

HUMMINGBIRD SURVEY RESULTS - 2005

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!



2005 RESULTS

In 2005, **52 Oklahomans** from **33 counties** participated in the Oklahoma Hummingbird Survey, as opposed to 44 participants from 27 counties in 2004. This reflects a large increase in the number of participants and counties represented! The earliest Ruby-throated Hummingbird sighting reported statewide was on **March 15** from **Oklahoma County** and the latest sighting reported was on **November 10** from **Wagoner County**. A map is provided (Figure 1) showing earliest and latest recorded dates of hummingbird observations by county, as well as the number of reports for each county. The most frequently reported date for putting up hummingbird feeders was April 1. Sixty percent (60%) of participants put their feeders up before April 15th. The most frequently reported date for removing hummingbird feeders was November 1. Sixty-six percent (66%) 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 2005, the eastern region had the most participants with 28 followed by the central region with 14 and the western region with 10. Regional results and comparisons are presented in Table 1.

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
 sp.
 Red-bellied Woodpecker
 mantis
 Carolina Chickadee
 American Robin
 Barn Swallow
 House Sparrow

INSECTS

ants
 honeybees
 wasps (red & black)
 Yellow jacket
 House Fly
 moths
 praying
 Monarch
 Dirt Dauber (mud wasps)
 Unidentified Butterfly sp.

MAMMALS

squirrel
 raccoon

OTHERS

spider

Recorded observations of the use of plants by hummingbirds resulted in a diverse plant list. However I've only listed the top 15, in order of the most frequently listed.

Red Honeysuckle
Salvia sp.
 Petunias
Lantana sp.
 Cannas
 Morning Glory
 Rose of Sharon
 Four'o'clocks

Trumpet Vine
 Cypress Vine
 Crepe Myrtle
 Mimosa Tree
 Zinnias
Impatiens sp.
 Cardinal climber

Comments

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

- Had 2 or 3 at a time, except July 27, had 5 for several (5) days then back to 2 or 3. (Logan)
- When it rains we have 20 to 30 hummingbirds. (Lincoln)
- I used over 40 lbs. of sugar. Had some waste when weather got hot. (Jefferson)
- Not as many hummers this year. More frequent in August & September. (Payne)
- I have dozens of birds each year. This year we had a nest in one of our pine trees but we had a strong storm with high winds and knocked it out of the tree. (Cleveland)
- We have several pair that come back and raise their babies each year. I have about 30 birds that we are feeding from our porch. My husband and I have both held a live hummer. That's a once in a lifetime deal. We are located in southeast Logan County.
- Humphrey, we named him, stays all summer and is very dominant, and will not let others feed. He sits and watches and runs them off. They are very exciting to watch. (Oklahoma)
- We love watching them from the living room. We live on 60 acres in isolated area, so plenty of wild plants for them also. So amazing when we started seeing them. (Logan)
- I live in the country, on Kaw Lake and usually have lots of hummingbirds---especially in the fall as they are gathering to go south. (Kay)
- We live in Stephens County. Our nearest neighbor is 1 ½ miles away. I mix my clear mixture 3/1. Two days last summer the hummers ate 2 – 40 oz. of sugar water each day. Part of the time it would last 1 ½ to 2 days. We estimate we had in excess of 100 birds. (Stephens)
- I would love to see a hummingbird nest. I have several mature Washington Hawthorn trees because I read that they are Hummingbird's favorite to nest in. Probably because of all of the thorns on them. Even if it isn't true the trees are worth having to see all of the cedar waxwings eat the fruit in winter. (Sequoyah)
- I refilled 4 – 8 oz. feeders 3 times a day. Sept. 14th was the first day they were not empty by 5 pm. They prefer Perky Pet feeders with perches. I watched one sit on the perch and preen. He was scratching his head with his foot and fluffing his feathers. We counted up to 24 maximum at one time. (Washington)
- The season started out slow, but at peak time I had 30 – 40 birds at a time. They all left by Sept. 30th. The one straggler in October was passing through on her way south. She only stayed a day. (Osage)

- We seem to notice them more around dusk or late afternoon. On Aug. 9th I had 3 hummers fighting over feeder – 2 rubys & a black-chinned! The black-chinned sat on the arm holding the feeder, to keep others away! (Off and on for nearly 30 minutes!) We also saw a chickadee trying to sup at our feeder – that was exciting! (Rogers)
- We continue to get many birds that try to drink from the hummingbird feeders – I started putting out small bowls for them to drink from and fixed large cookie sheets with rims and small mesh metal screening to cover the surface so the bees would not drown. We had 3 of these. This helps in keeping them away from the hummingbird feeders. (LeFlore)
- More hummingbirds than 2004. (Okmulgee)
- Several remained together – male – female – juvenile- until end of summer. (Mayes)
- I seem to have a lot of ants at the feeder this season. (LeFlore)
- I enjoy watching the hummers every summer. (Sequoyah)
- We found that axel grease on the hummingbird feeder hanger will keep the ants out and doesn't bother the birds. (Washington)
- ...During the season they will go through about 84 lbs of sugar. (McCurtain)
- I have had up to 12 – 14 birds at one time – 6 on the feeder – others sparring for position – I have to replenish every other day! (Wagoner)
- We make our own food: 1 c sugar to 4 c water. No color additives. For the past 5 years we have used 150 lbs. of sugar for the season. My feeders are emptied daily. (Tulsa)
- This year we had about 10 – 12 hummingbirds. My most aggressive are my rubythroat males. My mother and I just love watching them out of our kitchen window while they eat. Sometimes 3 or 4 will be eating at once. Next month (August) we always start seeing an increase in the numbers of hummingbirds here. They stay over for 2 to 3 weeks and feed heavily. Then we get up one morning and they are gone. (Craig)
- I usually get up to 20 or more hummingbirds. (McCurtain)
- We have counted as many as 50 at one time. (McIntosh)
- In September, 1995 we had a white hummingbird with black beak, black eyes, black feet and a little black and grey on the wing tips. It was here for 7 days. I have a videotape of it and still pictures. (Muskogee)
- Less birds visiting feeders this year. Honey bees discovered one feeder after the hummers left, they were on it when I finally took it down. (Muskogee)
- Sightings were spotty. Might go all day till evening. Had male, female, and juvenile in October. (Tulsa)
- Had one adult Rufous Hummingbird Aug. 7 – 10. Had a good number with heavy feeding early June and all of August. (Washington)

- Seems like fewer hummingbirds seen at this location this year – average 3. (Muskogee)
- We had 3 this year. 1 male, 2 females. One of the females loved to perch on the wire that hold the feeder in front of my kitchen window. She seemed to be watching us. (Tulsa)
- I had a good year, but the numbers were down. I had mostly the Rubythroat this year. Looking forward to next season. (Woods)
- Your parts of a hummingbird and explanation of differences in Rubythroat and Black-chinned was very informative – a great guide for future use. (Comanche)
- They never showed up this year. Never saw a single one. I talked to other folks that feed birds and this is why most people up here in Texas County don't feed hummingbirds. Some years they don't show up! (Texas)
- We had fewer birds this year. We have about 5 then after the hail storm the first part of July we only had 2 come back. (Blaine)
- We go through about 3 – 4 gallons of nectar a week during the heavy feeding season. (Jackson)
- I turn on the sprinkler. It is very entertaining to watch the hummingbird take a bath. (Custer)

We would welcome digital images of your hummingbird visitors. If you would like to submit one or more images, please send them to my email address: mhickman@zoo.odwc.state.ok.us. Please be sure that the images are high resolution (prefer 300 dpi) and provide me with how you would like the image to be credited. Sorry but we cannot provide remuneration for your images.

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.

Table 1. Data Comparison for Survey Results by Region												
Region	# of Reports				Earliest Sightings				Latest Sightings			
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2002	2003	2004	2005	2002	2003	2004	2005
Eastern	24	20	20	28	4-Apr	22-Mar	30-Mar	27-Mar	30-Oct	13-Oct	30-Oct	10-Nov
Central	18	10	10	14	3-Apr	6-Apr	29-Mar	15-Mar	13-Nov	15-Oct	14-Nov	2-Nov
Western	8	7	7	10	2-Apr	29-Mar	31-Mar	26-Mar	12-Oct	6-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct
Total # reports	50	37	37	52								

