



HummerNews

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Welcome!

This first issue of Hummer News is a newsletter for participants and other interested persons in the Great Lakes HummerNet. Formerly named the Michigan HummerNet, this project's scope has expanded to the point that this new name is more appropriate. It is hoped that this newsletter can become an annual event, perhaps eventually more frequently, depending on my time and sources of funding.

This newsletter is planned to be primarily distributed via the internet, though a few printed copies will also be distributed. Financial assistance for producing and printing this newsletter was provided by the homeowners in the Pine Cross Lane study site southwest of Ann Arbor. Thank you to David & Susan Horvath, Bernard & Micki Crawford, Barbara Hodgdon & Richard Abel, Carlos Fetterolf, and Mark Gilbert for your generosity. Financial assistance from Ohio was provided by Linda

Fayerweather. Thank you! These donations are especially helpful since the Great Lakes HummerNet is my own private research effort, and is not an incorporated organization, thus it is entirely self-funded through speaker fees for presentations given to groups (about 8 per year in Michigan, and one in Ohio last year), and also through use fees from my photos posted on my website.

It was a very busy 2003! Future newsletters will hopefully provide a greater variety of articles, including food plant preferences and perhaps even hummingbird gardening tips if anyone wishes to volunteer to write something. I have also begun investigating getting an internet chat group going for the HummerNet through the University of Michigan's system. If there is enough interest in this, I can pursue it further.

Thank you all for your support, and I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Allen Chartier
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Get ready for spring!

Spring is coming, and the hummingbirds are too! As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arrived early in spring 2003. You should clean your feeders now, and make sure you have plenty of sugar water on hand for the coming months. I always recommend that hummingbird feeders in Michigan be put out by April 15. Earlier if you wish. In addition to early arriving Ruby-throats, who knows what else may turn up! There are three unconfirmed reports of hummingbirds in Michigan in February and March from 1995-2003. It is almost certain that none of these was a Ruby-throat! Everyone should keep their hummingbird feeders up through at least Halloween to cover the late straggling Ruby-throats, and those who keep their

feeders up till Thanksgiving might be rewarded by the arrival of a rare Rufous Hummingbird, though this is a one-in-a-million chance.

Data Forms

Data forms for 2004 are being simplified considerably; as the process for data collection is refined it becomes clearer what data is most useful. These forms will be e-mailed, or mailed to you, hopefully sometime before the Ruby-throats arrive.

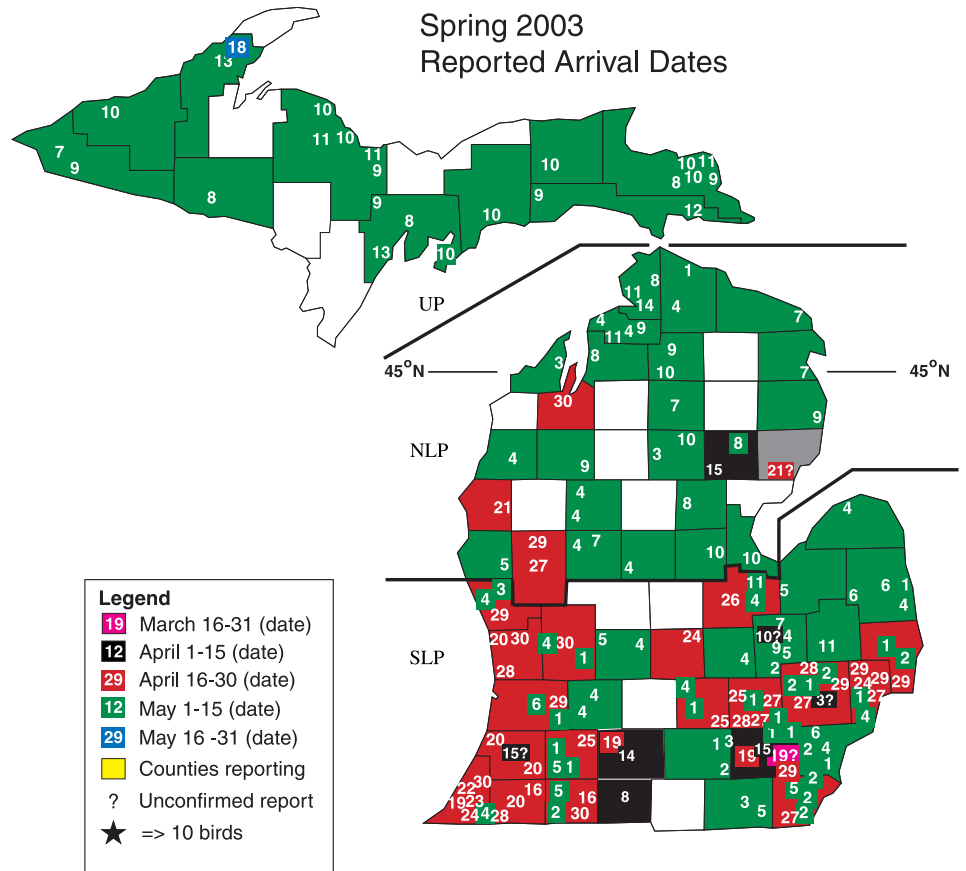
Unusual Hummingbirds

As always, keep your eyes open for unusual-looking hummingbirds at all seasons, and give me a call or send me an e-mail right away! Even if your bird turns out to be a Ruby-throat in an unexpected plumage, I always enjoy talking with hummingbird enthusiasts. Last spring, a Black-

chinned Hummingbird was reported in Michigan for the first time ever, though it was not officially confirmed. Summer is when the super rarities might show up (do you feel lucky?), and all Michigan records for the Arizona native Broad-billed Hummingbird (twice in Michigan) and the Central American native Green Violet-ear (also twice) have been from June, July, and August. Most of the Rufous Hummingbirds in Michigan are reported in October and November, but many actually have arrived earlier, and females might go unnoticed among your late summer hummingbird swarms. Last year, a Rufous Hummingbird was present as early as August and another as early as September. Keep your eyes open for any hummingbird with an unusual amount of buffy or pale orange on the sides and under the tail (of course an all-orange male would be unmistakable).

The 2003 Spring Migration

Arrivals were earlier than normal, with a record early date of April 8 confirmed in Branch County. Other reports in the first half of April were received April 14 from Calhoun County and on April 15 from Washtenaw and, amazingly, Ogemaw County. The number of birds arriving in the last half of April was considerable. These arrivals are shown in red on the map at right. Cool, wet conditions in early May surely affected hummingbirds, though less severely than in 2002 when there was snow in the southeast, and unfortunately several reports of dead hummingbirds were received.



The 2003 Breeding Season

In 2003, active nests were reported in Gratiot, Kalamazoo, Lake, Livingston, Saginaw, Washtenaw (2), and Wayne Counties. The nests in Wayne and one in Washtenaw failed. Nests in Lake, Saginaw, and Washtenaw each fledged two young. The outcome of the Gratiot, Kalamazoo and Livingston nests is unknown. In addition to the 161 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds banded in summer 2003, eleven birds banded in 2002 were recaptured (5.61% of the 196 banded in 2002). Ten were within 0.1 – 1.0 mile of where originally banded (3 recaptured at the same home where banded). One adult male recaptured in Waterloo Twp., Jackson Co. on 11 July 2003 was banded as an adult male in Milford, Oakland Co. (37 miles NE) on 30 July 2002.



Photo by Dan Arnosky

Bander training in Ohio

During summer and fall 2003, training of a hummingbird bander in Ohio was undertaken. Daniel C. Webb hopes to pursue a topic in hummingbird biology for his Master's Thesis, and also to enhance the banding operations at the stations of Tom Bartlett in northwestern Ohio. In late July, a trip to Lawrence County in extreme southern Ohio allowed 62 hummingbirds to be banded. Daniel's training continued in Ontario in the fall and will continue into 2004.

West Virginia: Hummingbird Heaven!

Early in 2003 I was invited, along with several other hummingbird banders, to the home of Gerry Tuning in the foothills of the Appalachians in West Virginia. Gerry was curious about how many hummingbirds she had, and hoped that a team of banders might be able to spend a few days and determine whether she had dozens, or hundreds. This was also a good opportunity for training new hummingbird banders...throwing them into the deep end of the pool, so to speak!

Upon arriving at Gerry's home, it was clear that there were far more than dozens of Ruby-throats, as we counted more than 40 at once at the feeders on the porch, and about 30 at six feeders in the yard. It was an exhilarating experience to have so many hummingbirds so close by, and we were giddy with anticipation.

The first day our efforts were hampered by intermittent thunderstorms, so we only banded 77 hummingbirds. The second day was perfect weather, and continuous effort all day allowed us to band an incredible 124 hummingbirds. The next two days the other banders processed more than 200 more, so more than 400 hummingbirds were banded in this one yard in only 4 days. Almost all were adult birds.

What makes this more incredible is that we were not there at the peak season. Gerry was using 1 gallon of nectar each day in late July, but in mid-August she uses 2 1/2 gallons each day! Truly hummingbird heaven!



Gerry Tuning's hummingbirds are very tolerant of people.



A small portion of the horde of hummingbirds at this magical place.



One of Gerry's secrets - LOTS of feeders.



The banding crew. L to R: Fred Moore, Allen Chartier, Bob Hall-Brooks (seated), Carl Pascoe, Scott Weidensaul (seated), Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent.



Chasing "winter" hummingbirds

The words "hummingbird" and "winter" don't seem to mix! But after the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have departed by mid-October, the Great Lakes HummerNet takes to the road to track down mainly Rufous Hummingbirds that have arrived to spend part of late fall and early winter in our region. While Rufous Hummingbirds are found annually in the Great Lakes, the numbers are not well documented, and almost nothing is known about their migrations in the region, nor their survival rates. Often these birds are detected in October or November, but can appear as early as August.

Before the HummerNet project began in 2001, there had been only 11 confirmed records of Rufous Hummingbird from Michigan, and about 15 from Ohio, between 1974 and 2000. Since then, an additional 6 have been confirmed in Michigan, and incredibly at least 16 more in Ohio, plus several more that could only be determined to be either Rufous or Allen's (a very similar western species that is also possible in our region). The status of Rufous Hummingbirds in Indiana is similar, though this information is still being compiled, and awareness of the Great Lakes HummerNet project has just begun in that state.

Whether this dramatic increase in reports is a real increase, or due to increased awareness of these birds is unclear, but may actually be a little of both. The following is a listing of the tracking done in fall and winter 2003 in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.

Michigan:

Confirmed

1 adult male Rufous from ~15 Aug – 20 Dec in Newton Twp., *Calhoun County* at the home of Jennifer Palmer, then moving to Debbie Pearsall's feeder across the street, was confirmed by banding on 26 Aug.

1 immature male Rufous from ~14 Sep – 8 Nov in Stockbridge Twp., *Ingham County* at the home of Bob & Linda Allen, was confirmed by banding on 17 Sep.

1 immature female Rufous in St. Joseph, *Berrien County* at the home of Ed & Lois Lewis. First observed 20 Oct, with brief single sightings on 20, 22, 23, 28 & 29 Oct and 6 Nov, then regular from 12 Nov – 26 Dec Confirmed by banding on 15 Nov.



This adult male Rufous Hummingbird, banded in Newton Twp., Michigan on 26 August 2003 was the earliest of the 2003 season, and remained there for more than four months.

Probable

1 adult male Rufous/Allen's in Commerce Twp., *Oakland County* reported 6 Aug as present at least two weeks prior, described as a "brown hummingbird".

1 immature or female Rufous/Allen's on ~15 – 25 Aug in Newton Twp., *Calhoun County* at the home of Debbie Pearsall.

1 adult male Rufous from ~10 – 25 Sep in Newport, *Monroe County* reported by Rebecca Goethe, Barb & John Jawor), but was unconfirmed as bird did not show on 26 Sep.

Possible

1 adult male Rufous/Allen's just before 30 July in Niles Township, *Berrien County*, was a third hand report and described as a "red hummingbird", but never confirmed.

1 adult male Rufous/Allen's in Grosse Pointe, *Wayne County* at the home of Linda Niczay on 5 September was not resighted.



- 1 adult male Rufous/Allen's on *Calhoun/Kalamazoo County* border in mid-Sep (via Ray Adams).
 1 immature or female Rufous/Allen's on 2-6 Oct in East Jordan, *Charlevoix County* at the home of Jill Anderson, photos may not clearly eliminate Ruby-throat in my opinion.

Ohio:

Confirmed

- 1 Rufous/Allen's, probably female, in Hallsville, *Ross County* from 14 Sep – 7 Nov at the home of Lisa & Terry Brady. Appeared to be banded in photos, but was a no-show on 8 Nov.
 1 immature female Rufous at Blendon Woods Nature Center, *Franklin County*, from 1 Nov – 25 Dec, reported by naturalists Sarah Dalton & Bruce Simpson. Confirmed by banding on 14 Nov.
 1 adult male Rufous in Bath, *Summit County* from late Sep – 1 Jan at the home of Charlotte & Andy Miller (photos by Roche not seen by me).
 1 Rufous/Allen's, probably female, from early Nov – 6 Jan in Massillon, *Stark County* at the home of Marijo Knowles, photographed by Norman Lowe.
 1 immature male Rufous east of Zanesville, *Muskingum County* from early Nov – 26 Dec at the home of Marcella & Wayne Wise. Confirmed by banding on 20 Nov.
 1 immature female Rufous in Middletown, *Butler County* from mid-Oct – 16 Jan at the home of R.G. Sauer. Confirmed by banding on 21 Dec.
 1 immature female Rufous in Greenville, *Darke County* from early Sep – 23 Jan (a record late date for Ohio) at the home of Cathy Fetzer. Confirmed by banding on 15 Dec.
 1 immature female Rufous in Maumee, *Lucas Co.* from 24 Nov – 20 Dec at the home of Linda Fayerweather. Confirmed by banding on 16 Dec.
 1 female Rufous/Allen's east of Dayton, *Montgomery County* from ??? – 4 Dec+? at the home of Russell Dougherty, who provided photos.



This immature female Rufous Hummingbird, banded at the Blendon Woods Metropark Nature Center northeast of Columbus, Ohio, on 14 November 2003 was a well-watched bird until its departure on Christmas Day.

Probable

- 1 immature or female Rufous in Carlisle Twp., *Lorain County* from 18 Oct – 1 Dec at the home of Cathy Priebe.
 1 immature or female Rufous/Allen's in Augusta, *Carroll County* from mid-Oct – 19 Nov at the home of Ellen & Richard Dinger. Bird was a no-show on 20 Nov, and had only been visiting every 3-4 hours prior to this. No photos.
 1 Rufous/Allen's in south Dayton, *Montgomery Co.* on 8 Nov (via southwest Ohio Rare Bird Alert). One-day wonder. No photos.

Indiana:

Confirmed

- 1 immature or female Rufous/Allen's in Lebanon, *Boone County* from 10-17 August at the home of Roger Hedge.
 1 female Rufous/Allen's east of Mitchell, *Lawrence County*, from 13 October – 5 January at the home of Mark Bennett, who provided photos.
 1 immature female Rufous in Evansville, *Vanderburgh County*, from 3 November – 31 Dec at the home of Lynn Simmons, who provided photos. Confirmed by banding on 28 Dec by Cathie Hutcheson.



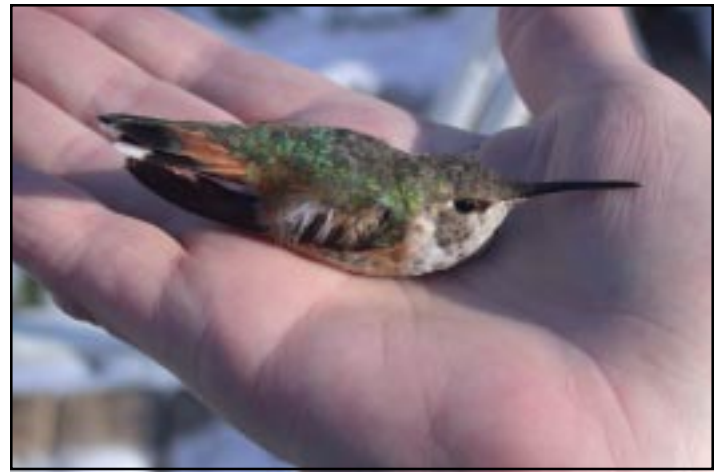
1 immature female Rufous in Morgan Twp., *Porter County* from 14 September – 24 November, when the bird was brought to a Veterinary Hospital while still clinging to a feeder in torpor. Bird expired a couple days later, not due to any veterinary actions.

Specimen's age and sex confirmed by my examination.

1 adult male Rufous in Bloomington, *Monroe County*, from mid-September – 5 January at the home of Jerry & Trudy Marsischky, who provided photos.

1 adult female Rufous in Bloomington, *Monroe County*, from 11 November – 8 January at the home of Cathy Meyer, photographed by Jeff McCoy. Confirmed by banding on 7 January 2004 by Cathie Hutcheson.

1 immature female Rufous in Indianapolis, *Marion County*, from ~25 November – 19 January (a record late date for the state) at the home of Nancy Hawley. Confirmed by banding on 21 December.



This immature female Rufous Hummingbird, banded in Indianapolis, Indiana on 21 December 2003 was not only the first Rufous ever banded in Indiana, but was the first hummingbird of any species banded there. Here, the homeowner releases the bird after it has been banded.

Probable

1 adult male Rufous in Pikeville, *Pike County*, from 30 August – 4 September at the home of Kate & Brian Averil. Bird was described as “orange all over!” with “extensive orange on the back.” Reliable observers, DNR employees.

1 immature or female Rufous/Allen’s in South Bend, *St. Joseph County*, from 25-28 October at the home of Jeff & April Sayre. No photos or documentation submitted, though video possibly exists. Reliable observers.

1 adult male Rufous in Indianapolis, *Marion County*, from early December – 19 December at the home of Heather Yater. Described as “having orangish-brown underparts, brown upperparts a little darker than the underside, a dark throat, and thin hummingbird-like bill.”

Thank you to the following people who provided information leading to the confirmation of these birds, or for additional date or location information:

John Castrale, Lanny Chambers, Don Gorney, Bill Hilton, Jr., Jim McCormac, Carl Pascoe, Stacy Peterson, Rachel Powless, Bob Sargent, Sharon Sorenson, Rusty Trump, Bill Whan

Ontario Hummingbird Banding

For the third season, Ruby-throated Hummingbird migration was documented at the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory, Ontario, Canada. Observations were made from both the hawk tower (Tower) and the passerine banding (Beach) station, with both observed and banded birds at the latter site.

In summary, a total of 455 hummingbirds passed through the two sites this year, with 157 counted from the Tower and 321 from the Beach Station (a record 134 banded). Between 1-31 August Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were recorded on 6 days from the Beach Station, with a total of 92 birds (58 banded,). There were no hummingbirds reported from the Tower during August. In September, hummingbirds were recorded on 17 days from the Tower and on 10 days from the Beach Station.

The peak day at the Tower was 27 on 8 September. The Beach Station was not in operation on this peak day, but sooner or later simultaneous data from these two sites will be obtained on such a “mega” peak day. The peak day at the Beach Station was 30 August (including a record of 28 banded), which was also the peak banding day. The overall peak day was 6 September, with a total of 62 (23 tower, 17 beach, 22 banded). The chart below (Figure 1) provides a summary of the 2003 hummingbird migration.



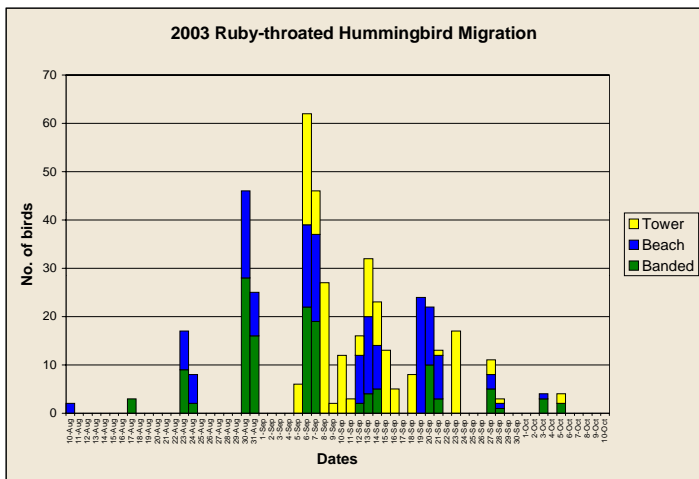


Figure 1.

Simultaneous data between the Tower and the Beach Station was obtained for a total of 9 days between 1 September and 5 October. These 9 days are presented in Table 1 below. In 2001, the data seemed to show a weak pattern that showed perhaps that hummingbirds were more numerous closer to the shoreline than over the tower. In 2003, this pattern appeared much more pronounced. Note that the Beach count includes additional birds seen flying past the banding area, but not banded.

Date	Tower	Beach	Banded	Total
6-Sep	23	17	22	62
7-Sep	9	18	19	46
12-Sep	4	10	2	16
13-Sep	12	16	4	32
14-Sep	9	9	5	23
21-Sep	1	9	3	13
27-Sep	3	3	5	11
28-Sep	1	1	1	3
5-Oct	2	0	2	4

Table 1.

The total number of October birds this year was 8 (the record is 14), with 4 on 3 October (none from Tower) and 4 on 5 October (2 from Beach, 2 from Tower).

The age and sex ratios of migrating hummingbirds are being studied through the banding operations at Holiday Beach. Prior to the beginning of this banding program, adult (AHY) males were rarely observed at Holiday Beach. Males are known to begin migrating as early as late July in some regions of North America, so our continued banding coverage throughout August may

eventually shed some light on when adult males migrate through this area. Figure 2 below shows the distribution of the various age and sex classes through the season.

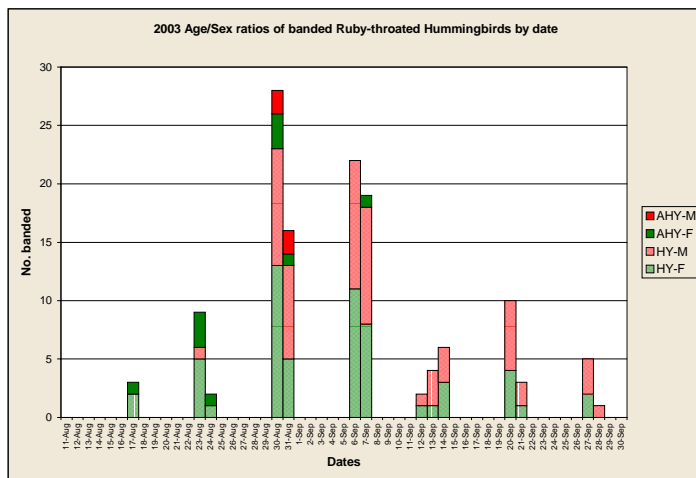


Figure 2.

Totals for each classification were:

- Adult (AHY) Male: 4
- Adult (AHY) Female: 10
- Young (HY) Male: 63
- Young (HY) Female: 58

Note that this totals 135 birds, as one bird released without a band is included above.

It is apparent from this year’s data, as well as from 2001 and 2002, that adult hummingbirds are infrequent migrants, or at least infrequently captured, at Holiday Beach.

A comparison of the age and sex ratios between 2001, 2002 and 2003 shows an interesting pattern (see Figures 3-5 below). The higher proportion of adults in 2002 (20%) than in 2003 (10%) and 2001 (8%) indicates a possible decreased productivity in summer 2002, in addition to the lower overall numbers.



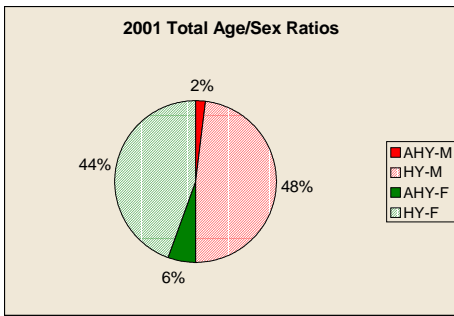


Figure 3.

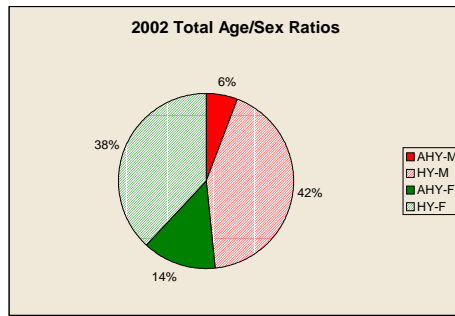


Figure 4.

A summary of the total hummingbirds banded at Holiday Beach from 2000 – 2003 is shown in Table 2 below. Note that 2000 was only a partial year for hummingbird banding.

Hummingbird banding will be continued in 2004 by two newly trained, and highly capable banders, Carl Pascoe and Bob Hall-Brooks.

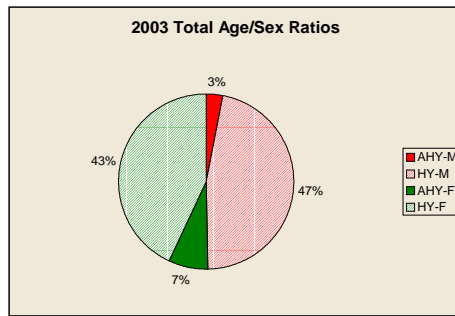


Figure 5.

	AHY-M	AHY-F	HY-M	HY-F	Total
2000	0	0	16	14	30
2001	2	6	51	47	106
2002	5	12	37	33	87
2003	4	10	62	58	134
Totals	11	28	166	152	357

Table 2.

Hummingbirds lose a good friend

I first met Hanna Richard in 2001, over the internet. Hanna, and her husband Artie, were banders from New York who retired to the hill country of Texas several years ago. There, Hanna began banding hummingbirds, and each year would band more than 2,000 Black-chinned Hummingbirds.

In May 2003, Hanna lost a long and difficult battle with cancer. In the short time I knew her, I considered her a good friend even though our contact was limited to the internet and the telephone. I never even knew what she looked like until after she was gone, when Artie sent me the photo of the two of them below. Hanna will be sorely missed.

