

and red markings on the wings, which were easily discernible. The black feathering of the throat was also more extensive and well-defined than on the other waxwings present.

Numerous observers saw this bird. A small article on the bird along with a photograph taken by Chris Young appeared in the *Springfield Journal Register*. Dennis Oehmke also provided the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee and the *Meadowlark* with exceptional photographs for documentation of this rarity. He was also responsible for re-finding the bird briefly in February.

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Rufous Hummingbird

(*Selasphorus rufus*)

Livens Winter in Urbana

by Elizabeth J. Chato

On 1 December 2000, my friend and neighbor, Helen Ritter, called to tell me excitedly she had seen a hummingbird in her yard. Helen is not a "birder" but is an avid gardener who enjoys feeding and watching birds in her yard. Her hummingbird feeder had been taken down long ago, but the bird had found a few bright red pineapple sage blossoms that had survived the frost. As the bird had flown, I suggested she put her feeder back up and call me if the hummer returned. I also mentioned that late hummingbirds might be something unusual and that she should look for brown on its back.

On 3 December, Helen called again. Yes, the hummer was back and visiting the feeder, and it did appear to have a brown back. I rushed over and was able to watch the bird first from about 3 m away through a window and later from a bench outside on the deck. At once I was able to determine it was an immature bird, but not our usual ruby-throated variety. Extensive rufous on the back, upper tail coverts, and tail showed it belonged to the genus *Selasphorus*. Because I knew the difficulty in separating immature hummingbirds of this genus down to species, I wrote extensive notes of what I saw during the half hour that I watched it come and go. Most likely it was a Rufous Hummingbird (*S. rufus*), as we have had at least one in Urbana before (see Chapel 1997), but Allen's (*S. sasin*) was also a possibility. Since Helen was willing to have visitors come and enjoy this bird, I spread the word.

I also checked several references including an article on *Selasphorus* identification (Heidcamp 1997). I decided first that this was an immature male bird because it showed only a few red feathers at the upper outer edges of the gorget (not in the center) and solid rufous on the uppertail. I then decided it was a Rufous Hummingbird because of the solid rufous on rump, tail, and back, which showed only a few green feather edges).

Later observers thought they had seen a band on the leg, and efforts were made to find a bander who could net the bird and check the number. Very few banded hummingbirds are ever recaptured and it would have been exciting to find out from where this wanderer had come. The bird had other ideas however, and apparently left on 10 December, before bander and net arrived the next day. People did get good pictures and even a video for the record.

Either because more people are aware of the possibility, or because this species is extending its range, the Midwest is hosting Rufous Hummingbirds quite frequently in late fall. They are more cold tolerant than most hummers, living at high altitudes in the Rockies and being the only hummingbird ranging north into Alaska. Champaign County's first Rufous Hummingbird was documented by Robert Chapel at Urbana on 6 October 1996 (Chapel 1997). The bird was identified through photographs by Denis Oehmke and by examining the second and fifth rectrices after Steve Bailey, who has a permit to band