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# FLORIDA FIELD NATURALIST

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## RECORDS OF THE RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD IN FLORIDA

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On 19 October 1974, the senior author netted a Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) at her banding station in Homestead, Dade County, Florida. It was being pursued by a pair of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) defending a territory of Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria bignonia capensis*) and Turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*). The bird was judged to be (1) *S. rufus* rather than *S. sasin* (Allen's Hummingbird) because the feathers of the lower back and the central pair of rectrices lacked the rufous color characteristic of *S. sasin*; (2) a female, from a comparison with illustrations (Pough 1946; Robbins, *et al.* 1966) and plumage descriptions (Bent 1940); and (3) an immature, because the crown and back were brown with only a scattering of green feathers. Species determination was corroborated by Roxie Laybourne, National Museum of Natural History, from photographs deposited with Everglades National Park.

At least 45 records of the Rufous Hummingbird exist for Florida (see Table 1 below) with at least 15 records in the Panhandle (29 Oct.-27 Mar.), 1 in the Tallahassee Division and 23 in the Northern Peninsula (7 Aug.-2 Apr.), and 6 in the Southern Peninsula (including 2 probables) (19 Sept.-16 Jan.). There is one record from the Bahama Islands (Grand Bahama, 22 Oct. 1966, Kale *et al.*, 1969) but none from the Florida Keys. The number of Panhandle records is probably greater than 15. After occurrences were cited for 11 of 20 years in *Audubon Field Notes*, the species was not mentioned for two years (1954-55 and 1955-56), then in the following winter was said to be "present as usual . . . at Pensacola" (Newman 1957), and listed for 1959, 1963, and 1965. At Pensacola, Weston (1965) called it "a regular but rare late fall migrant." At least 13 records occurred in the Panhandle (at Pensacola) before the species was recorded in the Peninsula (1958, Brevard Co.). William B. Robertson, Jr. (pers. comm.) suggests that the species may occur frequently but be overlooked where the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is a regular winter resident.

TABLE 1. RECORDS OF RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRDS FROM FLORIDA.

PANHANDLE. ESCAMBIA CO. — All from PENSACOLA area. First Florida record, 1 or 2, 26 Nov.-13 Dec. 1934, specimen, 29 Nov. (McClanahan 1935); 1935-1965, about 20 records in 13 different winters, regular in Nov.-Dec., but seldom spends the entire winter (James 1960, 1964, 1965; Lowery and Newman 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954; McClanahan 1936; Newman 1957; Weston 1939, 1940, 1942, 1947, 1965). GULF CO. — PANAMA CITY, 29 Oct. 1954 (Sprunt 1963). TALLAHASSEE DIVISION. LEON CO. — TALLAHASSEE, 22 Mar.-1 Apr. 1974 (Stevenson 1974). NORTHERN PENINSULA. DUVAL CO. — JACKSONVILLE, 29 Nov. 1971 (Robertson 1972) and 18-19 Sept. 1975 (Edscorn 1976). ALACHUA CO. — GAINESVILLE, 29 Oct. 1975 and 6 Nov. 1976 (Edscorn 1976, 1977) and High Springs, 23 Nov. 1975 (specimen, Florida State Mus., Edscorn 1975). ORANGE CO. — MAITLAND, 5 Nov. 1969 and ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, early Nov. 1969 (Robertson 1970). HERNANDO CO. — BROOKSVILLE, winter 1973 (Alline Kelly, pers. comm.), 7 Dec. 1974, 3 Jan.-2 Apr. 1975 (A. Kelly, S. Fickett, pers. comm.). BREVARD CO. — MERRITT ISLAND, 2 Nov. 1958, first state record east of Panama City (Stevenson 1959). The published statement "east of Pensacola" is erroneous [Stevenson, pers. comm.]; COCOA-ROCKLEDGE area, 1959-1974, about 15 records in nine winters, ranging from 28 Aug.-24 Feb. The record of 28 Aug.-3 Sept. 1966 at Rockledge (notes of A. D. Cruickshank, *vide* R. Barber) is second earliest date for Florida (Cunningham 1964, Edscorn 1974, 1975, Robertson 1968, 1972, Robertson and Ogden 1969, Stevenson 1959, 1973). PINELLAS CO. — ST. PETERSBURG, 7 Aug. 1975 (Edscorn 1976). This record of an adult male seen by Dave Goodwin, is the earliest for the state. SOUTHERN PENINSULA. ST. LUCIE CO. — FT. PIERCE, 11-12 Jan. 1960 ("presumed to be a Rufous," Stevenson 1960) and 13 Oct. 1962 ("a probable Rufous," Stevenson 1963). PALM BEACH CO. — LANTANA, 16 Jan. 1965 (Stevenson 1965). BROWARD CO. — FT. LAUDERDALE, 19 Sept. 1965, photo by W. Bolte (Tall Timbers Res. Sta. No. 23). DADE CO. — KENDALL, 7 Feb. 1964 (Stevenson 1964); HOMESTEAD, 19 Oct. 1974 (Edscorn 1975) — the southernmost record in the state.

Although observers rarely indicated the sex and age of the bird seen, we have presumed all of these observations to be of *S. rufus*. Nevertheless, the reader should remember Phillips' (1975) caveat that sight records, except of adult male *S. rufus*, are considered useless in those areas where *S. rufus* and *S. sasin* are sympatric (*sasin* occurs east to Arizona, Phillips 1975). For additional discussion of this problem see DeBenedictis (1976).

When the senior author initiated this paper we did not realize that so many records of the Rufous Hummingbird existed in Florida. The species should be considered an irregular winter visitor. Fall and wintering hummingbirds should be studied carefully for this species; and observers should consult Stiles (1972) for plumage description and age and sex determination of Rufous Hummingbirds.

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