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# A Record Late New York Rufous Hummingbird

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## ABSTRACT

*A Hatching-Year female Rufous Hummingbird (Selasphorus rufus) appeared 14 Oct 2020 at a feeder at Baldwinsville, Onondaga County, New York, was banded there on 3 Dec 2020, and remained until 23 Jan 2021, setting a new late-date record for New York state. During its time at this location, it endured a 5.8-in (14.7-cm) snowfall on 16-17 Dec and a morning low temperature of 5°F (-15°C.) on 19 Dec. On 22 and 23 Jan, the bird fed very actively, during a 6.2-in (15.7-cm) snowfall, last seen at the feeder at 1430 on 23 Jan, ahead of an overnight low of 4°F (-15.6°C.) next morning.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) is a western North American species breeding from southeast Alaska south through the Pacific Canadian provinces and Pacific Northwest United States to northern California, wintering from southern California into south-central Mexico as well as along the United States Gulf Coast. It is known to occur as a vagrant in fall and winter in eastern Canada and United States (Williamson, 2001).

The first sighting record accepted by the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC, 2020) was a bird downstate in Orange County on 9 Aug 1993. The first record of a banding in New York, an After-Hatching-Year (AHY) male, occurred on 3 Dec 1994 at Cambridge, Washington County (Yunick, 1994). Another AHY male banded 6 Dec 2012 in West Phoenix, Onondaga County, remaining until 27 Dec 2012 (Yunick, 2013) was thought to be a new late record for the state until NYSARC made known in 2013 a new state late-date record of a bird present 14 Dec 2011 to 3 Jan 2012 downstate in New York County. Then two new late-date state records were reported by NYSARC for Suffolk County, Long Island as follows: 4 Oct to 28 Dec 2013 and 29 Nov 2012 to 6 Jan 2013.

Jan.-Jun. 2021

All NYSARC data referred to here are extracted from its records summary published 3 Aug 2020.

The Baldwinsville Rufous reported here extends that state late date to 23 Jan 2021.

## METHODS

Jay McGowan (pers. comm.) made me aware of the presence of a *Selasphorus* hummingbird on 1 Dec 2020 visiting several feeders on Doyle Street in Baldwinsville, Onondaga County, New York, and put me in contact with some of the people in the neighborhood feeding the bird. One of them, Christine Rydelek at 3645 Doyle Road expressed an interest in having the bird identified and banded.

Historical data on the bird and local climatological data were obtained from her, and regional climatological data from the National Weather Service were accessed via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA, 2021) website at Syracuse Hancock International Airport (KSYR). Elevation and latitude/longitude data were obtained from Google Earth (2021).

## RESULTS

At the Rydelek residence (43°08' 28.78" N, 76°15' 33.57" W, elevation 498 ft, 159 m), a trap was in place by 0925 on 3 Dec 2020, air temperature 36°F., (2.2°C.), 2-3 cm of new snow from the previous day. The bird appeared at 0938 and 0939 and was caught at 0940. It was in captivity 44 min until released at 1024 during which time it was allowed to feed several times as plumage and measurement data were recorded. All data indicated it was an HY/F Rufous Hummingbird based on criteria in Pyle (1997) and Williamson (2001). A detailed summary was submitted to NYSARC.

It weighed 3.82 g, fat class 1 on a 0-3 scale, and immediately following this weighing was allowed to feed again, doing so actively. When it ceased this feeding, it was reweighed having gained 0.16 g or 4.2 % of its body weight.

Right primaries 1-6 were newly replaced and

darker compared to the slightly faded retained juvenile RP7-10. Right secondary 1 was about 90% regrown and darker than the slightly faded retained juvenile secondaries. The feathers on the front 7 mm of the forehead from the bill had been renewed. There was no apparent body molt.

Table 1 summarizes selected climatological data for Dec 2020 and Jan 2021 from the nearest National Weather Service station (NOAA 2021) referred to above at Syracuse located 20 km (12 mi) east of Baldwinsville at 43.11° N, 76.1° W at elevation 420 ft (128 m). The 5°F.(-15.0°C.) morning low recorded at Syracuse Airport on 19 Dec was also recorded on site at Doyle Road (Christine Rydelek, pers. comm.).

### DISCUSSION

This Rufous Hummingbird, like several others I have banded in New York, is a classic case of arriving anonymously at a feeder while Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) were still in residence. It became noticed only when it lingered past the usual departure date in Oct of the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, beginning the quest to identify it as to species, age and sex. Concern for its care and survivability arose as chilling autumn and winter weather arrived.

Thanks to dedicated daily maintenance of the Baldwinsville feeder by Christine Rydelek, who made frequent exchanges during days below

freezing to provide liquid nectar, a reliable food source was available to sustain this bird. She also enlisted several neighbors to continue maintaining their feeders to provide additional feeding sites for this bird.

Similar past situations of Rufous Hummingbird discovery after the normal departure dates of Ruby-throated Hummingbird occurred as follows. A HY/F Rufous Hummingbird banded in East Arlington, Vermont on 22 Nov 2011 remained until 15 Jan 2012 (Yunick, 2012), and an AHY/M Rufous Hummingbird banded at West Phoenix, Onondaga Co., New York on 6 Dec 2012 remained until 27 Dec 2012 (Yunick, 2013). The Baldwinsville site is 9.5 km (6 mi) south of the West Phoenix site, both in the lake plain approximately 36 km (22 mi) southeast of Lake Ontario, elevation 78.4 m (245 ft).

Table 1 summarizes temperatures down to 5°F.(-15.0°C), as well as the number of days at or below freezing, and snow exposure this Baldwinsville Rufous endured. When last seen, it was feeding actively in a snow storm on the afternoon of 23 Jan at 1430 (Christine Rydelek, pers. comm.). Its perseverance resembles that of the West Phoenix Rufous which appeared for the last time on the morning of 26 Dec 2012 after an overnight snowfall of 14in.(35.6 cm), 12°F. (-11.1°C.). The East Arlington Rufous endured a morning low of 4°F.(-15.2°C.) on 15 Jan 2012

Table 1. Climate data for Dec 2020 and Jan 2021 from Syracuse Hancock International Airport.		
Criterion	December	January
Lowest Temp., °F.(°C.)/Date	5 (-15.0) on 12/19	4 (-15.6) on 1/24
Highest Temp., °F.(°C.)/Date	56 (13.3) on 12/11 to 12/13	42 (5.6) on 1/14
No. Days Max. less/= 32°F.(0°C.)	9	13
No. Days Min. less/= 32°F.(0°C.)	24	29
Greatest Snow Depth, in(cm)/date	6 (15.2) on 12/17	10 (25.4) on 1/27 to 1/30
24-hr Total Fall, in(cm)/date	5.8 (14.7) on 12/16 to 12/17	6.2 (15.7) on 1/22 to 1/23
Monthly Total, in(cm)	13.2 (33.5)	22.7 (57.7)
No. Days Snow Fell		
Light Snow	19	22
Snow	0	4
Heavy Snow	1 (12/16 to 12/17)	2 (1/22 to 1/23 and later)
Total	20	28

when it last appeared, but not the next day at -8°F. (-22.2°C.) or thereafter.

These observations add further understanding to this vagrant species' ability to endure extreme winter climatic conditions far from its usual wintering area in the southwestern U. S., Mexico and U. S. Gulf Coast (Williamson, 2001).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## Ruby-throated Hummingbird Movements in Southwestern Michigan

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#### ABSTRACT

*From 2008-2017, among broader objectives, we documented site-fidelity of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (Archilochus colubris) at several study sites west of Battle Creek in southwestern Michigan. An unexpected finding was data about movements within the same breeding season, as well as potential relocations in subsequent years, that document movements at greater distances than is currently noted for the species (Weidensaul et al. 2020).*

#### INTRODUCTION

Among priorities for future research that Weidensaul et al. (2020) enumerated was the lack of information on Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) densities in Jan.-Jun. 2021

various parts of its range. The literature on nesting density and spacing includes only two papers on the topic (Chartier 2008, Welter 1935). Another aspect of this density is the size of their foraging territory within the breeding season. Most of this type of information focuses on distances that males may travel to locate nectar sources (i.e., "If a food source is inadequate to attract females, male may move during the breeding season and set up territory elsewhere, sometimes as far as 3 km away (RRS)" (Weidensaul et al., 2020). Little has been published about movements of females, which also need to find invertebrate prey to feed their nestlings. Site fidelity and return rates have also received little attention in the literature.