

Oklahoma Hummingbird Survey Results

2010 Summary



Wildlife Diversity Program
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife
Conservation

<http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/hummingbirdsurvey.htm>

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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!



2010 RESULTS

In 2010, **20 Oklahomans** from **16 counties** participated in the Oklahoma Hummingbird Survey, as opposed to 47 participants from 29 counties in 2009. The earliest hummingbird sighting in 2010 was of a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** on **April 1** in **Jackson County**. The earliest **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** sighting reported was on **April 7** from **Pushmataha County**. The latest sighting reported for **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was on **October 24** from **LeFlore County**. A map is provided (Figure 1) showing earliest and latest recorded dates of both 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 (30%). Ninety percent (90%) of participants put their feeders up before April 15th. Sixty percent (60%) of participants took

their feeders down on or after November 1 with the latest date being November 23rd.

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 2010 the eastern region had the most participants with 14 followed by the western region with 4 and the central region with 2. 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
Orchard Oriole
House Finch
Wren sp.
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
American Goldfinch
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Carolina Chickadee
American Robin
Barn Swallow
House Sparrow
Tufted Titmouse
Eastern Phoebe

INSECTS

ants
honeybees
wasps (red & black)
Yellow jacket
House Fly
moths
praying mantis
Dirt Dauber (mud wasp)
Unidentified Butterfly sp.
Hummingbird Moth
walking stick
Beetle – Rose borer

MAMMALS

squirrels
raccoons

OTHERS

spider sp.
treefrog

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 overall a decrease in hummingbird visitation to their feeders.

- We had much fewer hummingbirds in 2010. Drought kept many flowers from blooming profusely. Perhaps that was the reason. (Osage)
- I had more hummers this year. I let my field grow up letting wildflowers grow. The hummers really liked that and visited them often. (Sequoyah)
- Spotted a Black-chinned male around June 8 – 10; came by several days, then disappeared again. (Oklahoma)
- We moved to the edge of town during 2010 season. We kept 6 feeders up and had about 10 -20 “regulars”. They stayed very late this year – they usually leave in August, but this year they stayed until October. (Osage)
- Hummers seemed late getting here this year. Started arriving in just small numbers at first 3 to 6 at first and then got swarmed on when they did all arrive. We had as many as 25 or 30 all the time. Mix of Rubies and Black-chinned hummers (males & females). We had 4 of the 8 oz feeders and 1 – 12 oz that we had to refill everyday. Sometimes in the later summer we were refilling the 8 oz feeders morning & evenings. We used about 175 to 200 pounds of sugar (4 of the 25 lb. Bags). Got some wonderful pictures this year. Had several that would sit on my pointer finger to eat out of the feeder when I held my hand out close to the feeder. They weren't a bit afraid of me. They felt so feather light when they were sitting on my finger. Had to look twice to really feel they were on my finger. The wisp of air was the first clue they were there. What a thrill it was. When they did leave, they just left, like overnight. Was left with about 4 to 6, which I figured were the ones who had been with us all spring and summer. They stayed about another week and a half and then they too were gone. Last to leave was the Ruby-throated hummers. Had the Ruby-throats in larger population this year than Black-chinned hummers which was unusual because usually we have about 50 – 50 of the hummers. We did have an unusual sight they year that we hadn't in the past. It had to be a male because of the brilliant color on its head and throat. I believe it was a Anna's Hummingbird or a Rufous. Had very pretty purple color on it. Stayed about a day and never seen him again the rest of the season. I don't think we had as many hummers this year as in the past but still had a lot of fun with the ones we did have. They all arrived later than usual and left earlier than years past. They all left too soon for me, can't hardly wait for this year's hummers. (Craig)
- Did not have very many birds this year. We only had 5 at the most. They were late coming this year. (Dewey)

- Our resident birds left Sept. 27th after that we would see a traveler occasionally up until October 5th. (Tulsa)
- Sept 2 – Sept. 11, had 10 hummingbirds willingly sharing the feeders. No dive-bombing! Does this mean it was a “family”? We so enjoyed them just outside our large picture window. We never had that many “peacefully” sharing. (Washington)
- I always have between 30 – 40 hummers each year. (Wagoner)
- A slower year than in the past. Here is the daily average for sugar water consumed during the busiest 7 day periods for the following years:

2010 – 6 ½ cups/day	
2009 – 12 ¼ cups/day	
2008 – 9 ½ cups/day	
2007 – 10 ½ cups/day	(Okmulgee)
- Huge amount of hummingbirds this year. Seemed to be constantly filling feeders. Usually have a lull during egg-laying & hatching, but not this year. Hummingbirds left much earlier this year than ever before. (Jackson)
- Not as many this year as last year. We had more hummers close to the end of August maybe about 12, when last year we had about 25. (Payne)
- We live 4 miles south of Okmulgee, ¾ miles west off US 75. It seems like this year we didn't have as many birds. Last year we were up to 3 to 4 gallons a day. This year the most was 2 ½ gallons a day. (Okmulgee)
- By the end of April only a few birds had arrived. By weekend of 5/30 full amount of birds arrived. First week of August I had increased activity at feeders, perhaps due to dry weather & wilting of flowers. Most birds left by mid-September. I fed 104 lbs of sugar which is 34 lbs less than 2009 due to fewer birds. (McIntosh)
- The feeders were constantly in use from May 7 to September 20th. Throughout the month of August over 20 Ruby-throated hummingbirds were in attendance. (Osage)
- I did not see as many this year. Only 3 at one time. My brother in Gage also did not see the numbers he has had in the past. (Ellis)
- Feeder most used by hummers is the quart-size feeder. In June, quart feeder would be empty daily. In August, quart still busy. They slowed to

½ quart/day and then used only smaller feeders when none would come to the quart, then only see one at a time. (Pushmataha)

Getting Ready for Year 2011 Hummingbird Observations!

For submitting your 2011 hummingbird survey results you may complete the form from our website and attach it to an email to: mhickman@zoo.odwc.state.ok.us. The survey form will be available through the Wildlife Department's website – <http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/hummingbirdsurvey.htm>. I've also included a survey form with this summary just in case you don't want to submit through an email. Whether through the website or by postal mail please return or submit your information to the Oklahoma Wildlife Diversity Program before **January 15, 2012**.



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.

Table 1. Data Comparison for Survey Results by Region

Region	# of Reports				Earliest Sightings Ruby-throated				Earliest Sightings Black-chinned			Latest Sightings of Hummingbirds			
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010
Eastern	15	22	25	14	27-Mar	24-Mar	5-Apr	5-Apr	17-Apr	N/A	N/A	20-Oct	08-Nov	21-Nov	24-Oct
Central	6	21	12	2	8-Apr	1-Apr	30-Mar	14-Apr	23-Mar	23-Mar	N/A	28-Oct	22-Oct	30-Oct	4-Oct
Western	5	8	10	4	15-Apr	16-Apr	13-Apr	1-Apr	3-Apr	26-Mar	1-Apr	12-Oct	12-Oct	10-Oct	29-Sep
Total # reports	26	51	47	20											

