

INTRODUCTION

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. In 2005, participants were given their first opportunity to submit data through the agency’s website. Data gathered 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 conservation and restoration, monitoring of wintering and breeding populations, 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!



2007 RESULTS

In 2007, **26 Oklahomans** from **21 counties** participated in the Oklahoma Hummingbird Survey, as opposed to 44 participants from 27 counties in 2006. This reflects a decrease in the number of participants and counties represented. The earliest **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** sighting reported statewide was on **March 27** from **McCurtain County** and the latest sighting reported was on **October 28** from **Lincoln County**. The earliest reported sighting of a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was shared between two counties, **Jackson** and **Love**, both on **April 1**. There were no reported late sightings dates for the Black-chinned hummer. 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 2007, the eastern region had the most participants with 15 followed by the central region with 6 and western region with 5. 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
 Red-bellied Woodpecker
 Carolina Chickadee
 American Robin
 Barn Swallow
 House Sparrow
 Northern Cardinal

INSECTS

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

OTHERS

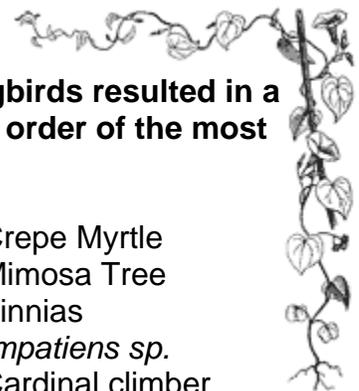
spider sp.

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 this year reflected an overwhelming increase in hummingbird visitation to their feeders. There was only one report that recorded a decrease in visitation. Without a doubt 2007, was an unusual year in the state of Oklahoma!

- Had only 2 birds. Saw 3 (birds) only twice. (Tulsa)
- July – August hummers left. Saw them back about Labor Day. (Tulsa)
- We counted more than 150 at one time. We really wish somebody would band or teach us how. The best laugh was right in the evening when the hummingbirds were at their peak. The feeders were empty and the hummers went to my brother's up the road about ¼ mile. He called and told us they invaded on him. When the feeders were filled back up you could actually see a gob of them coming down the road. This was a funny sight. Never had seen that before. (McIntosh)
- The birds definitely preferred my feeders to the flowers and only really visited the pink *Salvia* and Cannas often. We also have a large cedar and holly tree in the front yard which the birds probably nest in – but I've not seen nests...too high up for old ladies!! I got new feeders each having 10 ports instead of 4. Much Better...less fighting and easier to see number of birds. I fed 76 ¼ lbs. of sugar this year. I appreciated the '06 survey report. I think it helped me do a better job. (McIntosh)
- This year was the first time that I've had to bring my feeders in at night to prevent them from freezing up (April 6th & 7th). (Okmulgee)
- Came late this year but had many June through August. (Cherokee)
- In July had to get quart feeder – was changing pint feeders twice a day! First of September very busy at feeders. September 18th slow...only about 4 at a time. September 24th down to one on average in morning and evening. (Pushmataha)
- I had more hummingbirds this year. I guess our late frost last spring caused my mimosa trees not to bloom so the hummers missed them. (Sequoyah)
- The hummingbirds seemed slow arriving this year but when they did show up I ended up with over 50 total at least the rest of mid-summer. Got some great pictures this year. The 1st ones were not a bit afraid of me. Landing in my hair, flying up real close to me & my face. One even tried to land on my nose. He was so beautiful to look at that close. None of them really had much fear of me all year long. I never had so many hummers as I had this year. Plan to hang 2 more extra feeders next summer. One of the ruby-throated males was so fat, he was every bit of the size of a quarter around his middle. One ruby-throated female was found dead in my driveway right after the new hatchlings had started showing up at the feeders. She appeared to be a very old hummer. I used about 20 lbs. of sugar this year. Most hummers were between May 1st and 1st of September, then they were sporadic, coming, staying and moving on. So exciting this year with so

many, so much fun to watch. Truly entertaining. Ruby-throated males love to fight and spar with other males. (Craig)

- First hummingbirds started arriving April. August 14th – 30 plus birds; August 24th – 50 birds. Using 4 lbs. of sugar every 2 days. September 21 – only 10 birds left. September 30th – 2 birds left. October 10 – last bird left. (McCurtain)
- Less hummers this year. Never saw more than 4 at a time. (Osage)
- August 20th – have over 100 birds – they are all fat butterballs! Must be getting ready to go. August 27th - all males gone – only 20 females & juveniles left – maybe “my” summer group all left & these flew in – they are not as fat! (Osage)
- Had 25 to 35 hummingbirds all summer. (Love)
- Had more early activity than previous; also, hummers stayed steadily once they showed up, not sporadic like previous years. (Oklahoma)
- I had more birds this year than last and they stayed plentiful until they left. (Payne)
- We used 52 lbs. of sugar this season, the first time we’ve kept a record. We observed a male Black-chinned on April 17 for one day only. For about a week in June we had one male Ruby experiencing the hiccups with his bill up in the air. Activity increased from the last week in July through the rush from September 2 – 15, up to 35 filled perches with other birds waiting their turn. We bought a Perky-Pet 210 feeder that banders Ned and Gigi Batchelder had recommended to increase our activity. We placed it in an established group of 5-6 other feeders and the birds always flew to it first. Since the birds preferred that feeder so much, we bought others throughout the season and hope to start the 2008 season with more action than ever. (Payne)
- We had a large number of hummingbirds this year – nice increase in August. Males left September 9th – females made their total (nearly) exodus on September 20th. (Jackson)
- First one (April 20th) came to screen door as I was standing there as if to say, “I am back”. On April 22nd saw 4 at feeders – first to see since the one on the 20th – fighting over 2 feeders, worse than a bunch of kids. November 9th – took down feeders. We have not had a bird since the middle of September. That was rather unusual. We certainly will be watching and waiting for them to return back next year. (Dewey)
- I always enjoy watching these small birds. Other visitors come to our home, are attracted to the feeders and try to get as close to the birds as they can. They are always surprised that a wild bird will come within a foot or two from them as they stand by our feeder. Our grandkids always like to watch the little birds. We had about the same amount as usual. Five or six at a time is the most I saw this year. (Ellis)

Getting Ready for Year 2008 Hummingbird Observations!

Remember you can submit your results online through the Wildlife Department's website – <http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/hummingbirdsurvey.htm>. I've included a survey form with this summary just in case you don't want to submit online. Whether through the website or by postal mail please return or submit your information to the Oklahoma Wildlife Diversity Program before **January 15, 2009**.

We would also like to ask participants to record **specific dates** (in other words, include exact day) on your survey forms. Without a specific date, the point of the survey is negated.

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 and Black-chinned Hummingbirds.

Region	# of Reports				Earliest Sightings Ruby-throated				Earliest Sightings Black-chinned	Latest Sightings Ruby-throated			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Eastern	20	27	28	15	22-Mar	30-Mar	27-Mar	27-Mar	none recorded	13-Oct	30-Oct	10-Nov	20-Oct
Central	10	10	14	6	6-Apr	29-Mar	15-Mar	8-Apr	1-Apr	15-Oct	14-Nov	2-Nov	28-Oct
Western	7	7	10	5	29-Mar	31-Mar	26-Mar	15-Apr	1-Apr	6-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	12-Oct
Total # reports	37	44	52	26									

