue Jay

INSECTS

- ants
- honeybees
- wasps (red & black)
- walkingstick
- yellow jacket
- house fly
- moths
- praying mantis
- Common Wood Nymph
- Red-spotted Purple
- Unidentified Butterfly sp.

MAMMALS

- squirrel

OTHERS

- spider sp.

Recorded observations of the use of plants by hummingbirds resulted in a diverse plant list. Below is the list in order of the most frequent.

Honeysuckle
Salvia sp.
Petunias
Lantana sp.
Cannas
Morning Glory
Rose of Sharon
Four'o'clocks
Trumpet Vine
Roses
Hibiscus
Cypress Vine
Crepe Myrtle
Mimosa Tree
Penta sp.
Zinnias
Impatiens sp.
Azaleas
Hosta sp.
Phlox
Coneflowers
Clematis
Coleus (bloom)
Jasmine
Rose Moss
Fan Flower

Penstemon
Indian Paintbrush
Butterfly Bush
Lilac
Moon Plant
Marigold
Hyacinth Bean Vine
Iris
Vinca
Geranium sp.
Cardinal climber
Larkspur
Wiegilia sp.
Mints
Nicotiana
Gladiolas
Hummingbird Bush
Lilies
Wisteria
Hollyhock

Scarlet Runner Beans
Coral Bells
Million Bells

Comments

Comments that are provided by survey participants reflect a variety of sentiment ranging from joy to frustration – from wonder to bewilderment.

- Most hummers left on 8-19th, about 5 remained...left on 9-29 (Cherokee)
- I was late getting feeders up. They were nearly knocking at the door saying, "come on lady & get with the program". We have really enjoyed watching them. Worse than 2 kids fighting over the same toy. (Blaine)
- Used to put out 4 (feeders). This year put out 2 and had to refill 3 times a day, which gives them fresher sugar water. Up to Aug 1, was filling feeders 3 times a day – 8/22 male at each feeder keeping

females away – put up 3rd feeder, didn't go to it. 8/26 females at windows by feeders like they were saying "bye". Up to 9/19 only at feeder in morning & evening. We think they were travelers stopping by – took sips and left 1 or 2 at time. (Pushmataha)

- Last year a person in Comanche Co. asked about praying mantis. It has been confirmed they do kill the hummers. Do not let on feeder. Very good year; had so many hummers couldn't count them. Had to fill 4 feeders every day. (Oklahoma)
- The most I saw at one time this year was 5. Most years it is not that many. (Ellis)
- I had so many hummers that I had to refill the feeders every day. (LeFlore)
- I used 177 lbs. of sugar. I've been feeding for several years. First time I have kept records. They have increased every year. I have 40 to 50 at peak. Start slowing down in September. People are amazed at the number we have. Grandchildren will stand under feeder with their hands on the perches and the birds will land on their hands. We have them from April till October. Left a little early this year. We live in the country...only house around. (McIntosh)
- Hummingbirds were more plentiful late August and early September – 7 & 8 at a time. (Payne)
- The hummingbirds arrived earlier and left later than in years past. (Logan)
- We had only 3 or 4 hummers at a time – less than some years. (Osage)
- Saw 3 birds, 2 or 3 times, but usually only 2. (Tulsa)
- I had about 21 hummers this year. (Garvin)
- Not as many hummers. Most seen at one time was 6. Only saw Ruby-throated. (Cleveland)
- Had good numbers of hummingbirds this year but it wasn't as good as last year. (Okmulgee)
- We had lots of hummers this year. Saw as many as 25 at one time. (Cherokee)
- Not as many hummingbirds this year. (Muskogee)
- I had another great year. I have more feeders and will focus on a wider variety of plants for next season. They love the cedar trees. We had a problem with a hawk this year. Not sure how many he got. (Woods)
- One of these years I would like to find a hummingbird nest. Birds scarce this year. (Muskogee)
- Two black-chinned males spent the summer, at least until August. They are the first hummers I see every spring. I can't distinguish between the females. We had between 30 and 40 birds by July. (Love)
- The majority of the hummers left the early part of October – the final week I had 5 birds that I thought were female, but after doing some

research I discovered that they may have been juveniles of unknown gender. (Osage)

- Last regulars on October 2. Had a single show up on October 11 and stayed until October 14th. (Washington)
- Not as many hummers this year. Neighbors stole them – ha! I've been feeding hummers for 20 years but neighbors saw and asked for advice. I pass on all your tips. (Comanche)
- Had a female Rufous hummingbird that stayed one day in July. (Blaine)
- Most I saw at one time was five, usually 2 or 3. (Grady)
- I used 88 cups sugar. (Creek)
- We had a fountain spraying up out of our stock pond & the hummingbirds darted through the mist as if they were playing. (Sequoyah)
- Did not see 1st female until May 1 – a full month after males. April 5 – positive ID of 2 black-chinned males. (Grady)
- Counted 15 hummers at one time. Had to fill twice a day in August. Numbers up this year. (Tulsa)

Again, we would like to thank all the participants for your contribution to the hummingbird database. All of the information you provide is beneficial to understanding the habitat requirements of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird.